

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Nicola McEvinney
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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 children's home is operated by a local authority. It is able to accommodate up to six young people aged 13 to 17 years, of either gender. The remit of the home is to have young people stay from a short to medium term basis with the aim to rehabilitate young people home or move them to an appropriate long term facility, which may be a supported living setting. Young people may be admitted in an emergency.

The home is a large detached property situated on the outskirts of a small town with good access to local amenities and public transport. The communal areas comprise of an open-plan dining and living room on the ground floor. The young people have single bedroom accommodation and a bathroom is located near the bedrooms. There is a room available on the first floor where meetings can take place in private. There is a yard and a large garden. The home has two cars to transport young people if required.

Summary

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

The purpose of this unannounced full inspection was to check on the progress of the requirements and recommendations made at the last inspection and to ensure compliance with the national minimum standards.

There is a competent staff team who are committed to provide a good standard of care to the young people. There are a settled group of young people currently living at the home all of whom have an educational placement.

Although most of the requirements and recommendations have been met, some remain. The home do not inform Ofsted of all notifiable incidents; behavioural management plans do not address the individual behaviours of the young person with strategies in place to manage these behaviours; there are insufficient staff who hold National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 3 and staff do not commence this qualification within 3 months of joining the home; individual protocols are not in place to inform staff what action to take when a young person goes missing and child care reviews are not always held within 72 hours.

There was one new requirement and recommendation made at this inspection. Not all staff have restraint training that ensures that young people are handled appropriately; risk assessments for young people are generic and those for the premises and activities have not been reviewed and are difficult to comprehend.

Improvements since the last inspection

The staff team have pulled together and have worked hard to address most of the requirements and recommendations raised at the last inspection.

A number of these requirements and recommendations related to the inappropriate placement of some young people. This situation no longer exists therefore some are no longer relevant. The home is now vigilant in undertaking an impact risk assessment of all new referrals to ensure this situation does not arise again.

There are good systems in place to ensure that young people are administered their medication as prescribed; all young people have a college or school placement and are encouraged and supported to attend; young people's files contain all the required information to ensure there is an accurate history.

The home has produced a health file for each young person identifying their health needs; blinds are fitted to all bedroom windows ensuring their privacy is maintained; young people are encouraged to write their comments following a restraint or sanction and fire drills are held at night to ensure all know what action to take if a fire occurs at this time.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people are provided with healthy and nutritious meals, they are encouraged to help with meal preparation to promote their independence skills. Young people have free access to the kitchen and are able to make drinks and snacks when they choose. Young people are consulted over the menus and alternative diets are catered for, for example, vegetarian diets. Once a week the home has a theme night and young people are given the opportunity to have meals from different cultures.

The home maintains a health file on each of the young people outlining their health needs. All young people are registered with doctors, dentists and opticians and appointments are made as required. The consent to the administration of non-prescription medication and emergency first aid has been obtained from the person holding parental responsibility.

Medication records are in good order and are easy to follow. These are closely monitored to ensure young people are given their medication as prescribed. All staff have received first aid training ensuring that any injuries are properly attended to.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Each young person keeps the key to their bedrooms, and staff do not enter bedrooms unless invited to go in by the young person. If it is necessary to undertake

a room search this is done by two staff in line with the policy. Files are kept securely to maintain confidentiality and the identity of people making telephone enquiries is verified to ensure personal information is only shared with people who have a right to this information.

There is a complaints leaflet available to the young people should they wish to make a complaint. Young people are made aware of how to make a complaint on admission and this information is in the young person's guide. Individuals from a children's rights organisation are regular visitors to the home and meet with the young people.

Staff have a good awareness of safeguarding issues and are vigilant in supervising the young people whilst in the home. All staff have received safeguarding training at level 1 and are commencing level 2 imminently. There are no safeguarding concerns at this moment with the young people placed.

Staff have a good approach to address bullying behaviour by working with the perpetrator to help them understand the impact of their behaviour on others. Young people are encouraged to say if they feel threatened in the home.

Although the home has a missing persons policy there is not individual guidance on what action staff should take when a young person fails to return to the home when expected.

The home failed to inform Ofsted of an incident when the police were called to the home.

Although the home have produced individual crisis management plans these are generic. These plans do not detail individual anticipated behaviours young people may present and how they should be managed. The home is working towards implementing a restorative justice approach and to this end very few sanctions are given; those that have been are appropriate and staff discuss with young people incidents and encourage them to have their say. Staff rarely restrain young people, there has been one restraint since the last inspection to prevent a continued assault. Although this was appropriate some staff have not had restraint and control training.

Risk assessments for the young people are generic and do not identify the actual risk that each young person may present. The risk assessments for the premises and activities are out of date and lack clarity. Fire records are in good order with drills held at night to ensure all staff and young people know what action to take in the event of a fire.

The identity of visitors to the home is checked to ensure only authorised people have access to the young people.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The home accesses a number of services to help meet the needs of the young people, for example, the looked after children nurse will have one to one sessions with young people. There are good key work sessions and staff support young people on a range of issues including sexual health issues.

The home has worked hard to get young people into education or training and work closely with schools to maintain educational placements. The home is building links with the looked after children education team to enable them to be proactive when issues relating to education present.

The young people are engaged in a number of activities, for example, during the half term holiday staff arranged daily activities, for example, go carting, ice skating, and the cinema. Some individuals go to regular activities such as karate or the gym. This gives good routine and helps build their self esteem.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Care plans are in place identifying the needs of the young people with guidance to staff on how these needs are to be met.

Initial review meetings are not always held within 72 hours of admission. However, subsequent reviews are held as appropriate with staff attending. A detailed report is produced for the review and young people are encouraged to attend to ensure their views are heard.

Care plans clearly outline contact arrangement. Staff liaise closely with families and try to work with them to help build bridges between them and their children where there is conflict. Staff will visit parents to help build relationships and keep parents informed of their child's progress.

Staff have a good awareness of ensuring young people admitted to the home do not have an adverse effect on the young people placed; or the young people placed do not pose a risk to potential admissions. To this end, detailed impact risk assessments are undertaken. However, the home does admit young people in an emergency situation which can compromise the welfare of all the young people, although staff are vigilant in ensuring if appropriate young people are moved on promptly.

Regular residents meetings are held with a children's rights worker facilitating this meeting. Minutes are forwarded to the Registered Manager who responds to the young people.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The home is embarking on an independence programme with some young people to prepare them for living independently. Young people are encouraged and supported to do their own laundry and help with meal preparation.

The home has recently undergone a refurbishment programme; all areas including bedrooms have been redecorated and pleasantly furnished creating a homely environment for the young people.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

There is a comprehensive Statement of Purpose in place informing interested parties what services the home provides. A child friendly children's guide has been produced informing the young people what they can expect when they come to live in the home.

The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Although care plans, risk assessments and behaviour management plans are in place they are not individualised. However, staff have a good awareness of the individual needs of the young people, but this is not always recorded.

Staff confirm that they have regular supervision and they feel supported. There are good training opportunities for staff although there are insufficient staff who hold NVQ at level 3 or equivalent and staff do not commence on this qualification within three months of joining the home. There are adequate numbers of staff employed in the home.

There are good monitoring systems in place to ensure the home runs efficiently. Young people's files contain all the required information.

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
20	ensure Ofsted is informed of any notifiable events as listed in	14/03/2011

	Schedule 5 (Regulation 30 (1) Schedule 5)	
26	ensure unnecessary risks to the health and safety of the young people accommodated are identified and so far as possible eliminated by producing risk assessments that are regularly reviewed. (Regulation 23 (c))	01/06/2011

Recommendations

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

- produce individual protocols on what action staff should take when a young person goes missing (NMS 19.2)
- agree practical and acceptable means of responding to behavioural problems of the individual young people by devising individual behaviour management plans (NMS 22.16)
- ensure all staff are trained in physical restraint (NMC22.9)
- ensure reviews are held within 72 hours of admission to the home (NMS 5.6)
- ensure that there are sufficient staff who hold NVQ at level 3 or equivalent (NMS 29.5)
- ensure staff begin working towards NVQ at level 3 or equivalent within three months of joining the home. (NMS 29.5)