

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Mark Kersh
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Date of last inspection	12 March 2009
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About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Service information

Brief description of the service

This children's home is owned and managed by the responsible individual. It is a detached house situated in the suburbs close to a large town, with links to public transport and community facilities. The ground floor has a lounge, with satellite television, a kitchen and dining room combined, a bedroom and bathroom and toilet facilities, the office is situated on the ground floor. The second floor comprises of bedrooms and bathroom and toilet facilities. There is space for car parking on the home's driveway.

Six young people currently live in this home of which four were present during the inspection.

Summary

At this unannounced full inspection, all key standards were inspected. The recommendations made at the previous inspection were checked for compliance. This is an inadequate service, particularly in the outcome areas of staying safe and organisation, where shortfalls have been identified in relation to confidentiality and privacy, records relating to complaints, behaviour management, risk assessments and recruitment practices. Shortfalls identified in the outcome area of organisation include, support and training for staff, and inadequate management systems which are not focussed on improvement. However, some of the outcomes for young people at the time of this inspection are good, particularly around assessing and reviewing their needs, maintaining contact with family and friends and being consulted. The outcome area for enjoying and achieving is outstanding, in that the support young people receive is excellent and they make exceptional progress in education. Young people say they are cared for well and are very positive in questionnaires completed about their needs being met.

The overall quality rating is inadequate.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the previous inspection, the manager was asked to improve the records relating to menus. Food types are recorded in detail and show what young people actually eat, this enables staff to better monitor young people's diet. The manager was asked to maintain a complete record of all fire drills. This has been implemented and ensures young people and staff are taking part in evacuation tests. Recommendations relating to the electrical safety certificate and qualifications of staff have been carried forward and recommended during this inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people's dietary needs are mostly met. Improved menus show a specific variety of well balanced, wholesome and nutritious meals, prepared using fresh produce. Young people contribute to the weekly menu and staff are aware of their likes and dislikes of food. However, there is no evidence to show mealtimes attend to individual dietary needs, for example, if young people's preferred choice is to follow a vegetarian diet or give regard to young people's culture. Staff have sufficient knowledge of food hygiene and follow the 'safe food better business' guidance. There is no evidence to show staff have received food hygiene training. Such training enhances staff knowledge and ensures they have a good understanding of how to safely prepare and cook food.

Young people's health needs are managed well. Young people are registered with local health services and routinely attend appointments as and when needed. All young people have annual health assessments completed, and there is evidence that young people receive specialist health services, although currently there are no interventions from specialist services to address specific health matters. Individual health plans cover in general young people's individual health needs, with more detailed health information within young people's case files. As a result of these arrangements, staff do not have a clear health plan document in respect of individual young people, as the information is not stored in one place.

Staff follow procedures which ensure all medication is recorded correctly, stored securely, administered safely and accountable. Written consent has been obtained for the administration of appropriate non-prescription medication and treatment of first aid. However, there is no evidence to suggest the majority of staff have received medication or first aid training. Good practices are followed for seeking professional advice in relation to medication products, which have been temporarily withdrawn by a general practitioner. This ensures staff are putting young people's interest first and monitoring the situation for any likely affect this may have.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

Young people say their privacy is respected and staff always knock on their bedroom door before entering. All written information in relation to young people and staff is stored securely for confidentiality reasons. Young people without mobile phones have access to a telephone for making and receiving calls, the location of this telephone does not ensure calls can be made and received in private.

Young people know how to complain. They receive information in the form of a children's guide, which explains the complaints process, the children's guide refers to Ofsted but does not include their contact details. Following the previous inspection there have been no complaints made from young people about the care they receive in the home. The complaints record book is disorderly and not organised in a way that allows for simple monitoring.

The home's child protection policy, in line with the local authority safeguarding policy provide staff with clear guidance and flow charts on who to contact in cases of suspected abuse. These procedures have been followed correctly and Ofsted has been notified of significant events. Some staff have received basic child protection training, however the duration of this course is insufficient to provide an appropriate level of understanding in relation to recognising and responding to suspicions or allegations of abuse. Young people confirm there are currently no issues of bullying in the home.

When young people abscond, staff know what to do and follow agreed procedures. Records maintained show clear behaviour patterns for individual young people. However, there are no additional risk assessments for particular behaviours or strategies, that give clear directions for consistent staff responses.

Young people are encouraged to develop socially acceptable behaviour through planned activities, incentives and rewards and staff respond constructively to inappropriate behaviour. All staff have completed training in behaviour management and safe restraint techniques. Specific instructions for recording restraints and pocket money are not being followed, and records of these are disorderly and not organised in a way that allows for simple monitoring,

or identifying patterns of behaviour. Young people say sanctions imposed for inappropriate behaviour are fair. Sanction records are not explicit and show more than one sanction being imposed for one occurrence, which is not fair. Young people have an opportunity to comment and sign sanctions records, however, should they choose to do this other young people's details can be seen as all sanctions are recorded on the same page.

Young people, staff and visitors are safe from the risk from fire. Regular checks are carried out and signed for to show they are in good working order, in relation to the fire equipment, smoke detectors and alarm. Young people take part in routine fire drills and know how to evacuate the home safely and in a timely manner. The fire assembly point is considered by young people to be in the wrong place, and this does not make them feel safe. An electrical safety inspection certificate following completed work was not available.

All new staff do not commence work in the home until an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) has been received, application forms and gaps in employment histories are checked and followed up. However, new staff shadow existing staff before references are returned. This practice could leave vulnerable young people exposed to undesirable persons.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Young people receive individual support by designated staff. Regular key worker sessions are held so that young people's feelings, thoughts and needs are explored and reviewed. Detailed records of key worker sessions, show the progress that young people make. Young people say they feel supported and have access to information in relation to a range of services outside of the home and confirm regular key working sessions take place. Young people feel supported as a group and have access to people independent of the home for support. Young people clearly benefit and make good progress as a result of the effective level of individual support they receive, from committed staff and independent persons, all of which is supported by the management team.

Staff are fully committed in supporting young people to attend and achieve in school. Detailed information is within young people's case files in relation to education. Personal education plans identify people to support young people and these plans are up to date. Staff continue to liaise with local schools and training providers, to enable young people to achieve excellent outcomes. Staff are enthusiastic and participate in school social events and attend parents evenings. The management team liaise well with local education authorities ensuring utmost priority is given in securing the correct school placement for young people. One young person returned from collecting their GCSE results, excellent grades were achieved and staff were vibrant in celebrating this young person's achievement.

Young people confirm their involvement and participation in a variety of well planned activities and outings. Young people's individual interests and hobbies are maintained and sufficient funding is available for holidays and leisure pursuits.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people's placement plans provide staff with good information, which assists them to meet young people's ongoing identified assessed needs. The plans are set out to cover each

Every Child Matters (ECM) outcome area. However, additional risks identified and how these will be assessed are not on file. Young people's current and future needs are reviewed within statutory timescales. Young people are encouraged to attend and participate in their review meetings. There are good opportunities for young people to be consulted both formally, for example, prior, during and after their review and informally by staff during daily conversations. Detailed daily records provide good information in relation to young people's views and progress. Young people's collective views are regularly sought during meetings with staff. After these meetings, the staff and management team are able to consider the views of young people in relation to the running of the home.

Young people are supported to maintain contact with their families, so they are able to sustain important relationships, family and friends are welcomed into the home. Policies and procedures are followed, in relation to any admissions to the home or discharges from the home. Consideration is given to any likely impact this may have on young people or the resident group, introductory visits are routinely carried out for new admissions.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people enjoy homely accommodation, decorated, furnished and maintained, providing good facilities for their use. During the previous inspection work was being undertaken on an extension to the ground floor of the home, to provide an additional bedroom and bathroom facility for young people. This is now complete and as a result the management team will commence a programme of redecoration, throughout the home.

Each young person has their own bedroom, and key, so they can keep their personal possessions secure. Bedrooms are personalised to individual young people's preferences. Toilets and washing facilities are sufficient to meet the needs of young people and staff and provide them with privacy, all locks are in working order.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. The home's statement of purpose and children's guide contains useful information about the services the home provides and includes information in relation to equality and diversity. Some evidence across the five outcomes supports some consistent commitment to improving equality and diversity in practice. For example, the quality and detail of most placement plans demonstrates individually appropriate care packages. Young people are looked after by a team that has an appropriate balance of age and gender. Staff have not received equality and diversity training and there is little information available to them in relation to this.

Arrangements and agreements are in place for staff supervision, to ensure they are being positively supported and guided in promoting young people's welfare. They work well as a team and they are supported by their colleagues. Supervision records are individual and stored securely. However, not all staff receive regular monthly supervision and the records of staff supervision lack clarity, not all supervision agreements are signed. This is unsatisfactory as staff who provide young people with excellent support need to be supported themselves.

The home has an established staff team in place. However, staff have not received refresher mandatory training in the majority of childcare practice areas, such as safeguarding, medication, first aid and food hygiene. Training records of staff are incomplete.

There is sufficient staff to provide young people with continuity of care and to meet their needs. Staffing rotas are flexible and allow for extra staffing at key times, such as, mealtimes, activities and bedtime. Most staff are qualified to a minimum level of National Vocational Qualification at Level 3, or equivalent, with some staff currently undertaking this qualification. Suitable arrangements are in place for qualified and experienced staff to deputise in the managers absence.

The manager of the home is also the owner and has a system whereby each month a monitoring exercise is carried out, to check on the home's administration systems. However, these monitoring exercises are not routinely carried out each month, so they are therefore ineffective as the reports lack clarity and are not inclusive of any actions to take as a result of shortfalls being identified. There is no evidence of the standards in the home being raised as a result of these monitoring exercises, although outcomes for children are generally satisfactory.

The manager confirms the home is financially sound and there are enough resources allocated through budgets to cater for and meet the needs of young people. The manager has no professional qualification relevant to working with children, but does have a number of years experience within this field. The management arrangements are effective in ensuring the home is staffed in a manner that generally delivers satisfactory outcomes for young people.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, The Childrens Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
13	ensure at all times, at least one person on duty at the children's home has a suitable first aid qualification (Regulation 20.2.e)	30 October 2009
13	make suitable arrangements for the recording, handling, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of any medicines received into the children's home (Regulation 21.1)	30 October 2009
9	ensure there is a telephone in a suitable location in which young people can make and receive telephone calls in private (Regulation 15.4.a)	4 September 2009
16	include in the children's guide the contact details for Ofsted (Regulation 4.3.c)	4 September 2009
17	ensure that staff receive appropriate training which includes child protection and safeguarding (Regulation 27.4.a)	30 October 2009

19	ensure appropriate risk assessments are in place which identify the care strategies to minimise the risk to young people and others and to keep them safe (Regulation 23.c)	4 September 2009
22	maintain an accurate and up to date record of measures of control used (Regulation 17)	4 September 2009
28	ensure all staff and management receive appropriate supervision and appraisal (Regulation 27.4.a.b)	4 September 2009
33	ensure effective monitoring systems are in place which identify shortfalls and actions to take to rectify these (Regulation 34).	4 September 2009

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that any special dietary requests made by young people are considered with records maintained in respect of these (NMS 10)
- ensure health and safety at work, by providing training in, food hygiene (NMS 10)
- ensure each young person has a clear written health plan (NMS 12.2)
- make sure an up to date record of all complaints is maintained (NMS 16.3)
- ensure the record for young people's pocket money is set out as specified by instruction (NMS 11.9)
- review the arrangements for the fire assembly point so that young people feel safe (NMS 26)
- ensure an electrical maintenance certificate is available (NMS 26.4)
- ensure a minimum ratio of 80% of all care staff have completed their level 3 in the Caring for Children and Young People (NMS 29.5).