

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 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 and shops, with public transport nearby.

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 outstanding features in making a positive contribution. Care planning and reviewing is exceptional. This home provides well managed and supportive care practices with comprehensive guidance and training for all staff. Young people are encouraged to develop self control and understand their rights and the rights of others. Behaviour control is well managed and reflects an ethos of building relationships and respect for one another.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last interim inspection of February 2010, the registered manager was asked to ensure menus and the choices made by the young people were evidenced. The manager has reviewed this area of practice and menu planning is effectively managed with evidence of young people's choices. Menus are well organised and presented.

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 are provided with wholesome and nutritious meals. Meals are chosen by the young people informally during their discussions with staff and more formally during children's meetings. All staff undertake mandatory healthy living training and this provides them with the knowledge to support young people to make healthy choices. Young people are encouraged to take an interest in food and meals, staff provide brightly coloured menus and plans to promote this.

All young people are supported in their healthcare by effective planning and

monitoring. All young people are registered with core healthcare services, which include the GP, dentist, and optician. Ongoing and other more specialist interventions are planned and supported by staff. Although health files were of a typically good standard in most areas, recent reviews had caused files to appear somewhat confused and unclear.

First aid and minor treatments are provided by staff members that have undertaken training in this area. All staff members also undertake medication handling training to ensure that they are competent to administer medication. Robust records are maintained of all treatments provided by staff. Young people say that they are looked after well by staff and feel supported by staff.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people's privacy is respected and staff are aware of the need to ensure young people's information is confidential. Staff are aware that they need to be particularly aware of privacy at times when young people are washing and dressing. Each young person has a key to their room and areas in the home where they are able to meet friends and family privately, where appropriate. A private telephone is available for all young people to use.

A well managed complaints procedure is in place in the home. All young people are supported to make representations and complaints about any matter that is of concern to them. Complaints are treated seriously and detailed and comprehensive recording captures the young person's views. Young people are kept informed of the complaint through to resolution and further appeal can be made if the young person is dissatisfied with the initial outcome.

Robust safeguarding procedures and guidance are in place to ensure that young people's welfare is effectively protected. All staff receive mandatory training in matters of safeguarding and child protection and regular refresher training is in place. The safeguarding coordinator is very experienced and provides advice and appropriate action if a matter of safeguarding emerges. In addition all staff are supported by out of hours and on call support for any urgent matters that arise.

Anti-bullying procedures are in place and staff receive training in this important area. Procedures and guidance seeks to both provide proactive measures to identify occasions when bullying may arise and also take counter measures when bullying has been evident. Young people are therefore supported by effective measures that help to protect them in this area.

When young people go missing from the home or become absent without permission the home deploys effective and comprehensive measures to support the young person. Procedures are in place to search for, report and return the young person to the home. When young people return staff try to ascertain the reason for the absence. If absence presents particular risks or is uncharacteristic, a formal interview

is planned with an independent visitor to consider risk and further support.

Young people are encouraged to behave in a positive manner by staff. Staff engage effectively with the young people through discussion and reinforcement of positive behaviour. Approved sanctions are used only as a last resort.

Robust health and safety and fire safety is maintained in the home and all staff undertake mandatory training in areas of safety. All staff carry out fire evacuation drills with the young people and regular monitoring and safety review is conducted. All young people have comprehensive risk assessments and these provide insightful and detailed consideration of risk. Assessments aim to consider risk relevant to situation and environmental factors as well as considering the impact of the young person's behaviour.

All visitors to the home must be identified and visitors must sign in and out of the building. No visitor is allowed unsupervised access to the young people or the home. All staff are employed through an established and experienced recruitment panel. All statutory checks and reference checks are conducted before a staff member commences work in the home.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people benefit from regular one to one support through key working. Key working provides young people with an opportunity to meet with a staff member in private. Young people are able to discuss both day to day matters as well there progress in the home.

Staff use this opportunity to discuss the young person's progress and raise any matters that would support their progress. Young people's individual and more diverse needs are discussed in these sessions. Records of key work sessions reflect individual behaviours and needs and how these impact on day to day care. Sessions are well organised and each session has a plan, to focus the session. All key working sessions are recorded and this provides information for statutory reviews of the young person's placement.

Young people are supported in their schools and educational studies. Staff members establish individual files and records for all young people and these provide effective monitoring. Diaries are kept of all contact with the particular education provider and regularly liaison takes place between the home and the school. Staff, typically the key worker, attends all open days and parental consolation evenings. Recording of discussions during consultation visits to the school are rather informal providing limited records. Young people are provided with staff support and facilities to complete homework and extra curricular studies.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Young people benefit from robust and well organised care planning. Care plans and placement plans are extremely comprehensive, detailed and provide a high standard of practice. Placement plans are further supported by 24 management plans produced by the home. These plans compliment placement planning and are effectively mapped to the Every Child Matters outcomes. Plans provide a rich source of information regarding the individual and diverse needs of the young people.

Reviews are conducted in accordance with the placing authority's statutory guidelines. Prior to the young person's review, staff meet with the young person to look at the progress that has been made in the placement. A review report is then prepared by the home to provide the review panel with an up to date and comprehensive picture of the young person. Review reports are extremely detailed and these documents demonstrate very effective insights into the young person's progress. Planning and review is very well maintained in this home.

Young people are supported to establish and maintain contact with their friends and family. Staff promote contact and all staff receive training on supporting young people with their contact arrangements. Staff provide both the financial and logistical support along with emotional support. When contact is supervised, staff complete contact reports, to detail the progress of the contact session. Records of these sessions are insightful and well maintained and provide useful information for the young person's placement review.

When young people are moving into the home, the staff ensure that the young people are consulted and included in the decision making process. Young people are introduced to the home and will stay for a meal and provided with the opportunity to meet young people and staff. In cases where an emergency placement is made, a review is carried out within 72 hours of the placement to ensure that the move is beneficial.

Young people's meetings are held regularly in the home and this provides the opportunity for all young people to express their collective and individual views. Young people's views and comments are discussed in these meetings. Young people are therefore supported to make decisions that may influence the operation of the home.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people are supported to learn skills for adulthood and independence. Due to the age of the young people formal pathway planning has not yet begun.

Staff work closely with the young people to help them learn new skills and develop

existing ones. Young people are therefore encouraged by the use of chores around the home. A reward programme is in place to encourage self care and hygiene and day to day praise is given to promote this. Records are being made of this support and these will provide useful prompts when formal pathway planning commences.

The home is well maintained throughout and it was noted during the inspection that significant refurbishment is underway. Decoration is of a typically high standard and staff work hard to present the establishment as homely. Furnishings and fixtures are of good quality and young people are encouraged to make choices of furnishings in the home through regular discussions.

Young people may decorate their bedrooms to their own tastes and any reasonable request is supported. Bedrooms evidence personal and individual decoration and young people express their diverse tastes through their decorations and choices.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Young people are provided with good opportunities to express their individuality and diversity. 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 through and their day to day care.

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 May 2010 and is regularly reviewed to reflect any changes to the services offered to the young people.

All staff receive formal supervision at a frequency and of a duration in accordance with the national minimum standards. Young people are supported by adequately experienced staff in the home of sufficient numbers to meet their needs. In addition to a line management, staff support is structured to cover absence and the home operates an on call system. In addition, an out of hours service is also available in times of any need for extra cover.

All staff undertake mandatory training in core areas of care. In addition, staff undertake refresher training and more specialist training to meet any specific needs that emerge. Training is well organised and is managed centrally to ensure all staff are competent in their roles and responsibilities. There are five staff in the home and four of these staff are qualified to National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in caring for children and young people.

The Registered Manager carries out monitoring of the homes performance in accordance with the Statement of Purpose. Action is taken by the manager to

address any area of shortfall in the homes performance.

Each young person is supported by a detailed and comprehensive personal file, which is kept secure and confidential by the staff.

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 each child has a clear written plan covering all aspects of their health needs (NMS 12.2)
- ensure that each child's file contains a copy of their Personal Education Plan (PEP) setting out a record of their educational achievements, needs and aspirations. Other relevant documents are kept on file. (NMS 14.2)