

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Lindy Latreille
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Date of last inspection	8 January 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

The home is a large detached house with a walled rear garden, situated in a residential area. It is within walking distance of local shops, railway station, cinema and the beach.

The home provides care and accommodation for up to eight young people, aged between 11 and 18 years. There are many areas for quiet relaxation, games, television and computers in the house.

Six young people currently live in the home. Some did participate in the inspection.

Summary

At this unannounced full inspection all key standards were inspected.

This is a good service in most respects. Young people's welfare is enhanced by the good relationships with staff and each other. Young people are encouraged to follow healthy lifestyles and develop independent skills to support their futures. The home works closely with a range of outside agencies to meet the young people's needs.

The Registered Manager is focused on supporting staff to improve practice through training. However, in her absence staff were not confident to follow safeguarding procedures and she has initiated training.

Notifications to Ofsted have not been carried out without delay and staff who are engaged in the preparation of meals have not all received appropriate training.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

There were several recommendations from the last report. They reflected the interim position of the service during the introduction of new documentation and the absence, on the day of inspection, of the Registered Manager. The service has addressed all recommendations.

Health profiles are in place for all the young people to address their needs and review their progress.

Individual risk assessments relating to the prevention of bullying and unauthorised absence are now in place for each young person.

All the staff team have received training on the value of key working and planning to maximise good outcomes for the young people. The use of a template ensures that staff effectively record all essential information.

All the new documentation has now been completed for each young person including care plans in the new format. The Registered Manager assisted the key workers in this task to ensure consistency and quality.

Pathway Plans are in place for all the young people post 16 years. The plans form the basis of the home's plan and addresses the targets, goals and strategies to support good outcomes in developing independence.

Six staff hold appropriate child care qualifications and three are working towards these.

Staff personal development plans are now routinely updated is updated.

The arrangements for unannounced monthly visits have been improved.

The Registered Manager submits a report to senior managers bi-monthly. The organisation has started to review the capture of information to ensure that quality data further supports each young person's progress and achievements.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The provision of food and drink within the home is good and meal times are a social experience that staff and young people share. Meals served are mostly recorded, but the records do not always confirm any alternatives offered on each day. The young people say that they enjoy the meals provided, and have sufficient for their needs.

Health care plans are in place and address the holistic needs of the young people, through relevant screening and health promotion. Some health records are kept are in both imperial and metric measures, creating confusion when trying to interpret. Targets and goals are identified and reassessed; progress reports being taken to the young person's reviews. Opportunities are offered to each young person to engage in healthy lifestyles and choices. Staff are empathetic to the frequently changing emotional needs of the young people and the manner in which this distress may show.

There is a low usage of medication within the home. Records show that procedures are followed and safe practice mostly ensues. There is no risk assessment written for self administration of medication. Monthly monitoring takes place through regulatory reports.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

There are no concerns from the young people in relation to staff and the management of their privacy. They are encouraged to maintain contact with family and friends if appropriate. Staff are aware of confidentiality and the sharing of sensitive information.

There have been three complaints recorded since last inspection. The Registered Manager always provides feedback to the young person with another member of staff present. The young people confirm that they know how to make a complaint.

During an absence of the Registered Manager a situation arose where the safeguarding policy and procedures were not followed in line with the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB). Upon return the Registered Manager initiated a referral to a positive conclusion. The Registered Manager has since instigated whole team training with LSCB and is reviewing policy and procedures, with the Registered Person, to ensure the correct procedures are followed.

Bullying is not tolerated within the home. Staff are alert to any potential difficulties and provide strong support. The effect is that tolerance is overt, tangible and demonstrated by the young people.

Procedures are followed if young people are absent without authority and placing authorities are alerted immediately. For some young people, who are developing a greater maturity, their absence from the home is authorised. A good level of contact is maintained to ensure their safety.

The Registered Manager informs placing social workers and placing authorities immediately of all incidents, however Ofsted has not always received notifications which must be done without delay.

The young people know what is acceptable behaviour within the home. The response by staff is consistent. Physical intervention is only used to ensure the safety of a young person or the prevention of significant damage to property. Record keeping is vigorous and monitored by the regulatory reports. Staff demonstrate significant experience and consistency in the management of behaviour and the young people are developing strategies to address their anger.

Staff are aware of health and safety within the home and protect young people appropriately.

Risk assessments are in place for the home, activities and personal risks associated with each young person.

The management of fire prevention is through checks and annual contracts. All young people new to the home have the principles explained to them and an early opportunity to be involved in a fire drill. New staff are advised during their induction. It is not easy to track attendees at each drill to determine if all staff and young people have a recent experience of evacuation during a drill.

Recruitment files are maintained systematically and confirm good practice in all areas of recruitment.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

There is strong support for the individuality of young people. Their needs are under constant assessment and support strategies are in place. Key working is planned to take place at least monthly. These sessions, flexible when appropriate, are recorded and aim to reinforce the targets and goals of the care plan.

Arrangements for independent visitors are discussed in reviews in consultation with the young people.

At present there are no young people who are practicing their faith, but staff actively support and assist them to learn about their culture and heritage.

The young people are engaged in education or training and staff ensure that their attendance is consistent. There is close liaison between all the educational services and the home.

There are a wide range of activities offered. Sporting activities are not linked to sanctions as the Registered Manager is keen for all the young people to experience physical exercise being aware of the therapeutic benefits.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Care plans are in place for all young people. These address their holistic needs and evidence the review of targets and goals. All the young people are supported by a key worker who is an experienced member of staff. Care plans are monitored through the regulatory monthly reports.

Reviews are carried out to time and records confirm outcomes. Young people are consulted before and after the review meeting. The independent reviewing officer speaks with the young person prior to the meeting and most young people attend.

Contact arrangements are planned and staff are aware of the value for each young person. They are experienced to know that contact may cause changes in behaviour and are diligent in recording, so that support systems are put in place. Some contact is supervised and always recorded.

The young people have a voice and are involved in their care planning. The young people attend house meetings, are consulted about their plan of care, sign records kept and are verbal and comfortable making their thoughts known.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

All the young people who are over 16 years have Pathway Plans from the placing authorities; the home writes their own to monitor progress and achievement. All the young people admitted to the home are encouraged to acquire independence skills. These are recorded on file and contribute to their planning meeting. Staff plan and support development of skills and the young people are aware of the plans in place for them.

The home has some large rooms offering the young people plenty of space. Single bedrooms are assigned so that the genders are separate and rooms are personalised. The dining room offers a homely and social experience for meals for both young people and staff. There are areas for quiet relaxation, games, television and computers.

Externally the rear, walled garden can be used for outdoor play and the home is located within easy reach of public transport, shops and leisure activities.

Any damage is repaired quickly and the young people are involved in reparation where appropriate.

The young people comment that they like the home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Staff demonstrate an awareness and commitment to support difference within the home and observation confirms that the young people display a high level of tolerance and understanding within their daily lives.

The Statement of Purpose is in order and provides current information about the service that the home provides and is accessible to placing authorities.

The staff team is experienced with six qualified in child care and three working towards completion. Each shift has staff that are first aid qualified. On call arrangements are good.

The home has a full complement of staff now that new staff have been recruited. The young people know their key worker, and staff are very professional.

The training records are not accurate and do not include full details of recent training.

Arrangements for the monthly unannounced monitoring visits are now established.

The Regulation reports from the Registered Manager are submitted bi-monthly to senior staff. A new format is being developed.

All the case files are stored securely and are well organised. There is evidence that young people have access to their files with their key worker.

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
10	provide training in food hygiene to all staff who prepare food within the home Regulation 27 (4) (a)	1 September 2009
17	provide all staff with training in safeguarding to ensure competence in following the home's policy and procedure Regulation 27 (4) (a)	1 September 2009
20	notify without delay the relevant persons or agencies of the matters set out in Schedule 5 in particular to Ofsted Regulation 30 (1)	31 July 2009

Recommendations

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

- ensure that all persons involved in a fire drill are recorded NMS 26
- ensure that health records are consistently recorded in either metric or imperial measures NMS 12

- ensure that the training matrix is kept updated NMS 31
- ensure that all self medication is risk assessed NMS 13
- ensure that all meals taken by the young people are recorded NMS 10