

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Liz Driver
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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

A private company owns and operates this children's home. It is registered to accommodate three children of either sex from 10 years to under 18 years at any one time who have emotional and or behavioural difficulties.

The setting is a detached house. Located on the lower floor are two young people's bedrooms, bathroom, laundry room, the education room and two staff sleeping-in rooms. The upper floor consists of the staff office, a lounge, kitchen with dining area, toilet and a young person's bedroom. The garden is of a good size.

Summary

This unannounced interim inspection looked at the progress the setting has made with the one requirement made at the last inspection. This related to appointing a manager and submitting an application to register the manager. There has been a change in management since the last inspection with the assistant service manager carrying out the manager's role to a very high standard. The organisation continues with its recruitment programme for a permanent manager. This inspection also looked at staying safe and areas of being healthy, enjoying and achieving, economic wellbeing, and organisation.

Overall the setting provides a very good standard of care with some outstanding areas. Staff are fully committed to ensuring the best outcomes for young people and work very hard to engage them, especially in education. Staff aim to keep young people safe and have a wealth of experience and knowledge in all aspects of care and protection they provide. The office is being relocated to a more central position in the house in order for staff to be able to oversee the home more effectively.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting was asked to appoint a manager and submit an application to register. Since the last inspection the acting manager has stepped down and the assistant service manager is covering the manager's role. An active recruitment programme is in place to appoint a manager and subsequently submit an application. The interim management cover is of a very high standard.

The setting was recommended to make sure all young people who self administer medication have a risk assessment in place. At this inspection no young people were self administering medicines, however risk assessments are available if necessary.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The food provided for the young people shows that staff have a good understanding of what makes up a balanced diet. Staff consult with young people about their food preferences and encourage them to take an active part in shopping, preparation and cooking meals.

Young people's health needs are identified pre admission and addressed with a high degree of commitment by the home. Individual health care plans are in place for staff to work with and identify, in depth, health needs. Plans are of a very high standard and are subject to review by key workers, the manager and the Regulation 33 visitor. The acting manager is pro-active in bringing all professionals together to address complex health issues and maintains very regular contact with them. Staff demonstrate a sensitive and confident approach to individual health issues young people have.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff show a high regard to privacy and for maintaining levels of confidentiality. Files and sensitive information are kept securely and in locked cabinets. There are robust procedures if a room search has to be carried out.

Young people benefit from having access to a robust complaints procedure. The right of a young person to complain is made clear to them on admission. Young people are comfortable in voicing their opinions or issues, and are able to voice these concerns at house meetings, key worker sessions or through a more formal route, the complaints procedure.

The home has very clear procedures for responding to child protection and safe guarding. Staff work in accordance with the company's own policy that works alongside the local child protection and safeguarding policy. Child protection training is provided to staff who are clear as to their obligations in the event that they have concerns about a young person's wellbeing and of colleagues' practice if inappropriate. The practice in the setting is underpinned by the senior members of staff in the organisation providing support to managers and staff. The commitment, communication and awareness showed by the organisation in protecting young people is excellent.

Bullying is taken seriously with behaviour management plans in place that provide clear guidance for staff. The response and approach to bullying is made clear to young people on admission and during key worker sessions and house meetings. Staff are very aware of group dynamics in the home and manage young people's interactions very well.

Each young person has written information for staff to follow if they go missing or leave the home without permission. There is clear guidance as to whether it is an authorised or unauthorised absence. Records show a low number of unauthorised absences. Close communication with the local police and consistency of staff practice enable the whereabouts of young people to be identified. All incidents are robustly monitored and all young people receive support on return.

Each young person has a behaviour management plan in place. These outline what support they need in achieving positive behaviour, what may distress them and what agreed reward and sanctions are in place. The acting manager closely monitors practice and records relating to sanctions and physical interventions. Staff practice in dealing with challenging behaviour is of a high standard. Staff base their behaviour management on active encouragement and acceptable behaviour. Staff work hard to gain positive relationships with young people and provide a warm and caring environment where young people feel at ease to express themselves with the knowledge that staff are supportive.

The home has a comprehensive health and safety policy in place. All checks relating to fire, gas and electrical appliances are carried out regularly. All young people and staff are given fire safety instruction with records kept.

The organisation has a thorough recruitment process that ensures all necessary checks are completed prior to a member of staff starting work. Young people are actively involved in the recruitment process and are encouraged to give feedback to the recruitment panel carrying out the formal interviews, after they have met the potential members of staff. The vetting of visitors is robust with records kept.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Education is clearly valued by the home and young people are given good levels of support to maintain their placements at educational establishments. Attendance levels are good with staff working hard to engage young people in education. Staff support young people in gaining placements at further education establishments. Daily school or college attendance is an established part of the daily life at the home. The home is a registered school with the Department for Children, Schools and Families and has a designated teacher who is managed by a competent and experienced head teacher who oversees the education of all young people placed in the organisation's registered homes.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is not judged.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people benefit from living in a house that is large with a good sized garden. The house is well maintained and young people are in general respectful of their surroundings. The company's designated maintenance team respond quickly to any request submitted. Young people are able to have a say in the choice of furnishings and fittings and are able to personalise their own bedrooms. Toilets and bathrooms are of a good standard and sufficient in number. The home is subject to ongoing redecoration and refurbishment and is currently in the process of relocating the office to a more central position in the house.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

There are clear lines of accountability within the organisation. Currently the home is being managed by the assistant service manager who is extremely competent, has a wealth of experience and is suitably qualified to meet the needs of the role. The organisation is actively seeking to recruit a manager. The staff team is stable with a good mix of gender, age and experience. Staffing levels are maintained on a basis of one-to-one giving the young people enough adults available to have access to high levels of support. Young people are well informed of which staff are on duty. There is a very thorough organisational training programme on offer to all staff. Expectations are high for staff to access appropriate training and a closely monitored system ensures all staff are up to date with training.

Monitoring of the home and its practices is of a high standard. The Regulation 33 visitor provides excellent reports with actions and recommendations for the manager to address. These visits include consultation with the young people living in the home and feedback from placing social workers and families of the young people. All Regulation 33 reports are submitted to Ofsted without fail.

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
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Recommendations

There are no recommendations.