

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Mark Blesky
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	25 November 2008
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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

This is an unannounced inspection. This is a satisfactory home with some good aspects. The home has maintained good standards of practice in many areas and demonstrates typically robust procedures and practice standards. The home is however experiencing some enduring challenging behaviour and appears to be finding it difficult to address this. The homes appearance and decoration has clearly suffered as a result and it appears that day to day behaviour management has also suffered. This is evidenced by confused and inconsistent behaviour sanctions, which have not proved effective to challenge the unacceptable behaviour. The manager and staff say that they are finding behaviour management very difficult at the moment. Systems are however emerging that will address this matter. External consultation and support from the parent company have been deployed. It is also acknowledged that despite the current difficulties staff have managed to provide very good support to education and good progress with school attendance.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection in November 2008, the manager was asked to improve healthcare monitoring and provide more qualified staff members. Healthcare systems show improvement although one file did need updating. The new healthcare monitoring systems had identified this issue and this was being addressed at the time of the inspection. All staff members are now enrolled on training programs for National Vocational Qualification at level three. 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 good.

Young people enjoy healthy and nutritious meals, which are well prepared. Young people have ample opportunity to choose their preferences of food and meals. Children's meeting and key working meetings provide opportunities for young people to express their choice and discuss food. Staff support young people with healthy options and all staff attend mandatory healthily living training to ensure they are able to promote healthy lifestyles. Young people have dedicated healthcare files and these files provide monitoring of the young people's healthcare needs. Routine and more specialist treatments are recorded and monitored along with historic and planned interventions. Each young person has an additional health profile, which offers a pen picture of his or her health assessment. Health files are generally well maintained and up to date, although it was noticed one document awaited review. Medication is appropriately stored and secure. Medication administration is generally well managed and records are kept of all dosages and dates of administration. It was noted in a few cases that the times of administration,

which are stated on the medication, were not always present in the records kept by the home. This made it difficult to clarify that times of administration were being strictly followed.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people's privacy and confidentiality is respected by staff that follow clear guidelines and procedures. All staff receive mandatory training on the rights of young people, equality and diversity with instruction regarding data protection. A telephone is available and young people are able to use this privately. Young people's files are kept locked away when not in use and staff sign them to confirm when these files have been accessed. Young people's rooms are not entered without knocking and awaiting invitation. A formal complaints system is maintained by the home and all young people and staff are able to use this. Complaints are uncommon in this home and the last complaint that was made detailed appropriate consultation with the young people and prompt resolution. Child protection procedures are in place and all staff receive specific mandatory training in this area. Procedures and policies reflect the local authority's safeguarding guidance. A child protection co-ordinator is provided by the company and this person is a qualified social worker. Young people are protected from bullying by the home's procedures and staff say that they are vigilant to the likelihood of such incidents. Bullying is a subject that is regularly discussed in key working sessions, children's meetings and also in staff meetings. Absconding by young people is responded to by well managed procedures. Any young person that goes missing is reported to the police and the placing social worker and recovery arrangements are made. All young people are safeguarded by a risk assessment, which is specifically related to absconding and their vulnerability. It is noted that staff are not recording the reasons why young people abscond. Procedures are in place to address any negative behaviour displayed by young people and clear guidelines on permissible sanctions are published. It was noted that the home was experiencing a period of sustained challenging behaviour and this had largely manifest as damage to the home. Strategies to address this had not been effective or consistent and this left a rather muddled approach to behaviour control. Both discussion and documentation failed to confirm appropriate systems of effective behaviour management. The home maintains the fire warning systems and equipment appropriately. All staff are trained in evacuation and fire safety procedures, all visitors are informed of fire safety upon entering the building. It was noted that there were some minor discrepancies in the health and safety assessment document, and this appeared to be a slight oversight, which is being addressed. All staff working in the home undergo robust checking and vetting procedures and this is overseen by an established recruitment team and interview panel. All visitors to the home must sign when they enter the building and no visitor is allowed unsupervised access to the home or young people.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people are individually supported by key working in addition to their day to day support from staff. During key working sessions staff meet regularly with each young person and discuss both the broad aims of their care plan as well as their day to day progress. This offers young people an opportunity to consider their needs and raise any matter that they wish on a one to one basis. In addition, all young people attend regular house meetings where they are able to raise collectively, issues about their care. All young people are supported in their education studies. Staff, typically the key worker, liaise with the school and attend open days and parental

consultation evenings. Staff promote education and provide help and support for homework and after school pursuits. All young people have dedicated education files, which are used to inform assessment and monitor progress. A report that specifically focuses on education is also prepared by the staff for each statutory review.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Care plans are provided for all young people by the relevant placing authority. The home develops a placement plan for all young people, which details both their day to day needs and the aims of the placement. Placement plans are detailed and comprehensive. In addition to this plan the home has designed a 24 hour management plan which further breaks down the care plan and provides a very useful profile of the young person's needs. Care planning is typically at a high standard. All young people are subject to a statutory review where their needs are discussed and the progress that has been made considered. Before a review, staff meet with the young people and discuss the review and the views of the young person. Key working sessions are used to discuss any concerns that young people have. A review report is then compiled by the key worker and the manager and this provides the attendees of the review with a picture of the young person's progress. This report also includes the views of the young person. All young people are supported in their contact with friends and family. Contact plans are agreed with the placing social worker and staff then provide support for these arrangements. Staff provide transport and emotional support through key working. Contact that is supervised is recorded by staff. Where contact is unsupervised, the staff members canvass the young person and the party who had contact to enquire how the contact session progressed. Young people are encouraged to contact friends and family and a private telephone is provided for this purpose. Procedures are provided to ensure young people are supported with moving in and moving on from the home. Young people moving in are invited to visit the home and typically invited to meet all the young people and staff and join everyone for a meal. A young person's guide is provided, which details the home and the facilities and rules of the home. Young people's rights are also detailed along with contact agencies and the complaints procedures. Children's meetings are held regularly where the young people and the staff agree the agenda. Young people can express individual and collective views about the home, the staff and any aspect of their care. All meetings are recorded and available for any young person to view.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Pathway plans are drawn up for all young people over 14 years old. Plans are being developed and needs assessment is already in place. Further work needs to be done in this area to ensure young people are appropriately helped to prepare for adulthood. Pathway plans are discussed with the young people's social workers and all plans are agreed at reviews. All young people are able to choose their own clothes and personal items. Young people are able to choose how they decorate their bedrooms and consulted appropriately regarding the decoration of the home. Staff promote young people's personal and diverse choices and encourage them to express choice through their individual wishes. The home is pleasantly decorated and furnished, however at the time of this inspection some challenging behaviour had resulted in substantial damage to walls and some fittings. The maintenance team were prompt to attend to this during the inspection under the supervision of the manager.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. 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 it accommodates. The statement of purpose is regularly reviewed to ensure it accurately reflects the services and manner in which care is provided in the home. All staff working in the home receive regular supervision and appraisal. There are six staff working in the home, two of whom have completed their National Vocational Qualification in caring for children and young people at level three. The remaining staff are completing this qualification currently. This home has not reached the required minimum of maintaining 80% of staff qualified to NVQ level three. There is out of hours service and additional staff can be contacted to provide guidance or extra support for the home. It was noted that the staff in the home would have benefited from extra support due to some ongoing challenging behaviour. Arrangements were made during the inspection to provide extra support for the existing staff. Mandatory training is provided for all staff in the core areas of providing care. Staff undertake additional training to enable them to support young people that present particular or more specialist needs. A non-staff member visits the home each month and carries out a Regulation 33 visit. These visits effectively check the operation of the home and identify any areas that need to be addressed. If these are identified an action plan is drawn up to address these specific concerns. In addition, the manager of the home monitors and signs the home's records at least once a month, to identify any patterns or issues requiring action. The home is financially sound with adequate day to day funds to meet the needs of the young people. The manager is completing his National Vocational Qualification at level four in caring for young people and management. Each young person has a personal file that is maintained in accordance with the National Minimum Standards, and which can, in compliance with legal requirements, be seen by the child, and by the child's parents as appropriate. All files are kept securely when not in use.

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
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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 health assessments are reviewed at suitable intervals to meet the needs of the young people and detail the time of medication administration in the home's records (National Minimum Standards 12, 13)
- ensure effective behaviour management is maintained. In addition the consequences of unacceptable behaviour are clear to staff and children and any measures applied are relevant to the incident, reasonable and carried out as contemporaneously as possible (National Minimum Standards 22)

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- ensure written records are made of the circumstances of all incidents of absconding, all action taken by staff, the circumstances of the child's return, any reasons given by the child for absconding, and any action taken in the light of those reasons (National Minimum Standards 19)
 - ensure risk assessments identifying hazards, estimating level of risk to health, safety or welfare from the hazards identified. Ensure identifying actions to be taken both to reduce risks to an acceptable level where practicable and to avoid unnecessary or unreasonable risks are carried out. These should be recorded in writing and regularly reviewed (National Minimum Standards 26)
 - ensure each young person, in accordance with their plan has a comprehensive plan for preparing to leave care and to move into independent or semi independent living. This plan should specify the support and assistance they will need to receive to enable a successful transition into adulthood, and which is implemented in practice (National Minimum Standards 6)
 - ensure that 80% of the staff group are trained to National Vocational Qualification in caring for children and young people level three (National Minimum Standards 29)