

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 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 boys aged between 12 and under 18 years. It is a detached house in a residential area, in a seaside town.

Summary

This is an unannounced full key inspection. This is a good service in most aspects with some outstanding features. Young people's welfare is enhanced by the good relationships that exist between staff and young people, and between young people and their peers. Young people are encouraged to eat healthily and take regular exercise. The home works closely with a wide range of outside agencies in order to meet the young people's needs. Preparation for independence has begun for some young people. It was noted that further work needs to continue for formal preparation for young people moving on and pathway planning and this development has already begun.

This is a well managed home that has maintained consistent boundaries and provided a stable environment for all young people for a considerable period of time.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The Registered Manager was asked at the last inspection to ensure that all staff were aware of each young person's health care needs along with detailed knowledge of their assessment and diagnoses. The manager was also asked to ensure that robust systems of medication administration were in place along with training to Health and Safety Executive approved standards. A review has now taken place and all young people's medical assessments and plans are regularly discussed with staff. Medication is robustly monitored with improved clarity. Training to and Safety Executive approved standards is being planned.

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 outstanding.

Young people in this home have a wide choice and variety of well prepared and cooked meals. Staff ensure that the range of options meet both the young people's choices, and also contain nutritional and healthy foods. Staff meet regularly with the young people to discuss meals and these are also discussed with all the young people more formally at children's meetings. All staff undertake mandatory training in healthy lifestyles, which ensures that the young people's health is given appropriate priority. Young people say that the food is cooked and presented well and that they have the opportunity to make choices. Young people who prepare their own food say that they are guided by staff in the planning, preparation and cooking of their meals. Young people say that staff consult with them all the time to encourage and promote healthy eating and to encourage them to consider their lifestyles. This has resulted in young people being aware of the importance of looking after themselves and others. All young people in the home are supported in their healthcare by well managed systems and procedures. Each young

person has a dedicated healthcare file that contains their historic, current and future healthcare interventions. Healthcare files are maintained and reviewed regularly by staff with robust monitoring for routine visits to General Practitioners, dentist and opticians. In addition to all the information contained within placement plans, files also contain health action plan targets. These documents use all the known information about health and break it down into day-to-day tasks. More individual or specialist interventions are well planned and records are detailed appropriately. Young people say that the staff encourage them to look after their health and provide them with guidance and support, particularly with routine appointments that they are less keen on. All medication for young people is securely stored with robust monitoring systems to ensure adequate safety and security. All administration of medication is well managed with audit trails of dosage and medication handling. This home maintains high standards of healthcare.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Young people say that staff show them respect and understand that they have a need for privacy and occasional time alone. Young people say that staff always knock on their doors before entering, only enter their rooms for appropriate reasons, and respect their wishes and needs. Young people say that their information is treated confidentially and staff never discuss personal or private matters in the presence of other young people. Staff say that young people are all treated as individuals and, whilst they may have similar needs, they all have specific and diverse needs like anybody else. Consultation with the young people underpins well managed systems of meeting and respecting their needs. Young people are able to make a complaint or representation about any matter in the home or in their care. Complaints are rare in this home and the young people and staff say that this is because most matters or issues are resolved before a complaint is necessary. Young people say that staff are very vigilant in the home and when problems arise, matters are resolved promptly. The last complaint was over a year ago and there are appropriate systems in place to record complaints and representations. Robust systems of safeguarding are in place in the home and the home has a dedicated and qualified social worker who is the child protection co-ordinator. Policies and procedures reflect the local authorities safeguarding ethos. The safeguarding practices in this home are subject to regular and comprehensive monitoring and review to ensure high standards of safeguarding are maintained. Anti-bullying procedures are in place and young people say that staff are prompt to act if any young person was being bullied. Absconding from this home is unusual; the last occurrence was over two years ago. Young people say that there is no reason to run away as they are happy in the home and staff will always talk with them if they feel unsettled or upset. Systems are in place to manage and protect any young person who decides to abscond. The home maintains systems for using approved sanctions and controlling negative behaviour. The home adopts a practice where young people are given a large amount of responsibility for addressing their own behaviour. This practice works effectively in this home and as a result, sanctions are infrequent. Young people say that they are reminded when their behaviour is inappropriate and given warning of a sanction. If this is ineffective, staff will speak to them alone to help them calm down and make amends. The sanction record book clearly reflected this view. The home maintains health and safety effectively with detailed fire safety policies, procedures, and practices. Outcomes for young people are outstanding and the home maintains this standard consistently. Regular fire drills are in place and any new placement or staff member is subject to fire safety instruction and guidance with an evacuation drill. The home's staff are vigilant to health and safety, and training in these areas is mandatory for all staff members.

All visitors to this home are monitored and must sign in. No visitor is allowed unsupervised access to the home or young people. This home is part of a company and has a dedicated recruitment panel with robust checking of references and statutory person checks.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people are given individualised support from all staff and specifically their key worker. The key worker meets with each young person regularly, typically every week, to have one to one time. During this key working session, each young person is able to share any issues that they wish. The staff member discusses the broad aims of their individual care plan, but also the more specific day-to-day needs of the young person. Staff say that each young person's individual and diverse needs can be addressed in these sessions and staff and the young people have the opportunity to get to know one another. In addition, young people attend regular children's meetings where all young people are able to express issues that affect the whole home. Staff also use this meeting to share information as well as canvass the young people's views regarding whole-home events and decisions.

All young people attend education and the staff ensure that adequate transport and equipment is provided. Liaison with the school is typically maintained by each young person's key worker. Key workers also attend open days and parental consultation occasions. When young people are given homework, space, and support is provided by staff to ensure that young people are assisted in this. Young people say that they usually enjoy school and that staff will encourage them to attend, they also say that they understand the benefits of education. The home organises a range of activities for all young people. Young people are encouraged to pick a personal hobby or club that is specifically for them. In addition staff organise group structured activities that include cinema, bowling, roller skating and many other activities. Young people say that staff will arrange any reasonable activity that they choose. All activities are risk assessed by the staff to ensure that the young people are able to enjoy these pursuits safely.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Care plans are provided for all young people in the home. Each young person has a care plan provided by their placing authority and in addition the home develops an in house placement plan from this. The home uses this second plan to break down the broad aims of the care plan into day to day plans for each young person. This plan draws upon the individual and more diverse needs of the young person to provide staff with clear and consistent guidance. These documents demonstrate comprehensive needs assessment and effective planning. Young people are subject to regular statutory review and staff prepare young people to use this opportunity through key working sessions. All young people that have contact with friends and family are supported by the homes staff. Transport and finance is provided to promote contact and staff also provide emotional support to ensure contact is beneficial. Contact that is supervised is recorded by staff and where contact is unsupervised; staff members contact the relevant party to discuss how the contact has progressed. Policies and procedures are produced by the home to support young people who are moving into the home and young people that are to leave. In the case of new planned placements, the young person is invited to visit the home and meet the staff and other young people. Typically, the young person is invited to attend a meal and raise any questions and discuss their views. The existing young people are spoken to, to gather their views of the new placement and their opinions are considered. In emergency placements,

the home's staff and managers carry out a placement review in accordance with the National Minimum Standards. Regular house meetings are convened with all young people and the collective views of the young people are canvassed. Young people say that this provides an opportunity for them to discuss matters that affect the whole home. All meetings are recorded and details of both discussions and decisions are entered.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Individual support for young people subject to pathway planning is provided by staff. Assessment is carried out and staff develop a plan of support to ensure each young person develops independence skills. Plans demonstrated that assessment is carried out and tasks are identified to address areas where skills need to be developed. There is however, less evidence that assessment, implementation, and review are effective. Whilst the home produces some useful evidence that the development of skills is being addressed, limited evidence is provided of the outcome. This does not provide a complete picture of the independence and pathway planning and it is difficult to assess what progress has resulted.

All young people have, a largely free choice of clothing, and the purchasing of personal items. Staff appropriately provide guidance and supervision, which young people value. Young people say that they are able to express their individuality and identity through what they wear and what they choose to buy. In discussion with young people, it appears that staff have effectively balanced allowing the young people freedom of choice, whilst also advising and supporting this process.

The home was toured during the inspection and the home is clearly well looked after in almost all areas and the staff and young people take pride in its appearance. All furnishings and decoration was of good quality and the home is maintained in a manner appropriate to the needs of the young people.

Young people spoke very highly of the home and the staff's attention to keeping it well maintained. It was noted that the kitchen was in need of attention and did not appear to have been maintained appropriately. Although areas of concern were of a minor nature, cleaning schedules had failed to keep the kitchen as clean as it should have been. There was some attention needed to minor flaking of ceiling paint, some build up of grease noted, and the freezer maintenance had been overlooked. It was however considered that whilst maintenance was needed there were no apparent adverse outcomes to the young people. Efforts to resolve these matters were carried out during the inspection.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding in the home. The home has a published statement of purpose which accurately describe what the home sets out to do for children it accommodates, and the manner in which care is provided. All staff members receive one to one supervision, which is in accordance with the National Minimum Standards. There are five staff in the home and this home has achieved 100% staff training in National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) in caring for children and young people at level three. This is a very good achievement and exceeds the National Minimum Standards minimum expectation of 80% staff trained to NVQ three. The home is staffed day and night with the approved number of staff trained to a

level required to meet the needs of the young people. In addition to the resident staff in the home, the company operates an out of hour's service, where senior managers can be contacted to arrange extra staff cover or provide additional support. This home does not use agency staff members. All staff members receive induction training and mandatory training in the core areas of their practice. The home operates a training programme to ensure staff are trained in the areas of specialism required for the young people accommodated. The home is regularly visited by a regulation 33 visitor, who inspects the home on behalf of the provider. These visits include checks on the home's daily logs, records of complaints, disciplinary measures, the use of restraint, with assessment of the physical condition of the building, furniture, and equipment of the home. In addition, regulation 34 monitoring is conducted by the manager to ensure that the home is operating within the statement of purpose. Action is taken, if necessary, in relation to any concentration, trend or pattern in recorded issues or events to improve the safeguarding and promotion of the welfare of children and the quality of care in the home. The home appears financially sound and the manager confirmed that all costs and necessary expenses are met.

Each child has a permanent, private and secure record of their history and progress, which can, in compliance with legal requirements, be seen by the child and by the child's parents as appropriate. This home is very settled and has a history of being well managed and maintained. Good care practices are consistent with additional evidence that young people are settled with well managed systems of care and control.

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 there is a comprehensive plan for young people preparing to leave care and to move into independent or semi independent living, which specifies 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 the home is maintained in good order throughout and that the home is kept clean (National Minimum Standards 24)
- ensure at all times, at least one person on duty at the home has a suitable first aid qualification (National Minimum Standards 13)