

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Mark Blesky
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	24 February 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

This is a children's home for three young people who are aged between 10 and under 18 years old. The house is a domestic style property in a sea front location close to the seaside and local town. It is close to the cinema, shops, with public transport nearby.

Summary

This is an unannounced key inspection. This is a satisfactory service with mostly good features. Young people are supported by caring and respectful staff members. Safeguarding is well managed and young people's safety is paramount in this home. Staff support young people, both through well managed and implemented care planning, but also on a one to one individual basis, through key working. Young people's diversity and individuality are a focus of staff attention and staff members support young people's, wishes and feelings. Healthcare is, in most areas detailed and well managed, but staff members do not ensure that these important records are accurate and up to date. Insufficient work is undertaken in preparing young people for independent living.

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 February 2009, the registered person was asked to improve the quality of physical intervention records and ensure that staff members were supported by appropriate first aid training. The registered person was also asked to improve the quality of recording of key working sessions and make more effort to ascertain why young people chose to go missing or absent without authority. A requirement was made for the registered person to develop independency planning to support young people to learn and develop independency and life skills. Although some work has been undertaken to meet this requirement and to improve independence planning, insufficient work has been completed to ensure effective planning is provided.

The physical intervention records key working records and procedures regarding missing and absent young people have been reviewed. Robust systems are now in place, which appropriately address these areas. Staff members receive the necessary first aid training and instruction to meet the needs of the young people. 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 satisfactory.

Young people are provided with good quality nutritious meals. Staff meet with the young people to ensure that they are able to express choice and plan menus. Young people say that staff will plan and prepare meals that they like and also explain to them the importance of healthy eating. It was noted that although menus detailed a range of good meals, the presentation of the menus was rather bland and uninspiring. The menu consisted of a poorly photocopied spreadsheet. Although it is evident that young people are encouraged to make choices regarding meals, staff are not recording this effectively.

All young people have detailed and dedicated health files. All health interventions, routine and specialist treatments are to be detailed within these documents. All young people have an additional health profile, which details the salient elements of the young people's health needs and support. It was noted that some appointments were present in some records, but not others. Also, immunisation information was absent for a young person that had been resident for a substantial period of time. There was limited evidence that health profiles are being effectively reviewed although review dates are being entered. The independent regulation 33 visitor has identified shortfalls in this area on three previous occasions and made these known to the home, however, the registered person has not taken appropriate action to address this.

Young people's medication is safely and securely stored in an appropriate cabinet. Robust administration records support well managed procedures. All staff have mandatory first aid training and the home is supported by a qualified nurse for liaison and advice.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people say that they are respected by staff and their confidentiality is protected. There are procedural guidelines for all staff to follow, which detail the importance of young people having time alone and their rights to privacy. Staff training underpins both the need to demonstrate respect and for staff to value young people's rights.

Complaints are well managed and each young person is supported in any complaint or representation. All young people are given specific guidance on their rights to complain and the home maintains a culture where young people's satisfaction is valued. Young people say that staff will take all complaints seriously and all young people are able to ask for an independent overview if they are unhappy with the manner in which the complaint is dealt with. It was noted that young people are not signing their complaints to acknowledge the complaint resolution.

Well managed safeguarding procedures are in place in this home. All staff members undertake mandatory training in this important area and refresher training is maintained on a rolling programme. The home's safeguarding procedures are detailed and comprehensive and mirror the local authority's procedures. Out of hours and on call support is available to this home and senior staff are able to support or give advice on any issue of safeguarding that emerges. It was noted that some initial confusion resulted where updated information had been misplaced, however this was a very minor matter and quickly resolved.

Detailed and comprehensive anti-bullying procedures are being implemented in this home and a separate and dedicated recording and monitoring system is in place. Any case of suspected bullying is highlighted by the new procedure and action to counter this is planned and implemented. It is noted that recording is somewhat sparse; however, it is acknowledged that this system has only recently been introduced and development continues. This practice is innovative and proactive and demonstrates commitment to counter bullying and discrimination.

Any young person that is absent without authority or missing is supported by robust missing person's procedures. Clear and detailed guidance determines the searching, reporting, and recovery of all young people. When young people return to the home staff will spend time with them and try and determine why they were absent. Counter measures are taken to address any patterns or trends that are established.

Staff use approved sanctions and counter measures to address negative behaviour. The staff in the home do not routinely use punitive measures to modify behaviour and attempt to meet with the young people and try and talk it through. If sanctions are used then these are recorded along with some analyses of the effectiveness of the sanction. Young people say that staff are generally fair when they use sanctions and understand why rules must be in place. It was noted that smoking in bedrooms was occurring regularly, but counter measures appeared largely ineffective.

Health and safety and fire risk assessment is well managed in this home. All young people are subject to risk assessment and these detail both environmental and situation risks along with the impact of known behaviours of the young person. The resulting risk assessments are therefore detailed, comprehensive, and very effective. All fire drills and evacuations are maintained along with routine environmental health and safety checks.

Staff records are detailed and well maintained with appropriate statutory reference and recruitment checks. A formal and experienced recruitment panel is provided for this home along with human resources support. It was noted that visitors to the home were not being effectively recorded and staff were not sufficiently vigilant in this area.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All young people are supported by one to one key working sessions. On these occasions, staff members meet with the young people and look at their day to day progress and the broader elements of their care plan. During these meetings the staff and young people discuss the more diverse and individual elements of the care planning and progress. This is the opportunity for young people discuss any matter that they wish and the staff keep records of these discussions. Staff also provide analysis of the session in the records and provide an overview of the young person's progress. Young people say that key working is valued and that they feel supported and listened to. It was noted that records of key working varied and whilst there are good examples of this support some previous examples were less structured with support less clear. Appropriate action has however already been taken to address this.

Young people's education is supported with detailed recording of educational progress and liaison with the schools. Each young person in the home has a dedicated and detailed education plan that is supported by local authority assessment. Staff, typically the young person's key worker, liaise with the school and attend open days and parental consultation meetings. All young people are encouraged to choose activities and hobbies outside of the home and consider community pursuits. Young people say that they are able to choose any reasonable activity and staff will support this with transport and accompany them if appropriate. Staff try to encourage young people to identify their own hobby or club, but will also plan group structured activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Care plans are well maintained and detailed. Each young person is supported by their placing authorities plan to determine and identify their needs. In addition to this, the home develops a 24 hour management plan. This plan takes the broader and more general needs of the young person and breaks them down into day to day tasks. These management plans are extremely

detailed and diverse. These plans look at the individual and personal needs of the young person and consider how behaviour may impact on their planning.

All young people receive statutory reviews conducted by their placing authority. Before the review, staff meet with the young person and consider how that young person will be supported during their review. The key worker writes a review report for presentation at the review. This is a very comprehensive document and provides all parties at the review a full picture of the young person's development. Young people are also asked to make comment within this document and share their views as to their progress and wishes.

Contact is supported and each young person has a contact plan. Staff in the home understand the importance of contact and support the young people by promoting this. The home will provide the planning and transport to achieve contact and if contact is supervised, detailed records of the progress are compiled. A private telephone is available for young people to contact their friends and family and the home will supply writing materials for young people if requested.

All young people moving in or out of the home are supported by staff and planning effective is undertaken. Young people are consulted when new admissions are being considered and their views are considered. In the event of an emergency placement, being made the home will conduct a review of the placement in accordance with the National Minimum Standards.

Meetings are arranged for the young people to raise matters or give collective or group views of the homes performance. This occasion provides both staff and the young people to raise matters. Staff will also use this meeting to gather views on events such as activities, holidays and meals. Although there were examples of planned and detailed meetings, there were examples of poorly structured and failed meetings. Planning and structure of these meetings should improve to make these meeting effective and worthwhile.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Independence and pathway planning is emerging, but currently this is not structured or effective. Plans to promote and make proper provision for the welfare of children accommodated are not yet developed. However, a major review of this important area has begun and planning is intended to produce comprehensive and structured independency programmes for all young people.

All young people are able to express choice and their diverse needs in a range of areas. The young people's bedrooms can largely be decorated and furnished to the wishes of the young people. All young people are able to choose their own clothes and personal items. Cosmetics and care products are supplied by the home and young people are able to accompany the staff to shop for items or where practicable able to purchase these items alone. Young people say that staff do try and give them choice and encourage them to decorate and personalise their bedrooms and the common areas.

The home is very well maintained in both common areas and the young people's bedrooms. The home is thoughtfully decorated and furnishings are well maintained. Furniture and fixtures are of good quality and it is clear that staff work hard to maintain this pleasant home. The

home resembles a large family accommodation and staff ensure that regular maintenance and repair is carried out expeditiously.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The home has a written Statement of Purpose, which accurately describes what the home sets out to do for young people accommodated, and the manner in which care is provided. The home also produces a detailed and comprehensive children's guide, which is regularly reviewed and updated.

All staff in the home are effectively managed, regular supervision takes place in accordance with the National Minimum Standards. Staff receive six monthly appraisal and all staff have their training reviewed. All staff have detailed job descriptions of their day to day duties and guidance for staff includes the expectations placed upon them. In the absence of the manager, senior staff are available to act in this capacity. The home also has an on call and out of hours service that can be implemented in more urgent circumstances. Staff meetings are held regularly and this provides the staff the opportunity to discuss issue regarding the home, their performance, and the young people. Additional meetings and will be planned if circumstances require this.

There are four staff in the home and all staff receive mandatory training in key areas of childcare. The staff in the home are in sufficient numbers and appropriately experienced to meet the needs of the young people. All staff are placed on national training programmes when they begin employment. Training programmes include the National Vocational Qualification in caring for children and young people level three and training provided by the children's workforce development council. Currently the home has not managed to achieve training for staff to the minimum of 80%.

Detailed and well planned in-house training opportunities are available for all staff. All staff members are required to undertake mandatory training in key areas of childcare and additional or supplementary training is planned to ensure the needs of the young people are well managed. Regulation 33 visits are made to the home by an independent staff member from the company. The following action plan details areas where shortfall or development is required. Regulation 33 reports are detailed, comprehensive, and very well compiled. It was noted that action, regarding health required by the regulation 33 report had not been effectively addressed. This has been addressed in an earlier section of this report.

In addition, the manager of the home undertakes checks and monitoring of the homes performance under regulation 34. The manager takes action to counter any concentration, trend, or pattern in recorded issues or events. Appropriate action is taken to ensure improvement in the safeguarding and promotion of the welfare of children of care in the home. There are adequate funds and finances to operate the home within the statement of purpose. Each child has a permanent private and secure record of their history and progress, which can be seen by the child and by the child's parents as appropriate.

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
12	ensure that the registered person promotes and protects the health of the children accommodated in the home (Regulation 20)	28 February 2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure menus and menu planning is effectively managed with evidence of young people's choices (National Minimum Standards 10.1)
- ensure visitors into the home are appropriately monitored and requested to sign in and out of the home (National Minimum Standards 27.11)
- ensure that children's meetings occur regularly and their opinions and views are ascertained on a regular and frequent basis (National Minimum Standards 8.1)
- ensure planning and preparation is in place to equip young people with the necessary skills for their future independence (National Minimum Standards 6.1)
- ensure that a minimum of 80% of staff have completed training in the National Vocational Qualification in caring for children and young people level three (National Minimum Standards 29.5)
- ensure appropriate action is taken by the registered person on recommendations or issues of concern raised in regulation 33 reports (National Minimum Standards 32.3)