

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 is the staff office, two young people's bedrooms, bathroom, laundry room, the education room and staff sleeping in room. The upper floor consists of a lounge, kitchen with dining area, toilet, staff sleeping in room that can be used as a semi independence flat for young people, and a young person's bedroom. The garden is of a good size.

Summary

This key inspection was unannounced and took place on a weekday. There was one recommendation resulting from the last inspection to follow up with one action and one recommendation made at this inspection. All key national minimum standards were assessed during this inspection.

The home provides young people with excellent care and support. Robust policies and procedures support the day to day practice that is of a high standard. The acting manager has settled in well and is having a positive impact on the home and young people. An application for a registered manager needs to be submitted to Ofsted. Staff training is organised and very well structured. Health care needs are robustly identified and met. Medication procedures are robust however risk assessments need to be in place for those young people who currently self medicate. Clear boundaries are in place for behaviour management that young people respect and have resulted in improved outcomes. Young people feel safe at the setting and fully protected by staff. Each young person's voice is important and numerous avenues exist to enable them to voice their opinions. The setting is currently undergoing some redecoration and is, in general, respected by the young people. All aspects of the home are robustly monitored at very regular intervals. Staff work hard to gain the trust of young people and this has seen improved outcomes for young people.

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 make sure all staff had received fire training. Records show this has taken place and current staff are up to date with training.

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 are assisted in developing these skills for independence living. Menus seen are varied and healthy and reflect the young people's wishes and choices. Staff are trained in food hygiene

and have a very good awareness of what each young person's dietary needs are. Comprehensive care plans identify dietary needs.

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 receive training around health issues, for example, first aid in response to self harming. Staff demonstrate a sensitive and confident approach to individual health issues young people have. Risk assessments are comprehensive with excellent content. Young people have a good insight into their health needs and feel free to discuss any concerns with staff. Records are very well maintained with comprehensive recording.

Young people benefit from the home having comprehensive policies and procedures in place for the administration of medication. Consents for the administration of medication and first aid provide protection for young people. There is a system whereby young people are assessed as to their competency and risk of administering and keeping their own medication although those young people currently self administering medication did not have a risk assessment in place. Staff receive training in medication administration to enhance their competency. All medicines are kept safely and securely. Current practice of storage, recording and stock control is of a high standard.

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. Young people are aware of their right to have access to written records. Staff members knock on doors before entering, and all toilets and washing facilities have locks that can be overridden in an emergency. There are robust procedures if a room search has to be carried out. Records show none have been completed since March 2009.

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. The young person's handbook gives clear guidance about who they can complain to and their contact details. Young people are comfortable in voicing their opinions or issues, and are able to voice these concerns at house meetings, key worker sessions or a more formal route, the complaints procedure. Staff receive training in complaints and whistle blowing during the induction process. Records show no complaints since the last inspection. Staff are confident in whistle blowing if they have concerns with all appropriate agencies notified.

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 very well informed of their responsibilities. Staff 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 the manager to ensure that all young people who are cared for are

protected. 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 absconding. The home has worked closely with the local police to implement missing children protocols. Records show an increase in the number of absconding incidents over the last year and staff are working hard to reduce this. Very recent records show a decrease since new procedures have been put in place. Close communication with the local police and consistency of staff practice enable the whereabouts of young people to be identified. Incidents of absconding are rigorously monitored.

The home has complied without fail to notify all those persons and appropriate authorities, listed in schedule 5 of Regulation 30 of The Children's Homes Regulations, of all significant events that have occurred. The number of these incidents is low.

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. Records of sanctions and physical interventions are recorded to a high standard. The manager closely monitors practice and records relating to sanctions and physical interventions. Recording systems identify the need for young people to have the opportunity to comment following a restraint. 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 they feel at ease to express themselves with the knowledge that staff are supportive.

The home has updated risk assessments for all aspects of safety of the premises and grounds including fire and activities. All checks relating to fire, gas and electrical appliances are checked regularly. All young people and staff are given fire safety instruction. All records relating to checks are of a high standard. The home has a comprehensive fire risk assessment in place which together with other risk assessments are of a very high standard.

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.

Care plans for young people address how support will be provided. The emphasis is on individual needs of each young person. Each young person has a key worker who meets with them on a regular basis to discuss their care plan, weekly plans and overall behaviour and progress. High

standard weekly reports are forwarded onto the organisation's head office and placing special workers. The home has excellent links with a wide range of agencies that fit with the needs of the young people.

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 fluctuate with staff working hard to engage young people in education. The home works closely with other professionals to ensure recently placed young people have access to appropriate educational establishments that will meet their needs. Daily school or college attendance is an established part of the daily life at the home. The home is a registered school with the DCSF 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. Each young person has a Personal Education Plan (PEP). These are up to date and include strategies and plans to help young people develop their education and life skills.

Young people are encouraged to take part in leisure activities in house and in the local community. Staff are supportive of young people maintaining family contact. Staff work hard to ensure they can access activities of their choice and enjoy the experience.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Young people have their needs assessed effectively and comprehensively. No young person is admitted to the home unless the home is confident it can meet the young person's needs. Each young person has a detailed and comprehensive care plan in place, which cover short and long term plan. All Looked After Children's paperwork is kept on file. Young people are encouraged to take part in their reviews and do so proactively. Weekly reports written by key workers ensure progress is monitored and that any issues can be shared with the team, social workers, families if appropriate or external professionals. The setting maintains good relationships with placing authorities and chase up reviews if necessary.

Contact arrangements for each young person are clearly outlined in each young person's care plan. Staff are very supportive of young people in facilitating visits. Strategies are put in place in order to ensure young people receive high levels of support during and after contacts. Any restrictions on contact are also known and recorded. Staff have shown they are very aware of the importance of restriction of contacts in relation to keeping young people safe and safeguarding them from potential harm or abuse. Young people are able to visit friends and family and they are welcome to visit the home. Written records are maintained of any contacts. All recording is of a high standard.

Young people have numerous opportunities to discuss the running of the home and how they are being cared for. It is clear that young people's views and opinions are valued. Young people's meetings take place regularly where they can discuss areas such as menu planning, activities, changes in the home and any other areas they bring to the meeting. Key worker sessions are held regularly and provide the opportunity for young people to express their views and wishes. The acting manager is highly visible and approachable and senior management visit regularly where they seek the views of the young people who happily voice their opinions. The young people are confident in expressing their views and this is encouraged by the staff team. Advocates are pro actively sought for young people.

Relationships between staff and young people are warm and respectful. Young people are happy at the home and complimentary about the staff. Staff are clear of the boundaries and behavioural expectations and provide support for young people to be aware of these expectations. Staff are professional and competent in carrying out their roles, and always put the needs of the young people first. They are sensitive and supportive even during challenging times.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Staff work hard to ensure young people receive life skills according to their needs so they can move into adulthood confidently. Liaison with social workers and other related professionals enable young people to gain as many skills as they need to live an independent life when they leave care. Transitional planning is implemented as early as possible with input from social workers, the young person and the home. Social skills can prove more difficult for some young people and the home works hard to ensure they are aware of their vulnerabilities and how to keep safe.

The opportunities provided for young people to buy their own clothing and toiletries give them the experience in expressing their individual preferences and develops skills such as budgeting that will be essential throughout their lives. Young people are able to spend their monies freely unless they have been found to be spending it inappropriately.

Young people benefit from living in a house that is large with a good size garden. The house is currently being redecorated with new carpets being laid. 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. Furnishings and fittings are of a high quality. 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 with some having been redecorated since the last inspection. The home has a car for staff to utilise to transport young people.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Young people are given equal access to all aspects of provision and care. Staff have undertaken training on equality and diversity and monthly regulation 33 reports now have a designated section covering equality and diversity and is an agenda item at all meetings, from staff meetings to managers meetings to individual supervision sessions.

The home has a Statement of Purpose and Children's Guide that gives a comprehensive description of what the home can offer and achieve. The children's guide is of a particularly high standard giving a wealth of information to young people. The guide makes it clear what rights and responsibilities the young people have and what they can expect from the home. It includes useful telephone numbers of external agencies to whom the young people can approach for advice or to complain to.

There are clear lines of accountability within the organisation. Currently the home has an acting manager in place, who is working towards the role as registered manager, and continues to

ensure practice is maintained to a high standard and has shown she can develop further standards already in place. She is supported by a strong senior management team, including the directors of the organisation. The acting manager has experience in working with young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties and is providing a stable and calming influence in the home. The staff team is, in general, stable, with some new staff in place, and a 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 clear process for cover when the acting manager is absent from the home. The on call system enables staff to access support and advice from senior managers within the organisation. 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. Training includes areas such as first aid, child protection, food hygiene, physical interventions, behaviour management, complaints and whistle blowing, fire safety and the value of education. Additional training is provided relating to individual young people's needs, such as self injury and autism. New staff commence an induction programme followed by enrolment on a National Vocational Qualification course in childcare. New staff have reviews on a monthly basis carried out by the acting manager. All staff receive regular supervision that is of a high standard. Staff meetings are held regularly, with the acting manager attending weekly meetings with other managers in the organisation.

Monitoring of the home and its practices is of a high standard. The acting manager is supported by a senior manager in the organisation who visits regularly to offer support and guidance. The Regulation 33 visitor provides excellent reports with actions and recommendations for the acting 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.

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
30	appoint an individual to manage the children's home and submit an application for registration. (Regulation 7 (1))	30 December 2009

Recommendations

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

- ensure young people who self administer medication have a risk assessment in place (NMS 13.9).