

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Mark Blesky
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Date of last inspection	2 February 2010
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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

This is a children's home registered to care for up to three children. The home is situated near a seaside town and is close to shops, local amenities and the beach. The home is in a residential area with little to distinguish the home from any other nearby property.

Summary

At this unannounced full inspection, all key standards were inspected.

This is a good service in most respects with some outstanding features. Young people are well cared for by supportive and dedicated staff. Young people are encouraged to eat well, maintain healthy lifestyles and are supported to act positively. Procedures and practices in the home typically reflect insightful and sensitive approaches to care and support. Care planning and placement planning is given high priority and young people are encouraged to make their views, wishes and feelings known. More effort needs to be undertaken by the home to develop the existing independency plans to ensure young people are equipped to look after themselves when they move on.

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 visit in February 2010, the Registered Manager was asked to review all aspects of documentation and practice relating to medication and healthcare. Improvement was requested to ensure young people are being supported when they return from being absent without permission. Risk assessments were identified during the last inspection as needing review and it was noted that independence planning was not being managed effectively. The minimum number of staff had not been trained to National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in caring for children and young people.

Healthcare and medication have now been reviewed and improvements have been made to both the recording and administration. The manager has made improvements to the support offered to young people that have been absent without permission and procedures have been updated. Interviews are now planned to engage a young person upon return to try and minimise further absences. Independence plans have been started, but these need further improvement as detailed in the report. Further training for staff has begun and sufficient numbers of staff are now achieving their National Vocational Qualification. The registered person has taken appropriate steps to improve the quality of the home for young people.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are given a range of healthy, nutritious meals and they are able to express their choices and preferences. Young people are able to help plan, shop and prepare meals with staff guidance. Formal independency plans also provide opportunities for young people to learn and understand healthy eating and living.

Each young person is supported by well managed healthcare planning, which includes details of historic, current, and future healthcare provisions. Young people are registered with core health services as soon as they become resident and these include the GP, dentist, and optician. Healthcare profiles are maintained for all the young people and these are detailed, insightful, and generally well maintained.

Medication and the administration of all drugs are well planned and robust. Medication is kept securely and it was noted that detailed and comprehensive guidance is provided for all staff to minimise and administration errors.

All staff receive training in first aid and the handling and administration of medication. High standards of healthcare support are evident in both the systems and practice and it is clear that healthcare is treated with great importance and care.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

All young people are enabled to have privacy and their personal information is treated confidentially. Young people are given space and time alone and all staff knock on bedroom doors before entering. Staff members are sensitive to times when young people maybe washing or dressing. A telephone is provided in order that young people are to make private calls and space is made available for unsupervised contact. It was however noted that staff had left some children's information on table tops in the office. This was confirmed by the staff as an oversight and remedied during the inspection.

Complaints are addressed promptly and thoroughly and staff ensure that young people are kept up to date with progress. Detailed guidance on young people's rights to complain and make representation are available to both young people and staff and practice in this area is well managed.

Safeguarding practice is generally robust and consistent and the home has a dedicated safeguarding co-ordinator. All staff receive mandatory training and refresher training to ensure that they are knowledgeable and competent to address safeguarding matters. A recent complaint had been addressed which contained safeguarding elements and the practice had become rather muddled in this area. At the start of the inspection only one male staff member was on shift with a female. Although this was for a relatively short period, this situation was not endorsed by the current risk assessment. It was understood that a planning oversight had resulted in this brief situation.

Young people are protected from bullying with proactive practice and well planned responses to counter any suspected incidents. Anti-bullying procedures are well written, insightful, and detailed and support zero tolerance approaches to bullying from any young person. Absence without permission has been infrequent and staff respond positively to discourage young people leaving the home in this manner. When young people go absent, the staff have planned responses to minimise risk and procedures to search, report and recover the young person. The home is supported by both an on call system and extra staff cover is available.

When young people behave in a negative manner the staff use planned and approved sanctions and behaviour control. All staff are trained in physical intervention and attempt to use

de-escalation techniques. When young people are sanctioned, the staff use the agreed sanctions and the manager monitors all aspects of behaviour management.

The home is maintained to ensure that health and safety and fire safety measures are in place and all staff receive training in health and safety awareness. Formal fire safety risk assessment has been undertaken and this is reviewed periodically, subject to assessment. Visitors to the home are monitored and must identify themselves and sign in and out. No visitor is allowed unsupervised access to the building or young people. All staff recruitment and employment is planned by well managed systems. An experienced interview panel ensures that statutory checks and safeguards are in place for any new staff member.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people receive a high level of individual support, typically through day to day contact, and more formally through regular key working sessions. Records demonstrate that a range of support is given to young people and both the broad aims and more specific aims of the care planning are addressed. A particular focus is to consider each young person's individual and diverse needs. This was particularly evident in managing young people's day to day needs. Standards of key working are generally high. It however noted that some files demonstrated inconsistency, lacked clear tasks, and aims of the key working session with young person. All young people are supported with their education and staff, typically the key worker, provide liaison between home and school. Parental consultation evenings and open days are supported by the home and young people receive help and support with homework and extra curricular activities.

Young people are encouraged to identify personal hobbies and interests and staff support and provide transport or funding for this to take place. In addition to personal hobbies, young people are also taken on group structured activities and they are able to choose these through consultation with staff.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Care planning and support for local authority planning is of a very good standard in this home. Each young person's care plan informs the placement planning and day to day care goals for each young person. Placement planning is very detailed and comprehensive, planning is insightful and sensitive to the diverse and individual needs of each young person. Planning demonstrates a thoughtful and practical approach to achieving aims and goals and much care has been taken to produce these impressive documents. When placing authorities has not supplied necessary care planning information, the home actively chases this and monitors progress of requests.

Reviews and care planning development has been given the same high priority and review reports are produced for all young people prior to their statutory review. These are detailed, comprehensive, and very informative providing an accurate picture for the review and planning process.

Contact is promoted for all young people and the home demonstrates the importance placed in contact with detailed procedures and good practice. All young people are provided with both practical support such as transport and also emotional support and care. Young people are

provided with opportunities to discuss contact in key working and day to day discussions with staff. The contact wishes for young people can also be articulated by them in the formal review report presented to the placing authority.

Young people's meetings are held regularly in the home and each young person is given the opportunity to voice their opinion and make representation. An agenda is maintained and young people are able to discuss topics before the meeting amongst themselves or with staff members. All meetings are recorded and demonstrate an effective and appropriate forum for young people to communicate their views.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Independence and pathway planning commences for all young people when they become resident in the home. Life skills support and preparation for adulthood is more formally addressed when young people have reached 14 years of age. Assessment is then undertaken to consider current skills and the development of new skills for independence. Although assessment is being undertaken, current planning and development of independence programmes is somewhat vague. It is unclear if goals are being met and what further development is being undertaken. Young people are supported to buy their own clothes and other personal items. Staff will advise and assist young people where appropriate. Staff also allow greater independence in this area in accordance with pathway plans where possible. The home is very well maintained. It is clean, tidy, and pleasantly presented, decoration has been thoughtfully planned, and each young person's bedroom reflects personal choice and individuality. Furnishings and equipment in the home are of good quality and it is clear that the staff members work hard to maintain this pleasant home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The home maintains and regularly reviews the Statement of Purpose and children's guide, which details the provisions for the young people and services available. Staff are well managed and understand their roles and responsibilities. An on call system is available, along with an out of hours support service. There are eight staff in the home and six of these staff are trained to National Vocational Qualification at level 3 or an equivalent in caring for children and young people. All staff receive regular supervision in accordance with the national minimum standards. Team meetings are held regularly and these are recorded with an agenda. Meetings include regular discussion of progress in the home and detailed discussion of each young person's development. Matters of diversity and more individual needs are discussed during these meetings. These meetings are well managed and evidence the support for staff and the importance placed in care planning for all the young people. All staff undertake mandatory core training and refresher training and further training is provided for more specialised care provision. Each staff member has a training profile and regular appraisal of his or her training and performance.

Regulation 33 monitoring visits are carried by an independent staff member and these provide a very detailed and comprehensive picture of the home. Following the regulation 33 visit, an action plan is agreed to address any areas of shortfall or elements identified for improvement. The manager monitors and signs the home's records at least once a month, to identify any patterns or issues requiring action. Action is taken to improve or adjust provisions where

necessary. Young people's files and personal records are well maintained, accurate, and up to date and these records are kept securely.

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
26	ensure that unnecessary risks to the health or safety of children accommodated in the home are identified and so far as possible eliminated (Regulation 23)	31 July 2010

Recommendations

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

- provide effective procedural guidelines on privacy and confidentiality covering access to case records by staff and others (NMS 9)
- ensure that safeguarding procedures setting out the procedure to be followed in the event of any allegation of abuse or neglect are effective and observed (NMS 16)
- ensure that all children are given individualised support in line with their needs and wishes (NMS 7)
- devise plans appropriate to the age and needs of each child, for the development of knowledge and skills needed by the child for future independent living (NMS 6)