

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Bill Drumm
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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 outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

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

The home provides medium to long-term accommodation to four young people of either sex, between the ages of 11 and 17 years.

The home is approximately three miles from the city centre. It is close to schools, local and community facilities and public transport routes.

The young people have their own single bedroom and access to a lounge, dining room and kitchen. To the rear of the building there is a yard.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This was an unannounced key inspection of the home and all outcome areas for young people were inspected. The outcome areas for being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and organisation were judged to be good. The outcome areas for economic well-being were judged to be satisfactory. Overall this is a good service.

Since the last inspection the home's manager has addressed all the actions and recommendations raised at the previous inspection and has made significant progress in ensuring they have all been fully met.

One action and four recommendations have been made as a result of this inspection. Young people enjoy a healthy well-balanced diet and have their health needs met. Improvements in staff training in both the administration of medication and child protection helps to ensure young people are safeguarded and kept safe. Young people enjoy a healthy diet and those who are old enough, are encouraged to develop their own independence and daily living skills. Due to improvements staff can communicate more easily with those young people whose first language is not English. This will aid the positive communication between young people and members of staff. A comprehensive pathway plan for those who are eligible, and which will aid the transition of young people into adulthood and independence has not been written. This leads to a recommendation.

The home is visited every month by someone who does not work there to monitor how the home is run and to inspect the premises. Recommendations made by the visiting officer with regard to the premises have not been acted upon for some months. Repairs to the rear of the building have not been carried out resulting in continuing health and safety risks.

Two young people were living at the home at the time of the inspection. One young person was not present at the time of the inspection and the second declined the invitation to participate in the inspection process.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection the home's manager has made several improvements to how the home is run. Risk assessments in relation to the known and likely activities of the young people living there have been reviewed and updated. Risk assessments are also in place for a wider range of activities. Young people currently living at the home receive the help and support they need. Regular meetings between the young people and their key workers take place at regular intervals. The home's Statement of Purpose has been reviewed and some improvements have been made. Members of staff have received further training to help them safeguard young people. In addition, all members of staff now receive regular supervision.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Members of staff ensure young people enjoy a well-balanced diet. Fresh fruit is freely available, which young people are encouraged to eat. Those young people who are old enough are encouraged to develop their independence skills and to learn activities for daily living by becoming actively involved in budgeting and meal preparation. The home ensures that young people living there are able to follow the diet of their choice. The home also ensures that young people are able to sample food from different countries and cultures. Young people living at the home enjoy a healthy, well-balanced diet and healthy eating is promoted.

Young people living at the home have had their individual health care needs identified. Young people are supported and encouraged to attend all meetings and appointments with healthcare professionals. The home has good links with the local looked after nurse. Members of staff have attended first aid training and there is always a first aider on duty at the home. The health care needs of young people are promoted.

Policies and procedures relating to the safe handling and administration of medication are in place and members of staff have undertaken training in the safe handling and administration of medication. Members of staff use their initials and not signatures when administering medication. This is not in line with the home's own procedures nor is it in line with national minimum standards. At the time of the inspection there are no young people living in the home who were taking prescribed medication. Consent forms from parents or those with parental responsibility are all in place. Young people living at the home are protected by the home's medication administration systems.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Each young person has their own bedroom. The home has policies and procedures in place, which explain what action members of staff should take when it is necessary to search a young person's bedroom. No room searches have been carried out by members of staff since the last inspection. Personal information relating to each young person is stored securely to prevent unauthorised access. Members of staff were observed to talk with the young person present at the time of the inspection, in an open and honest manner. Young people living at the home are treated with dignity and respect.

There are policies and procedures in place for dealing with complaints in an effective and timely manner. There have been no complaints made by young people since the last inspection. However members of staff have not received training in the complaints process which may result in young people's complaints not dealt with seriously or without delay.

A copy of the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures is available in the home. There have been no child protection referrals made since the last inspection. All members of staff working at the home have undertaken training in child protection and the welfare of young people is promoted. Young people living at the home are protected from exploitation and abuse.

The home has policies and procedures in place with regard to countering bullying. The young people's guide to the home includes information for young people about what action they should take if they feel they are being targeted by bullies. Information about independent agencies that can help young people, if they feel they are being bullied, is also available within the home. The manager of the home has written a countering bullying risk assessment and members of staff working at the home have received training in countering bullying. Young people are protected from bullying.

There have been several occasions since the last inspection when young people have been absent without authority. The home has policies and procedures in place with regard to what action members of staff should take if a young person is missing. Procedures comply with national minimum standards and provide clear guidance for staff action, particularly when a young person returns to the home after being missing. Young people are responded to positively on their return.

The home has policies and procedures in place relating to the safe holding or restraint of young people, and members of staff have received appropriate training. Restraint records are retained within a separate bound and numbered book used specifically for that purpose. There have been no occasions since the last inspection when it has been necessary for members of staff to restrain or hold a young person. The home also has policies and procedures in place, which relate to the sanctions members of staff are permitted to use to help young people modify their behaviour.

Very few sanctions have been used since the last inspection. Sanction records have however, been completed appropriately. Young people are encouraged to develop socially acceptable behaviour through encouragement and staff support.

Young people are protected from fire and other hazards within the home. There are good systems in place to ensure that young people, members of staff and visitors to the home are kept safe and free from hazards. Fire drills are carried out at regular intervals. Risk assessments that relate to the known and likely activities are in place. Risk assessments are generally thorough and help to protect young people from the risk of accident or injury.

Written records show that thorough and detailed checks are carried out to ensure that all members of staff are suitable to work with young people. Young people living at the home are provided with physical safety and security and are protected from being exposed to potential abusers.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The individual help and support each young person receives at the home is good. Each young person has their own link worker and meetings between them take place at regular intervals. Link workers have a proactive approach to ensuring the changing needs of young people are highlighted and they regularly review each young person's care needs. This helps to ensure that appropriate services continue to be provided.

Young people living at the home, because of their age, are no longer required to attend school. Members of staff do however encourage and support young people to attend training or to look for work. The manager and staff at the home, encourage young people to achieve their maximum potential by offering daily practical support and ongoing encouragement in learning skills associated with daily living. Young people are encouraged and supported with their hobbies and interests. Young people are encouraged and assisted to develop their own identity and community presence.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Each young person has a placement plan, which outlines what their needs are and how they will be met. The admissions process is generally good and where possible, takes into consideration the wishes and feelings of young people already living at the home. Staff members talk regularly with young people, to discuss issues affecting their lives, to make them feel safe, at ease and to see if they can help in any way.

The needs of young people are regularly reviewed. The manager and members of staff regularly attend review meetings with partner agencies, changing needs are quickly highlighted and appropriate action is taken. Where necessary, the home's

manager will request a review be organised to help quickly resolve any issues.

Where appropriate, young people are supported and encouraged to maintain regular contact with their friends and families. Restrictions on contact between young people and their families are discussed prior to admission and are written into the young person's placement plan. The reasons for these restrictions, if any, are both known and understood by the manager and staff at the home.

The home has a clear admissions policy and procedure; this includes, where possible, arrangements for young people to visit the home before a placement is agreed and their wishes and feelings will be discussed. The home's admission's procedure also allows for discussion to take place with existing residents about any proposed admissions.

Young people are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence how the home is run through link worker meetings and young people's meetings. Consultation between the home, parents of young people and placing social workers takes place in order to try and improve the service offered to young people. The relationships between young people and members of staff is good.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

Formal pathway plans, for all those young people who require them, are not available in the home at the time of the inspection. Therefore robust pathway planning to ensure young people receive the services and care they need to prepare them and support them into adulthood is not fully in place.

Young people enjoy homely accommodation that is decorated, furnished and maintained to a good standard. Members of staff help to maintain the building and to keep it clean and tidy. Young people living at the home are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms and are encouraged to keep their home clean and tidy.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Where possible, members of staff support and enable young people to participate in community-based activities. Members of staff have received training in equality and diversity issues. There is information in place for young people, parents and others regarding the services the home provides. The Statement of Purpose has recently been reviewed and up dated although the document does not clarify what skills and experience staff members have.

The home's manager makes herself available to talk with all staff members should they need to do so. Formal supervision takes place at regular intervals. Staff

meetings are held at regular intervals and all members of staff are actively encouraged to take a full and active part in these meetings. Young people are looked after by members of staff who are well supported and properly managed.

Young people receive the care and services they need from a committed staff team. There are sufficient members of staff on duty to meet the day-to-day needs of the young people living there. Systems are in place to increase the staffing of the home should the need arise.

The home's rotas ensure that, where possible, there is a mix of both male and female staff on duty. Staff sickness and holidays are covered by existing staff members being flexible in their work patterns or by using temporary staff members employed by the organisation.

A record of all training received by members of staff is maintained within the home. Young people are looked after by staff who are well trained to meet their needs. A programme is in place to ensure that all staff training is kept up to date and maintained.

The home is visited by someone independent of the home every month to review how the home is run and to ensure the premises remain safe and well maintained. The report from the visiting officer raised concerns about the yard at the back of the building some months ago. Despite these concerns taken forward by the manager, agreement for suitable repairs has not yet been actioned in the organisation. As a result the rear yard is not well maintained and remains a health and safety risk to young people and visitors.

The care of young people living at the home is monitored regularly by the home's manager. A system is in place to ensure performance is monitored, any patterns or issues requiring action are highlighted and appropriate action is taken.

The needs of young people are recorded to reflect their individuality and daily records are maintained. Information relating to the care that young people receive is stored securely. Young people and their parents are able to access this information within the home if they request it.

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/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Std.	Action	Due date
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32	ensure that the home is inspected at least once each month and that a written report is prepared on the conduct and premises of the home. In particular address any health and safety issues which arise from such visits. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))	31/03/2011
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Recommendations

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

- ensure that all members of staff sign the home's medication administration records (NMS 13.2)
- ensure that all members of staff receive training in the home's complaints procedures (NMS 16.6)
- ensure that each young person who is old enough has an a comprehensive pathway plan in place to aid their transition into adulthood (NMS 6)
- review the home's statement of purpose to ensure it provides accurate and up to date information about how the home is run. NMS 1)