

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Mark Blesky
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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

This service is a children's home for up to three young people aged between 10 and 17 years old. The home is in a residential street in a seaside town within easy reach of local shops, amenities, cinema, beach and public transport. The home has the appearance of a large family home and it is decorated and furnished to reflect this.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

At this unannounced full inspection, all key standards were inspected. This is a good service in most respects with some outstanding features. Young people benefit from well-managed and caring staff members. Planning and care practices are insightful and extremely thorough which provide very good support for young people.

Staff and young people enjoy beneficial and respectful relationships and this aspect of the home enhances care and control within the home. Staff provide good support and advocacy for the young people and promote self-expression and choice. The leadership in this home is strong and staff and young people benefit from an experienced and insightful manager.

Improvements since the last inspection

No actions or recommendations were made at the last inspection in March 2010.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people are provided with healthy and nutritious meals. All young people are encouraged to express their choices and plan the menu. Staff meet with the young people to support them in making healthy choices and trying new foods and meals. All staff receive healthy living training that provides them with an understanding of nutrition and health. Young people say that the meals are well prepared and a wide range of choices are available.

All young people are provided with dedicated healthcare planning. Well-managed plans ensure that young people are provided with routine core services such as GP, dentist and optician as well as specific healthcare interventions. Healthcare support

promotes individual choice and diversity and each child has a comprehensive plan. All staff receive healthcare training to ensure that they are able to promote healthy lifestyles. When young people need specific support with less common healthcare support, training is provided to the staff members.

All staff undertake medication handling instruction and training in medicine administration. Medication is kept securely and all administrations are rigorously documented. Any request from a young person wishing to self-administer is risk assessed to ensure safe care practices for the young person and others in the home.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Young people say that staff members observe their wishes for privacy and show them respect. Staff do not enter young people's rooms without knocking and awaiting invitation. Staff enable young people to telephone their friends and family in private and provide them with space to meet family members in private. Staff are particularly sensitive regarding privacy at times when young people maybe washing and dressing.

The home has a detailed and comprehensive complaints policy which is well managed and well presented. Young people are guided through using this policy and supported by staff members where appropriate. All complaints are taken seriously and the complainant is kept informed of the progress of any complaint until its conclusion. Complaints are uncommon in this home and young people say that matters are resolved through discussion and formal complaints are rarely necessary. Complaints records are extremely detailed and well managed.

Young people are safeguarded by effective and well-organised safeguarding procedures. All staff receive mandatory training in this area to ensure that they are knowledgeable of procedures and practice. The home uses a dedicated safeguarding coordinator, independent to the home, who is extremely experienced in these matters.

To ensure that young people are protected from bullying the home maintains an effective anti-bullying procedure. This procedure acts proactively to assess the likelihood of bullying and further supports any young person that feels bullied or persecuted. Bullying is uncommon in this home and young people say that staff are prompt to act if any bullying is suspected.

Young people do not commonly go absent without permission from this home, but when this occurs staff respond in a clear and precise manner. Staff act promptly to search, report and recover any young person that is missing. In addition to the staff in the home, there is an out-of-hours service and on-call service to ensure support is directed to safeguard the missing person. It was also noted that an independent

visitor is allocated in any case of absence when risk is greater or more uncharacteristic. Support is therefore extremely well planned in this area.

When young people behave in a less positive manner, they are supported towards improved behaviour by clear and insightful guidance. Sanctions may be used, but these are used sparingly and most improvement in behaviour stems from discussion and negotiation. Young people say that sanctions are fair and clear to them, and they say that they are only used as a last resort.

The home maintains effective and well-planned fire risk and health and safety assessments. All activities that involve risk are assessed to ensure that young people are protected. Risk assessments are of very high quality and reflect insightful and considered practices. Risk assessment reflects both the situational risk and concern and also seeks to interpret this risk through consideration of the young person's behaviour. Risk assessment provides a rich source of evidence of understanding of diversity and individuality.

All visitors to the home are rigorously monitored and all visitors must identify themselves before they enter the home. No visitor is allowed unsupervised access to the young people or home.

All staff are employed through a dedicated recruitment and employment human resource team. All interviews include the manager from the home and checking of references and past employment is robust and well managed.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All young people benefit from regular one-to-one key working. Staff meet with the young person and consider both their specific day-to-day progress as well as the broader and more individual aims of their care plan.

Key working provides a good opportunity for staff members to raise matters with the young person and discuss any important issues. Young people say that key working supports them and they enjoy having a staff member that is able to listen to them and spend one-to-one time with them. Key working is well organised and staff plan each session to ensure that they have goals and a focus for each session.

All young people are supported in their education and all young people have dedicated education assessments. Staff support young people with their learning and liaise with the education provider. Young people are supported with homework and also extra curricular activities. Staff attend all open evenings and parental consultation days.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Care plans are of extremely high quality. All plans detail comprehensive and specific plans for the young people. Matters of individuality and difference are clear in planning and both the day-to-day and broader aims of the care plan are explicit. Care plans are broken down into 24 hour management plans and these documents detail not only the planning outcomes, but issues of behaviour and individuality that may impact on the planning outcomes. These plans therefore provide considered insight in the care planning process.

Reviews also reflect this adherence to detail and each young person has an up-to-date statutory review. Before a review, each young person is provided with a review report that details his or her current progress and elements of the day-to-day care. These documents are extremely detailed and provide valuable and essential information to the review meeting. It was noted that one young person awaited the review minutes from their placing authority and the home were unable to evidence that this has been actively pursued.

All young people are supported to achieve and maintain contact with their friends and family. Staff promote this contact and provide both practical support with transport as well as emotional support before and after contact. When contact is supervised staff take notes of the progress of the contact and this information supports discussion at contact reviews.

When young people move in or out of the home the staff members follow clear guidance on ensuring this is supported appropriately. All young people new to the home are first invited to take a meal with the staff and young people. Prospective residents are able to express choices before they move in and they are all given a copy of the young people's handbook. Young people already living in the home are also consulted and their opinions canvassed.

Emergencies placements are uncommon in this home, however in all cases of emergency; the Registered Manager ensures appropriate review takes place along with consideration of the impact upon the resident group.

All young people are consulted regarding the running of the home and regular house meetings take place. House meetings provide a good opportunity for young people to speak collectively on matters that concern them all. Young people say that they are able to speak as a group and can suggest changes or share ideas regarding the operation of the home. All meetings are minuted and provide evidence of young people being supported to express themselves and influence the management of the home.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people are supported to gain skills for independency and moving on. All young people have dedicated independency plans to enable them to identify goals and develop life skills. Plans are supported by staff, typically the key worker, who will identify areas of development and plan activities and tasks to address this.

Young people are supported with planning, shopping, and cooking meals, registering with recruitment agencies and other important tasks. Plans are detailed, but it was noted that documents are incomplete in regarding detailing staff roles and this may leave planning rather muddled.

The home is well maintained in all areas and staff and the young people clearly work very hard to maintain this pleasant home. Furnishings and decoration are of high quality and the home is well managed. Prompt action is taken when damage or repair is identified.

The home has been decorated and maintained in keeping with a large family home and young people have appropriate facilities to meet the aims of their care plan. Young people say that this is a nice place to live and it feels like home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Young people are provided with good opportunities to express their individuality. This is evidenced in care planning, review and day-to-day support from the staff members. Staff members encourage and promote young people to express their individual views, formally through dedicated meetings and informally.

The home has a written Statement of Purpose and children's guide which accurately describe what the home sets out to do for children accommodated, and the manner in which care is provided. The Statement of Purpose was last reviewed in March 2010 and reflects the current staff group and services provided by the home. Staff are sufficiently experienced and knowledgeable to provide care for the young people.

All staff are well supported by the line management structure and they know to whom they are accountable and the expectations of their role. It was noted that two staff have completed their National Vocational Qualification in caring for children and young people level three out of the four staff employed which is lower than 80 per cent expected by the national minimum standards.

Staff are supported by an on-call service and out-of-hours support if an urgent situation arises and the home is always staffed both day and night. Young people are consulted regarding staff members on duty and all young people are able to use the staff rota to know who will be coming on shift.

All staff receive mandatory and refresher training in core areas of practice. More individual or specialised training is arranged for staff subject to identified needs.

Regulation 33 and regulation 34 inspections are undertaken to ensure the home is operating in accordance with the regulations and its Statement of Purpose. Following regulation 33 inspections, an action plan is produced for the manager if any shortfalls in service or performance are identified. Regulation 34 inspections carried out by the manager also identify action needed and detail the action taken to address any shortfall.

Each child has a permanent private and secure record of their history and progress which is up to date, well managed and kept securely.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the statutory reviews and reviews of placement plans are recorded on the child's file, and individuals responsible for pursuing actions at the home arising from reviews are clearly identified (National Minimum Standards 3.4)
- ensure that there is a comprehensive plan for young people preparing to leave care and to move into independent or semi-independent living. (National Minimum Standards 6.1)