

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 home is a three storey town house in a seaside resort. It provides care for up to three young people. There are local amenities with the beach, parks and town within walking distance.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This is an unannounced full inspection. This is a good service in most respects with outstanding features in the outcome area of positive contribution. Young people's welfare is enhanced by the good relationships that exist between staff and young people. Young people are engaged through effective and beneficial relationships with staff. Young people are encouraged to eat healthily and take regular exercise so that they are able to develop healthy lifestyles. Young people are encouraged to develop their self esteem through taking appropriate responsibility for their own behaviour. Support is in place for young people to learn independence and life skills in preparation for moving on.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last interim inspection in February 2010, the Registered Manager was asked to ensure that effective procedures and practice were in place to address young people's absence without permission and behaviour management. In addition, the Registered Manager was asked to ensure that anti-bullying procedures were effectively deployed.

The Registered Manager has reviewed procedures that address unauthorised absence and countering negative behaviour. Current procedures reflect insightful and effective practice that has been maintained since the last inspection. Unauthorised absence is now addressed through effective searching, reporting, and recovery procedures. In addition, arrangements for consultation with an external visitor have been put into place. The visitor will now meet with young people returning from episodes away from the home to try and discourage further episodes. 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. They are encouraged to help plan, prepare, shop, and cook meals with staff support. Young people are able to choose their own meals and the menu for all meals is created by the them. All staff undertake mandatory training in healthy living and healthy eating to provide them with the knowledge to promote healthy lifestyles. Menus in the home are brightly decorated to ensure young people can see the type of food being presented and to encourage them to try new foods and meals.

All young people are supported in their healthcare by well-managed healthcare planning. Each young person is registered with the core services as soon as they move into the home. These include General Practitioner, dentist and optician as well as any specialist healthcare support identified. Young people are encouraged to have a say in their healthcare and consider choices of support and treatment where appropriate.

Dedicated and comprehensive healthcare files are carefully prepared for the young people and these provide historic, current, and future healthcare interventions. It was noted that there was some confusion over the wearing of spectacles for one young person and information was somewhat muddled in this area.

All staff undertake mandatory first aid training and training in the handling of medicines. Up-to-date and well-maintained records are kept of all medication admissions and safe and secure storage is provided for all medications. Medical consent is maintained for all young people to ensure that they are able to receive emergency treatment. Young people say that they are regularly supported in their healthcare and staff will remind them about daily tasks such as hygiene and looking after themselves.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people say that staff respect their privacy and give them time alone. All staff knock on bedroom doors before entering and await invitation. Staff are particularly sensitive around times of washing and dressing and young people have their own keys to their bedrooms. Private areas are available for young people to meet with friends and family. There is a phone, which young people can use privately.

Young people are supported to make representations or complaints and staff reinforce young people's rights. Any matter that causes dissatisfaction is treated seriously by staff and young people are assisted in formalising their views. All complaints are rigorously recorded and the young person is kept abreast of the

complaint through to resolution. If young people are unhappy with the outcome, external consultation is arranged to address this. Complaints are uncommon in this home.

Well managed and effective safeguarding procedures are in place and all staff undertake mandatory training. All staff are provided with detailed guidance to ensure that they are competent in this important area. A dedicated safeguarding coordinator is in place with many years of experience in safeguarding. In addition the home operates an on-call and out-of-hours service to support more urgent matters.

Young people are protected from bullying by dedicated anti-bullying procedures. Procedures provide a proactive element to encourage staff to look out for and identify suspected bullying. In addition, the procedures also provide support in the event of bullying in which both the bully and the victim are consulted.

When young people are absent from the home without permission or missing, the home's staff deploy effective procedures to search, report and recover the young person. A detailed and comprehensive risk assessment of young people's vulnerability when missing supports proportionate action. When a young person is returned to the home the staff meet with the young person to try and counter any repeat episodes.

To support young people towards positive behaviour, the home provides detailed guidance, procedures, and training for all staff. Non-punitive methods of behaviour control are favoured and are typically very effective. Staff members consider the more individual and diverse behaviours and the needs of the young people in modifying behaviour.

Staff will try and engage with young people and encourage self-control and discussion to promote positive behaviour. If this is unsuccessful, a range of approved sanctions can be used to modify behaviour. Behaviour control is effective and has been consistently maintained. It was noted that one young person was currently repaying for damage, but it was unclear to him when this repayment period ended. Robust health and safety and fire safety checks and assessments are in place.

The home is regularly inspected by staff to minimise risk and all young people are provided with comprehensive and insightful risk assessments. Regular fire evacuation drills are undertaken. Risk assessment provides both the situational factors of risk, as well as the impact of young people's behaviour. Risk assessments consider young people's difference and diversity and seek to consider the impact of these factors upon risk.

Prior to working in the home robust reference and recruitment checks are taken up. All new applicants are managed through an established recruitment panel and no staff members begin work without reference and statutory checks. All visitors to the home are strictly monitored and no visitor is allowed unsupervised access to the home.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Key working is maintained for all young people and this provides young people with one-to-one sessions with staff. Key working supports young people and presents an opportunity for young people to share their view and feelings. Staff engage with the young people and seek to discuss both their day to day care as well as the broader aims of their individual care plan.

Young people say that they value key working as this is special time for them as individuals, where they can express any views they wish. Key working is recorded by staff and staff plan and structure sessions to ensure that sessions are beneficial and productive. Sessions provide a rich source of evidence that young people's individual and more diverse needs are considered in key working and session planning.

Young people are supported with their education and training and staff ensure that they liaise with the education provider. Where appropriate, education assessments are carried out and the staff will support all young people with after-school and homework activities. A staff member, typically the key worker, attends all open evenings and parental consultation events and a record is kept of all educational events.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Care planning is extremely detailed and comprehensive. All young people have clear plans that detail aims and goals and the young person's progress. Plans demonstrate that young people's diverse needs have been considered and planning expectations are insightful and achievable.

In addition, each young person has a detailed and dedicated 24 hour management plan. This provides very useful insights into the day-to-day needs of the young people. Plans demonstrate not only the anticipated outcome, but just as importantly, the type of motivation and individual support that is most likely to be beneficial.

Care plans provide a rich source of evidence that the planning process addresses young people's individuality and diversity. All young people attend statutory reviews in accordance with their placing authority's procedures. Each young person is provided with a review report from the home, prior to his or her meeting, with preparation supported through key working sessions.

Reviews reports for young people are equally well presented, comprehensive and insightful documents. Young people are encouraged to make their views and wishes known and these are presented to the review meeting.

Staff members promote contact between young people and their friends and family. Transport and practical support is provided along with emotional support and guidance. When contact is supervised staff use agreed procedures to record the progress of the contact and consider strategies to support beneficial contact.

All young people are encouraged to give their opinion regarding the operation of the home and their care. Children's or house meetings are regularly arranged to ensure that all young people can express their collective or individual views. Staff will also use this opportunity to impart information and news to the young people and canvass their views in any planning.

Young people say that staff listen to their views and will discuss matters with them. All new planned placements are discussed with both the staff team and young people to gather views and opinions. New admissions are invited to the home and have the opportunity to spend time with the young people and take a meal in the home. When emergency placements are made the staff ensure that a review is arranged and all staff and young people are able to contribute. All planned moves and farewells from the home are discussed with all young people along with introductions to the subsequent placement.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Plans are prepared for all young people to support them into independence. In addition to the placing authority plan the home's staff prepare tasks and exercises to promote independency skills. Plans therefore support young people to develop existing skills and gain new skills to support them towards adult life. Plans demonstrate detailed assessment and goals to be achieved to ensure young people are given the greatest opportunities.

The home is well maintained; it is decorated in all areas and provides a homely environment for all the young people. Private areas are available for the young people, along with access to a private telephone. Young people are able to decorate their own bedrooms and make choices regarding the decoration of the home. Decoration of personal space reflects young people's individual and diverse choices. The home maintains effective maintenance and all repairs are carried out promptly.

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 as part of daily life.

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 this document is regularly reviewed to reflect any changes to the services provided.

Supervision is provided for all staff and each staff member undertakes performance appraisal with their supervisor. National Vocational Qualification training is in place for all staff. However, the home has not yet achieved 80 per cent of staff trained to National Vocational Qualification in caring for children and young people level three. Suitably experienced staff are provided in sufficient numbers to meet the needs of the young people and provided services in accordance with the Statement of Purpose.

The home provides training for all staff members and mandatory training in key areas of practice for all new staff members. The home operates an on-call and out-of-hours service and extra staff can be deployed in the home when extra support is needed.

Regulation 33 and regulation 34 inspections and monitoring is maintained to ensure the home is operating within the national minimum standards and Children's Homes Regulations 2001. The manager takes appropriate action to address any shortfalls or areas where improvements in practice need to be developed.

All young people have dedicated and comprehensive personal files. These files reflect the individual and diverse needs of the young people. Files are up to date, legible and provide accurate information on the child's care and progress in the home.

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 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 22.4)
- ensure that each child has a clear written health plan covering areas of healthcare in accordance with 12.2 (National Minimum Standards 12.2)
- ensure 80% of staff are trained to National Vocational Qualification in caring for children and young people level three. (National Minimum Standards 29.5)