

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Sandra Jacobs-Walls
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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 provides long term residential placements to four young women aged between 14 years and 18 years old. The home extends its services to offer care and support to expectant and young mothers. Young women are able to reside at the home with their babies. The service offers an outreach support service to young people 16 years old and upwards who have moved on to independent accommodation. The home provides services which prepare young people to achieve self-sufficiency, self-reliance and develop independence.

The home has easy access to all local amenities including a local shopping centre and has excellent transport links. The service provider is also the Registered Manager for the home. The home's premises have recently been refurbished to now offer en-suite facilities to each bedroom

At the time of the inspection, four young women were in placement at the home. One young woman participated in the inspection process. The home now has a newly appointed deputy manager in place.

Summary

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

The inspection was an unannounced key inspection. The purpose of the inspection was to assess the home against key national minimum standards. All six outcome areas were assessed.

The previous inspection was conducted when no young people were resident. At this inspection four women were in placement at the home, one young woman agreed to participate in the inspection process. This inspection notes that the staff group are committed to providing quality care services to young women, some of whom are pregnant. The service pays good attention to health care needs of the young women and promote healthy lifestyles for all residents, but particularly expectant mothers. Staff make good effort to keep young people safe. Key safeguarding policies and procedures are in place, but the service will need to update existing policies to account for the presence of babies on the premises. Staff vetting practices are in need of improvement.

Staff continue to promote well young people's educational progress and residents benefit from the home's new computer room. Staff ensure case files contain comprehensive background and current information that demonstrate the service is meeting young people's identified needs. Young people feel that their relationship with staff is positive. The premises provides physical safety and security, however,

the service is yet to purchase key health and safety baby equipment in anticipation of the placement of a baby.

The home's management structure is sound. Staff receive training and are well supported and supervised by managers. The home's monitoring systems are good, however, monthly monitoring visit reports are not consistently shared with Ofsted.

Improvements since the last inspection

The previous inspection was conducted when the home had recently re-opened following a period of temporary closure. At that time no young people were in placement and the inspection focused on three outcome areas only. No requirements or recommendations were made.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Staff of the home provide young people with healthy meals that young people enjoy. Staff encourage the young women to participate in determining meal choices and they have the opportunity to assist with shopping and the preparation of meals. Staff offer young people meals that are varied, nutritional and well balanced. In preparing meals, staff take into account young people's expressed preferences, food allergies and cultural and religious food requirements. Young people indicate that they are happy with meals provided by the home. Pregnant young women in placement at the home have good access to literature offering advice and guidance about healthy eating during pregnancy.

Staff encourage young women resident at the home to live healthy lifestyles. Young people's case files evidence comprehensive information that relate to health care matters and there are well documented health care plans in place. This is especially important for those expectant mothers living at the home. The home maintains clear records of all accidents and injuries that occur. Since the last inspection two accidents have been recorded.

Young women have good access to information and health care staff that offer support and advice in relation to health and social issues. Staff promptly assist young women to register with key primary health care services such as dental, opticians and doctors. Staff monitor young women's attendance at medical appointments and appointment outcomes. The home has clear written policies in place to both young women and staff that address issues of alcohol and tobacco use and substance misuse. These are well known to young people. Similarly, young people have good access to information and specialist health care professionals to help address sexual health matters. However, the home does not have a health care policy as outlined in the national minimum standards. Such policy development would further promote good health care by addressing a range of issues such as immunisation and screening. Staff working with expectant and young mothers in particular will benefit from the implementation of such a policy.

Staff's management of medication administration is fair. Some staff of the home have received medication training. Staff have access to a medication policy to support their practice in the administration of young people's medication. However, given the home's new remit to offer services to young mothers and their babies, staff and young women will benefit from more comprehensive guidance. This should include safeguards to monitor young women who choose to self-medicate or administer medication to their babies. Currently no young woman is taking any medication and the home's medication recording system is basic. Staff and young people will benefit from a more effective recording system to minimise the potential of recording errors. The purchase of a dedicated medication cabinet will improve the current storage facilities used for medicines.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people indicate that the staff group are respectful of their need for privacy. Staff maintain written information about young people confidentially and electronically held information is secure. Staff have access to clear written guidance to support their practice and this includes information about accessing file information and the conduct of room searches. Staff demonstrate a good awareness of these policies. The home's newly renovated building now provides en-suite facilities and so washing in private is not an issue for the service.

Young people benefit from the home's comprehensive complaints procedure. Both young people and staff are familiar with this guidance and the issue of complaints is openly discussed within the home. The home's complaints information is also available in the home's Statement of Purpose document and the young people's guide. Since the last inspection, no complaints have been recorded against the home.

Young people and staff benefit from clear child protection policies and procedures. Staff receive child protection training on an ongoing basis and safeguarding training features during the induction process. The home's management of safeguarding issues will be further enhanced with improvements to child protection policies that specifically address young mothers caring for their babies. Young women comment that they share a trusting relationship with staff and feel well protected by the service. Staff record significant incidents centrally and on individual files and highlight action taken by staff in response to these incidents. There have been no incidents or allegations of a child protection nature since the last inspection.

Young people indicate that bullying is not an issue for the home and are confident that staff would act appropriately should bullying occur. Staff have access to sound anti-bullying policies and the home adopts a 'zero tolerance' stance with regard to bullying. Similarly young people and staff are very familiar with the home's policies and procedures when young people are absent from the home without permission. Staff maintain good records when young people are deemed 'missing'.

Young people are advised about the home's expectations regarding behaviour upon admission. Staff have access to clear written information with regard to care and control and make use of a sanction and rewards system. Young people indicate that they feel staff fairly impose sanctions and that they have an opportunity to formally comment upon their experience of sanctions. The home's records of the use of sanctions is detailed and demonstrates staff's appropriate use. Staff have access to policies that address physical intervention. There are no records of any young person being restrained since the last inspection.

The home's premises provides physical safety and security. Young people benefit from the home's sound fire precaution measures. Staff regularly check the home's fire equipment and emergency provision, and maintain good documentation of findings. Building risk assessments are also in place. The home has installed a sensory device to discreetly alert staff audibly to the movements of young people. The home's door alarm system is activated only during the night. This offers additional security to the home's entry points. The home's liability insurance is current and staff have access to health and safety policies and training. However, the service is yet to purchase key baby equipment to enhance the health and safety of any babies living at the home. Such purchases should include stair gates, wall socket cover plugs, sterilising and appropriate car seating equipment.

The service has clear policies and procedures that outline its recruitment practices. However, these policies are not consistently followed and as a result not all required staff personnel information is evidenced. Information missing from staff files includes proof of qualifications, interview notes and evidence of Criminal Record Bureau checks. This is a breach of the regulations and is not evidence of safe vetting practices.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people receive individual support to meet their needs and young people confirm that this is the case. Staff demonstrate good familiarity of the specific needs of the young women and how the service intends to address identified needs. Young people's case files evidence well the very individualistic needs of residents and staff pay good attention to issues of age, race, culture, ethnicity, language and religion.

The service places a high priority on educational achievement and young people indicate that staff are instrumental in securing school and college placements. Young people's case files have a dedicated educational section which contains comprehensive information relating to young people's educational and training options. Staff of the home have a good working relationship with educational professionals and are very involved in monitoring young people's educational progress.

Staff encourage young people to pursue leisure interests of their choice and funding

for such activities are made available by the service. Additional recreational funds are sometimes used by the home as a means of reward.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people have their needs assessed effectively by the placing authority initially and the home's referral form facilitates good exchange of information at the point of placement negotiations. Staff consistently convene placement planning meetings to outline how the service intends to meet the individual needs of prospective residents. Young people's case files evidence local authority care planning documents together with the home's detailed support plan that is written in accordance with the local authority plans. Young people are appropriately placed at the home and staff complete risk assessments to ensure they are aware of potential risk factors.

The home have good systems in place to ensure that the service can meet young people's changing needs. This is achieved by regular discussion via key work sessions and staff's completion of a monthly progress report. Staff share these reports with key involved professionals. The looked after children's reviewing process also ensures that young people's needs and development are reviewed regularly.

Young people are able to maintain constructive contact with their families and friends while living at the home. Files contain information about young people's key family and social networks and the home has flexible rules about visitation to the home. Young people receive information about this when they first arrive in placement.

The service accepts both planned and emergency placements and staff have access to the home's admission and discharge policies. Young people comment that staff are welcoming upon their arrival at the home and that time is taken to explore the home's operation, placement purpose and house rules.

Staff encourage young people to share their opinions about the service they receive and to participate in decisions about the running of the home. Residents meetings are scheduled on a weekly basis for this purpose and for general information sharing. Young people attend these meetings sporadically, but are involved in drawing up the agenda and discussions. Typical discussion points are menu planning, education, health and safety issues, complaints and activities. Key work sessions and statutory reviews are other forums for young people to share their opinions about the home and influence how it is run. Young people indicate that they feel the staff of the home take their views seriously.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Staff provide young women with support in preparation of adulthood and to leave local authority care. Some of the current young women in placement are embarking

upon the home's comprehensive semi-independent programme. Staff focus on young people's development of a range of life skills, such as, money management, shopping, cooking, setting behaviour boundaries and self-care issues. Some young people's files evidence pathway plans of which staff of the home are significant contributors.

Young people confirm that they regularly receive funds to purchase clothing and personal requisites. Young people are able to make their purchases freely once they demonstrate they are able to do so sensibly. Staff maintain good records of young people's expenditure.

The home's premises have recently been subject to major renovation. The home is well furnished, decorated and is very well maintained. Each young woman has her own bedroom with newly added en-suite facilities, young people are particularly appreciative about this provision. The home's communal areas are well equipped and now include a new computer room. There is an additional private room which young people can access for meetings or to entertain visitors. The home is welcoming and young people appreciate their surroundings and the home's general environment.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Staff pay good attention to the gender, religious, ethnic and cultural needs of the young women. This is well documented in young people's case files. Files indicate that staff promote the religious needs of young people. Staff ensure that they address issues of identity and self-esteem competently. The staff group is diverse in terms of gender and ethnic composition. The home's premises and literature display positive images that reflect multi-cultural society.

The home's Statement of Purpose is a comprehensive document that outlines well the home's services, aims and objectives. The document is compliant with the regulations and includes updated information with regard to the home now offering services to expectant and young mothers with their babies. However, this is not the case for the home's young people's guide. This document that has not been updated to reflect the home's new remit.

The staff group are sufficient in numbers, experienced and well trained. A number of staff working at the home have been in post for a number of years. However, a review of the overnight staffing provision may prove useful in anticipation of babies also being accommodated by the home. Newly recruited staff indicate that the home's induction process is useful in preparing them for their duties. Staff inductions includes child protection training. The staff team receive good support and supervision from their line managers, individual supervision is regular and addresses well individual staff developmental needs. There is a clear and effective management structure in place.

Young people's quality of care is monitored well by the home. The Registered Manager who is also the home's provider conducts periodical review of staff practices and completes case file audits. Young people also benefit from monthly monitoring visits. These are unannounced and subsequent reports are sufficiently detailed. However, monthly monitoring reports are not consistently forwarded to Ofsted for review as required. Managers are also developing staff training profiles and staff are welcoming of service reviews conducted by other interested parties.

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/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Std.	Action	Due date
12	promote and protect the health of the young people in the home, in particular by developing a health care policy for staff to inform and support good health care practices (Regulation 20)	01/12/2010
13	make suitable arrangements for a written record to be kept of the administration of any medicine to any young person (Regulation 21(2)(c))	01/12/2010
17	prepare and implement a written policy which safeguards children and babies accommodated in the home from abuse and neglect (Regulation 16(1)(a))	01/12/2010
26	ensure that unnecessary risks to the health or safety of children accommodated in the home are identified and so far as possible eliminated. In particular that the home purchase essential health and safety baby equipment (Regulation 23(c))	01/11/2010
27	obtain for all staff, before they start work at the home, all the information set out in Regulation 26 (Regulation 26)	01/12/2010
1	produce a young people's guide which shall include a summary of the home's Statement of Purpose (Regulation 4(3)(a))	01/12/2010
32	send reports of monthly visits to the National Business Unit at Ofsted. (Regulation 33)	01/11/2010

Recommendations

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

- purchase a locked cabinet to ensure medication is stored securely (national minimum standard 13.10)

- develop more comprehensive medication policies to support staff practices in the administration of young people's medication (national minimum standard 13.10)
- review the staffing arrangements for overnight shifts to ensure staffing is adequate to meet the needs of any baby accommodated at the home. (national minimum standard 30.2)