

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Anthony Kyem
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	18 September 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

The home is a 72 foot narrow boat that travels around the canal network of the entire country. It is registered for one young person of either sex from aged eight to 17 years. It has been registered as a care home since 14 January 2005 but had previously been used as a holiday placement for children.

Summary

This was a key announced inspection. All key national minimum standards were inspected. Actions and recommendations made at the last inspection, were also assessed during this visit.

The home provides care for young people to a satisfactory standard. Young people are looked after by the same staff, to enable them to form and develop trusting relationships. They receive good support in accordance with their placement plans and their needs are regularly reviewed. Contact is promoted so that young people sustain their relationships with their families and friends.

As a result of this inspection there are a number of actions and recommendations made for the registered person to address and consider, to improve the home's performance.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

A number of actions and recommendations were made at the last inspection. The home has ensured that most have been met, resulting in improvements to the quality of care provided. Young people's files include better details about them, to help staff meet their diverse range of needs. The home's performance is monitored and reports are prepared in relation to the home's conduct and its capacity to improve.

Where young people absent themselves without authority, staff implement the home's missing persons procedures, to promote their safe return. Health and safety systems are satisfactory, but further improvements are required to ensure that young people's health, welfare and safety is actively promoted.

Young people have access to medical support, but they are not routinely registered with local health services to promote positive health outcomes for them. There is always at least one member of staff on duty who is trained in the use of first aid, but provisions for the treatment of first aid were not identified. Records held in relation to behaviour management systems, risk assessments and restraints were all found to be in order.

The food menu has improved and young people's health needs are now sufficiently recorded within well written placement plans. The home's policies and procedures are accessible to staff, to guide them in the work performed.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people are actively involved with the home's food shopping and with the planning and preparation of meals. Fresh foods are purchased and young people's food choices are considered to ensure they enjoy the diverse range of foods provided for them. Meals prepared by staff are varied, wholesome and nutritionally balanced. Young people are encouraged by staff to eat healthily.

Young people's health needs are sufficiently covered within their placement plans. Their records include signed medical consent, which enables staff to attend to their health needs. However, this does not include consent for the administration of emergency treatment and homely remedies, where required.

Young people are not registered with any formal healthcare services, such as doctors, dentists and opticians. There is little evidence available of routine health appointments being attended by them, to ensure that they remain healthy. Young people do have access to emergency walk in centres, the details for which, were available. Whilst these arrangements are satisfactory, the home is not actively promoting the health needs of young people, by ensuring they attend and have access to routine health appointments.

Young people's medication is stored and administered safely. The home is staffed so that at least one staff on duty, is trained in the use of first aid. Should first aid be required, there were no provisions observed for the administration of first aid.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people's privacy is respected and their private records are securely stored for confidentiality purposes. Young people are able to wash in private and they are provided with their private sleeping quarters for privacy purposes. There is a complaint policy in place, however, no complaints have been made by young people, for a considerable period of time. Young people were not present during this inspection, therefore, their views and experiences could not be ascertained.

The home only provides care for one young person, so bullying is not an issue for young people to be concerned with. Staff receive relevant training and this includes training in safeguarding and care and control, to help staff safeguard young people's welfare and safety. Young people's behaviours are assessed and identified risks are recorded, to help staff work with young people safely. A recent independent inspection identified a potential risk, which has yet to be formally assessed to ensure that staff are alert towards the potential dangers.

Young people who absent themselves without authority are reported missing to promote their safe return. Their behaviours are managed safely and the use of sanctions and restraints are rare. Where they have occurred, they have been conducted fairly. Staff and young people have positive relationships and records show that young people engage well with staff in structured activities.

Health and safety systems are satisfactory. The boat is serviced and maintenance work is undertaken to ensure that the boat is canal worthy. The boat is equipped with fire fighting equipment for safety reasons. There are regular fire drills held, to ensure that young people know how to evacuate the boat safely, in the event of fire. Appliances on the boat are contractually serviced, however, safety inspections to the home's fire fighting equipment and

gas appliances are due. It was also identified that the home's heating system may require servicing to ensure the boat is sufficiently heated in cold weather. The risk assessments identifying the potential hazards and to further promote young people's welfare and safety in respect of their ability to swim are not fully robust.

The services recruitment and selection procedures were not assessed on this occasion. The last inspection of the home found appropriate systems were in place to keep young people safe. Staff have their suitability to work with vulnerable young people carefully assessed for such purposes.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people are provided with good support in accordance with their assessed needs, which are outlined sufficiently, within detailed placement plans. The home is staffed in such a way, to ensure that staff are always available to respond to young people's needs or requests for support. There are two staff on duty at all times.

The arrangements made to promote young people's education and learning are satisfactory. Young people unable to attend school are provided with education on site, through home tuition. The service employs qualified teachers to promote young people's learning. Where possible, young people are encouraged to attend the services own designated school, to enable young people to socialise with their peers.

Personal educational plans and statements of special educational needs were not available to describe young people's needs, targets and individual achievements.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people's individual needs are covered within their placement plans, which provide staff with the information they need to work with young people and review their needs and progress. The home has used a wide source of information to inform young people's placement plans, to ensure young people's needs are well documented.

Young people's needs are reviewed during the review process, with meetings held within the recommended timescales. Young people are encouraged to attend their reviews, to enable them to have a say in the care provided to them. Staff support young people in meetings and in their absence may represent their views, if required.

Young people are supported to sustain their family links. The arrangements for contact are recorded and staff provide the necessary resources to facilitate contact, which supports young people to sustain their relationships with their families.

Young people's views and opinions are sought to ensure they feel involved in decisions and with the running of the boat, which promotes team work, young people's participation and cooperation.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

The accommodation provided for young people is very different from a domestic family home. The home is a mobile canal boat, which travels along the canals from city to city. The boat is professionally maintained and provides a functional environment for young people to live in. Given the home is a narrow boat, space and room are somewhat limited, but sufficient. The boat is reasonably furnished and maintained to a satisfactory standard.

The boat is centrally heated and has a log fire and the cooking, washing and sleeping facilities are all available on the canal boat. There is limited but adequate storage available for young people to store their personal belongings. The boat has a television and games console for young people's pastimes.

The boat provides care and accommodation for one young person at any one time. Those young people resident, are not of an age where they are ready to begin with any preparatory work for their independence. Young people are, however, encouraged to be semi-independent and to show an active interest in the general upkeep and maintenance of the boat. This includes taking part in associated duties, such as, helping with food shopping and with the preparation and cooking of meals.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The home has a revised Statement of Purpose, which outlines what the home sets out to do for young people. The statement includes relevant information about the home and this includes staff's qualifications and experience.

The numbers of staff trained to National Vocational Qualification standards is below the specified requirement. Less than 80% of staff, are currently qualified to the required standard. The home is currently operating without a Registered Manager, so a manager from another children's home is deputising to oversee the daily operations of the home.

Whilst the service has a training programme in place to enhance and develop staff's knowledge and experience, records held in respect of staff training are not up to date, to show that new staff employed have completed all mandatory training.

The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Young people are cared for by a stable staff team of the same gender and ethnicity. Continuity of care is provided so that young people are able to develop and form trusting relationships with the same staff.

The performance of the home is monitored independently and visits have largely been conducted within the recommended timescales. Reports are prepared on the conduct of the home and these are used by staff, to improve the home's performance.

Managerial monitoring over the home's administrative systems, is inconsistent and not undertaken at suitable intervals. Without consistent monitoring irregularities with practice will not be identified or rectified.

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 Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
12	ensure that children's health needs are met, including access to a GP, dental care, opticians and support to keep and attend appointments (Regulation 20.2 b)	30 April 2010
13	ensure that suitable first aid provisions are kept within the home (Regulation 20.1)	30 April 2010
26	ensure all of the home's appliances are serviced within the recommended timescales (Regulation 23.a)	30 April 2010
33	ensure there are systems in place to monitor matters set out in Schedule 6 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001 at suitable intervals. (Regulation 34)	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 a written copy is maintained on file, containing written permission from a person with parental responsibility for each child, for the administration of first aid and appropriate non-prescribed medication (NMS 13.4)
- ensure that risk assessments identifying hazards to young people are carried out and regularly reviewed, with particular reference to making sure the young people's ability to swim is assessed to promote their welfare and safety (NMS 26.2)
- ensure young people have personal educational plans and where necessary, statements of special educational needs (NMS 14.2)
- ensure training records are updated to reflect the current competency of the staff team (NMS 29.1)
- ensure a minimum ratio of 80% of all staff are trained to National Vocational Qualification level 3 standards in caring for children and young people (NMS 29.4)
- ensure a Registered Manager is appointed and registered with Ofsted. (NMS 29.1)