

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	16 February 2010
Inspector	Mark Blesky
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	26 August 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 home is a three storey town house in the seaside resort. This home provides care for up to three young people. This home is set on three floors. There are local amenities, with the beach, parks and town within walking distance.

Summary

This is an unannounced, random inspection. This home has been inoperative since 2006 and recently resumed operation. No previous recommendations or actions have therefore been made. The refurbishment of the building has not yet completed, but current progress is being well managed. Outcome groups of being healthy and staying safe were inspected on this visit. Enjoying and achieving, positive contribution, economic well-being and organisation were not inspected. There were not adequate measures in place to address some of the key minimum standards in the staying safe outcome with the potential to impact on the safeguarding of young people. A finding of inadequate is therefore made with a notice to improve.

The overall quality rating is inadequate.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

This home has not been operational since 2006 and has not been inspected as operational by Ofsted.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people are encouraged to plan, shop and cook their own meals as part of their independency plan. Unlike the more typical staff roles, staff in this home are specifically preparing young people to gain and develop skills of independence. Young people are given an agreed amount of money and are expected, with minimal support, to manage their own meals. Staff will intervene if young people are not planning nutritious or wholesome meals or any hazards are present. Young people say that they have their own storage and fridge and feel that they manage this area of their care well. Assessment is undertaken by staff with the young people to consider their health and welfare development and consider if any additional support is needed.

Young people's health needs are met by well managed planning and responses by staff. All young people are registered with the appropriate routine health services. Staff will ensure transport and finance is available to attend appointments and visits. Young people are encouraged to consider planning for their healthcare as part of their independence plan and staff support this to ensure necessary treatments and interventions are maintained. A self-administration medication risk assessment and plan is currently being implemented to help young people prepare for self-administration of medication in future independent living.

All medication is robustly managed and all administration records are comprehensive and detailed. An appointed staff member is identified for each shift to managed medication and all medication is kept safely stored in an appropriate secure place.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

Young people are supported by staff that respect and value their rights to privacy. Staff knock on the young people's bedroom doors and understand the need to show sensitivity with more personal matters such as washing and dressing. Young people's information is kept securely and any information sharing with young people is conducted in private.

Any young person wishing to make a complaint or representation is supported by well-managed complaints procedures and practice. Young people can raise objection about any matter that troubles them and detailed records are kept of this process. If any young person is unhappy with a compliant outcome, they are invited to make further representation. Robust child protection and safeguarding procedures are maintained in the home, which mirror those of the local authority. All staff receive mandatory safeguarding training with regular refresher training.

Where there are cases of suspected bullying, staff respond promptly to address this. The home has recently introduced a new anti-bullying initiative, which includes increased training and awareness for staff. In addition it includes a new process of recording and the monitoring bullying behaviour. Young people are therefore supported and protected by this procedure and practice and the acting manager oversees all cases of suspected bullying. Young people say that bullying is not a feature of this home and they feel that the staff would be prompt to spot and address this. However staff do not always complete anti-bullying records, which somewhat weakens, an otherwise robust procedure.

Young people are supported when they are missing from the home and staff will search for, report and recover young people to ensure their welfare is safeguarded. However, currently this home accommodates older adolescents, preparing to move into semi-independent living. As such, more responsibility is given to the young people. Young people stay away from the home until very late at night or choose not to return, with minimum notice and in the absence of planning. Clear and robust procedures to ensure young people are supported in making safe and responsible decisions are absent in this area. Currently informal and somewhat casual approaches are in place. It is unclear how such an approach is able to support structured and planned independency programmes. This has the potential to undermine the safeguarding of young people.

When young people behave in a less positive manner, staff take action to counter this and may use a range of approved sanctions. However, effective behaviour management practices are not evident. There is evidence of ineffective and poorly planned responses to challenging behaviour. Whilst it is understood that the accommodated young people are expected to demonstrate skills of self-discipline; staff are not successfully engaging them in this process. Conduct is frequently poor in this home and there is little evidence young people are demonstrating improvement in self-control. Discussion with young people supported these concerns.

The home is undergoing some refurbishment and progress so far is impressive. Health and safety, fire safety procedures and practices are maintained and this area will be looked at in greater details once the refurbishment has completed. Risk assessments are carried out on the home environment and the young people to address known and perceived risks.

All new staff are rigorously checked and both statutory checks and previous employer checks are carried out. The home has an established and experienced recruitment panel and no staff members can work unsupervised until all checks are complete. All visitors to the home are monitored and no visitor is allowed to have unsupervised access to the home or the young people.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is not judged.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is not judged.

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
19	ensure that the registered person maintains an effective procedure to be followed when any child accommodated in the home is absent without permission (Regulation 16.4(b))	30 April 2010
22	ensure that the registered person prepares and implements an effective written policy of the measures of control, restraint and discipline which may be used in the home. Keep this under review and where appropriate revise the behaviour management policy (Regulation 17.2(a) 17.3(a)).	30 April 2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure that anti-bullying measures and procedures are followed and records of incidents are completed (National Minimum Standards 18.2)