

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 children's home can accommodate up to three young people, aged between 12 and under 18 years. The home is in a residential area near a seaside town, with amenities for the young people close by.

Summary

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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 satisfactory home with some good and outstanding features. This home provides good standards of care across a range of outcome groups and young people are well supported and looked after.

Leadership is strong in this home and the close relationships between the staff and young people are clearly evident and beneficial.

Formal and comprehensive independency planning is now in place and emerging plans are insightful and effective. It was noted that an administration error had left a rather confused assessment, but it is also acknowledged that this was an exception to otherwise, well managed systems and practices.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were no recommendations or actions made at the last random inspection in January 2010.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people benefit from a range of healthy and nutritious meals. Staff regularly meet with the young people to ensure that they have choice and they are able to plan menus. Young people are provided with the opportunity to help staff prepare and cook meals. All staff benefit from healthily living training provided by the home and this enables them to consult and advise young people on healthy eating.

Planning and support for young people's health is generally very well managed. All young people are supported by individual health care plans and regular assessment and review. Each young person has an additional health profile that provides the salient elements of the young person's health needs. Core health care services that

include the GP, dentist, and optician are promptly set up for all young people and young people regularly attend for routine examinations.

It was noted that an error had taken place in one young person's referral, assessment, and health plan. This error was noted by senior staff, but appropriate action had not been effectively taken to address it. Although this error was significant, it had not adversely impacted on the healthcare outcomes for the young person concerned. It is also acknowledged that this matter is an error in planning and organisation, rather than healthcare provision and it will therefore be addressed in the organisation outcomes in this report.

Medication and administration is well managed and young people are supported effectively by robust medication handling by staff. Well managed medication and administration records are maintained and the manager ensures oversight of all matters relating to medication.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff are aware of the need to be sensitive to young people's privacy and staff knock on bedroom doors and await invitation before entering. Staff understand the need to be particularly sensitive regarding washing dressing and personal care.

Young people are well supported with any complaints or representations that they may wish to make. Complaints are infrequent in this home and young people say that staff will promptly deal with any matter that concerns them. When complaints are made detailed and effective management ensures that matters are resolved and young people are consulted throughout the complaint process.

Robust safeguarding procedures are maintained and the guidance for all staff mirrors the safeguarding procedures of the local authority. All staff have mandatory training in safeguarding and the signs and systems of abuse. Staff are competent in this area and the home also maintains an out of hours and on call service to support staff in more urgent situations. Young people are protected from bullying by an established and proactive anti-bullying procedure. The procedure and guidance for staff includes training and raising awareness of bullying and victimisation. Any cases of bullying are recorded separately from the more minor day-to-day squabbles to ensure appropriate and effective action is planned and deployed.

When young people behave in a less positive manner, staff use a range of techniques to encourage good behaviour. Actions taken by staff are not overly punitive and staff encourage discussion and promote self-control where appropriate. Young people clearly benefit from this consultation and say that they feel staff are fair and supportive. When sanctions are used, the staff use a range of approved and agreed sanctions that are proportionate and related to the behaviour.

Young people are protected by comprehensive and well managed risk assessments.

All young people have risk assessments that are related to their own individual and diverse needs. Risk assessment is insightful and well thought out. It is related to both the behavioural and specific need of the young person and related to a context of situations and environmental considerations. This effective assessment allows staff to be proactive on occasions and in the situations that present the greatest risk to the young people.

The home maintains effective fire safety and health and safety risk assessment and planning. The fire building plan is regularly reviewed and the home carries out appropriate fire evacuation drills and test. All staff are interviewed and recruited with well managed and effective employment panels.

All necessary references and statutory checks are carried out to ensure employment history and suitability is assessed. To ensure young people are kept safe from visitors, all visitors to the home must identify themselves and sign in and out of the building. No visitor is allowed unsupervised access to the young people or the building.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people are provided with effective one-to-one support with their individual and diverse needs. Each young person has a named key worker who meets regularly with the young person in one-to-one key working sessions. These sessions provide a good opportunity for the young person and staff member to discuss, both the broad aims of the care plan, and the more individual and diverse needs of their day-to-day care.

Young people are supported with their education and studies by well planned educational programmes. The Registered Manager ensures that all young people have appropriate educational plans, which are based around their personal educational plans. Young people are supported with homework and after school activities and staff members attend open evenings and parental consultation meetings.

It was noted that some educational reports were still outstanding for one young person and the manager contacted the school during the inspection. Although it is accepted that gathering reports can be delayed, there was limited evidence that the chasing of reports had been rigorous.

All young people have the opportunity to engage in hobbies and clubs and the manager will support and finance any reasonable request. Young people are also able to benefit from structured activities planned and organised by the home and these included trips to the cinema, bowling and a range of similar activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Young people benefit from excellent support with their care plans and placement plans. Each young person has a very detailed and comprehensive placement plan. Young people's individual and more diverse needs are further addressed by 24 hour management plans. These plans provide extensive, detailed information regarding the day-to-day needs of the young person.

These plans are very thoroughly prepared and demonstrate clear insights into the young person's day-to-day and personal needs. Plans demonstrate methods of support based on young people's temperament, known behaviours, and wishes. These plans provided great levels of support.

Statutory reviews are maintained for all young people and review reports written by the home for each young person reflect the same level of detail and care as the care plans. Review reports are extremely detailed and the report maps the need of the young person against the every child matters outcomes. The reviewing of care plans, similar to the care planning, is very well supported.

Young people are encouraged to achieve and maintain contact with friends and family. All staff receive training and guidance on the importance of promoting contact and young people are well supported in this area. When contact is supervised by staff, staff collate detailed reports of the contact session. Records of sessions provide both the details and observation along with some useful analyses of the progress of the session.

A private telephone is provided for young people and staff will supply writing and postage material for young people to write to friends and family.

Typically all new placements of young people are planned, and young people are consulted accordingly. However, the home may take young people in an emergency. In cases of emergency appropriate review is carried out along with consultation with the staff and existing young people. All non emergency moves from the home are well planned. Staff will provide support both, at the time of the move and subsequently, in accordance with agreement for the young person or placing authority.

Children's meetings are also regularly held to provide a more formal opportunity for young people to raise collective views about the home and their care. Children's meetings are recorded and each meeting has an agenda. Young people say that meetings with the staff offer a chance to speak as a group about things that affect them.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Pathway planning and preparation for independence has commenced for all young people. Although plans are in their early stages and are under development, planning is comprehensive and detailed. Plans are being developed to ensure that all young people are equipped with the necessary skills to look after themselves and become independent. Plans are appropriately developed to meet the more diverse and individual needs of the young people and the manager of the home demonstrated clear insight into the importance of independence planning.

All young people are encouraged to choose their own clothes and personal items. Staff will typically go out with young people to provide support for purchasing appropriate clothing and other items. Staff understand the importance of promoting individuality and encourage young people to express themselves through their choices of personal items.

The home is generally very well maintained and provides a homely and pleasant environment for all the young people. Decoration and furnishings have been provided thoughtfully and young people are consulted regarding the more general decoration and presentation of the home.

Maintenance is generally well planned and essential repairs are promptly undertaken. Young people are encouraged to decorate their own rooms and the manager will support any reasonable request for decoration or furnishings. The home is well managed and provides appropriate provisions for the young people accommodated. It was however noted that the kitchen area was not clean in some areas and it appeared that cleaning schedules had not been effective. It was not evident that appropriate care had been taken in this one area.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Young people are treated as individuals and encouraged to express their diverse needs. Key documentation such as care plans and placement plans provide a rich source of evidence that young people are treated as individuals encouraged to express themselves.

The home has a written Statement of Purpose and a 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 references key staff members and the services which are provided. The children's guide is made available to all young people upon admission and made available to placing social workers. The Statement of Purpose is reviewed regularly to ensure that it is adapted where necessary to meet the individual and diverse needs of the young people.

All staff benefit from regular supervision and support. Supervision allows staff the opportunity to express their views and be supervised in both their practice and their development. Supervision sessions address key topics of practice, training, and evaluation. Staff members are competent to perform in their roles and sufficiently experienced to meet the needs of the young people within the home. It was noted that four staff out of six had achieved the National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People. The home has therefore not managed to achieve 80% of qualified staff in accordance with the national minimum standards.

Adequate numbers of staff are available in the home both day and night and the home has an established on call and out of hours service to provide support in more urgent situations.

All staff receive both core training regarding key elements of their role. In addition, staff benefit from formal training assessments to ensure that they have more specific training to meet the needs of young people. Staff also have regular refresher training to ensure that they are up to date with the most recent programmes.

Comprehensive reports are prepared by an independent staff member that visits the home each month in accordance with Regulation 33 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001. These are very well written and give a detailed overview of the home's performance. In addition, the manager carries out formal monitoring of the home's performance against the Statement of Purpose. These reports are also very comprehensive and provide a detailed summary of the home's performance and any action that is subsequently taken to address any area of shortfall.

The manager has the appropriate experience and qualifications to manage this home and provides strong leadership to the staff.

Each young person is well supported in their placement by generally well maintained and detailed personal files. Appropriate information is kept and files are in the main, clear, and concise providing both historic and current information essential to their care. It was noted that in one case, a young person's file had wrongly assessed their ability and this miss-information had not been appropriately addressed. This error is significant; however, it is not apparent that this matter has impacted on the current outcomes for this young person.

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
35	obtain the information specified in Schedule 3 in respect of each child, in particular details of any health examination or developmental test conducted with respect to the child at or in connection with his school. Details of any immunisation, allergy, or medical examination of the child and of any medical or dental need or treatment of the child. (Regulation 28.1, Schedule 3)	31/10/2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure 80% of staff are qualified to National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People or equivalent (National Minimum Standards 29.5)
- ensure that each child's file contains relevant documents, including any record of educational history and any statement of special educational needs and that staff are familiar with the educational histories and needs of the children in the home (National Minimum Standards 14.2)
- ensure that the home is kept clean. (National Minimum Standards 24.3)