

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Debbi Flint
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Date of last inspection	22 March 2010
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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 four bedroom children's home. The home is actually two adjacent bungalows affording young people a high degree of privacy. The home is located in a residential area with a range of shops and amenities nearby. There is provision for staff to sleep in both bungalows. The organisation provides its own education at a school in a nearby town. The home currently accommodates one young person who was present for part of the inspection.

Summary

At this unannounced full inspection all key standards were assessed. The outstanding recommendations from the previous inspection were also followed up.

The home is well managed and there are good policies and procedures in place. Young people are fully involved in the running of the home and enjoy living in it. Young people have also made good progress while living in the home and one young person has moved on recently. Young people who live in this home are able to develop socially acceptable behaviour and achieve good outcomes. The promotion of equality and diversity is good throughout the standards inspected.

One action and three recommendations were made at this inspection. These related to the administration of medication and some other administrative matters.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection there were three recommendations made and these were to ensure that two members of staff receive an update in safeguarding training, to ensure that the policy on bullying is available in user-friendly form and to investigate the bathroom locks to ensure that they provide both privacy and safety. All these recommendations have been met.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people plan their own meals with staff and their dietary wishes are respected; for example they may follow a vegetarian diet. Young people also learn about budgeting and are encouraged to carry out the home's weekly shop. Recently young people have participated in a nutritional analysis. They looked at everything they had eaten in a week and considered whether the balance was right and whether the calorie intake was appropriate. The exercise established that meals are healthy and young people eat a well balanced diet. The exercise also helped young people to increase their nutritional awareness. Young people are involved in meal preparation within the home and they also have the opportunity to eat in restaurants where they sample foods from a variety of cultures.

Young people have comprehensive health plans on file which are followed in practice. Staff are pro active in encouraging young people to follow a healthy life style and encourage them to take regular exercise such as horse riding, walking and running. Staff also support young people with any mental health problems that they may have and explore ways of dealing with

these; they work hard to ensure that young people receive the help that they need. All young people are registered with doctors, dentists and opticians and are encouraged to access other health professionals as and when necessary. This means that young people's health has improved while living at this home. Staff are trained to administer medication as and when necessary but it was noted that one medication for a minor skin condition had been omitted by staff in error on occasions. The manager has noted the error and is taking appropriate action. Medication is safely stored in a locked safe within the home's office.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff have worked hard to develop a culture of mutual respect and young people are in control of their own private spaces. Staff do not enter young people's rooms without their permission and young people are also able to lock bathroom doors to ensure their privacy. Young people have access to a digital cordless phone which they can use in private in any room in the house subject to any contact restrictions. Young people state that they feel their privacy is respected.

The home has good policies and procedures in place to safeguard the young people and staff work well together to ensure that young people are safe. All staff complete safeguarding training on induction. In addition to this every member of the staff team is currently completing a six month on line course in safeguarding. This means that staff have a good knowledge of safeguarding procedures. However the copy of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board procedures which is kept in the home is four years old and may not be up-to-date. There have been no safeguarding referrals or complaints since the last inspection. Young people state that they have no complaints and there is nothing that they would like to change about the home. They do not report any bullying.

The organisation employs a psychologist who assists staff in developing behaviour management plans. Staff manage behaviour through identifying and eliminating triggers and also through the use of positive reinforcement. Staff also meet regularly with the young people to discuss their behaviour. Young people's behaviour has improved while they have been living at this home and they are making good progress in developing their understanding of socially acceptable behaviour. Staff ensure that any sanctions or restraints are correctly recorded in bound and numbered logs. The frequency of sanctions and restraints is low due to the effective behaviour management strategies which staff follow.

The home has comprehensive risk assessments in place for all aspects of internal and external safety and evidence shows that these risk assessments are followed in practice; for example fire alarms are tested on a two weekly basis and there are regular fire drills. Staff state that risk assessments are reviewed annually but some reviews have not been recorded since 2008 and it is recommended that this is addressed. The organisation ensures that all staff are vetted before they start work in the home and staff recruitment procedures comply with Schedule 2 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are well supported by their key workers and they meet regularly with their personal tutors at the organisation's school. Young people can also access weekly sessions in life skills which are delivered by the organisation's area manager. Young people have not chosen

to access the services of independent advocates because they already feel well supported; however they are aware that these services are available.

Staff have worked hard to encourage young people to understand the importance of education and some young people have re-engaged with their education since moving in to the home. Staff have also ensured that all young people have personal education plans and they work closely with the staff at the organisation's school. Young people state that they like school and are now happy to go to school. Some young people have a clear idea about what they want to do in the future and staff have assisted them to engage in work experience to support their future plans. Young people who live in this home are achieving very good educational outcomes and are well motivated. They are also encouraged to participate in a range of leisure activities such as horse riding, trampoline, walking, running and cinema. Young people are able to go on overnight trips to activity centres and to spend time in a caravan in Cornwall which is owned by the organisation. Summer camping trips have also been arranged for the young people.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people are consulted before moving in to the home and admissions are well planned. Comprehensive placement plans are drawn up and these follow the Every Child Matters outcomes. Placement plans are reviewed on a monthly basis to ensure that young people always receive care that meets their individual needs and young people are achieving good outcomes. Statutory reviews take place as and when required and the minutes from these confirm the young people's progress. Young people who have recently left the home have elected to keep in touch with staff by telephone and staff are always happy to speak with them. Young people moved on to semi independence units and college placements were arranged.

Young people state that they feel involved in the running of the home and they have been consulted about the decoration of the home, gardening and menus. One young person has asked for a pet and this is in the process of being arranged. Young people meet twice a month with the home's manager and their key worker and these meetings are recorded. They also have individual one-to-one sessions with their key workers although these meetings are not currently recorded. Young people are supported to have contact with their families as and when appropriate and all contact is recorded.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The home is comprised of two adjacent bungalows in a residential area on the outskirts of a seaside town. One bungalow is currently occupied. Young people recently moved out of the second bungalow but there are plans for it to be occupied within the next few days. Both bungalows are in good order. Young people's rooms are tidy and well presented and are brightly decorated in the colours of their choice. Both bungalows have lounges which provide ample space for the young people to relax in. There is a homely atmosphere and young people's photographs are displayed around the house. Bathrooms are private and can be locked by the young people although there is a facility where by staff could enter the bathrooms in the event of any emergency. Both bungalows have reasonably large gardens and there is a trampoline for the young people's use.

Staff support young people to increase their independence and some young people have recently moved on to semi independence units. Current residents have life skill sessions on a weekly basis with the organisation's area manager and they are learning about budgeting and shopping. Young people keep their rooms tidy and have good domestic skills. They prepare meals and also go out for meals and this helps them to increase their social skills. Staff support young people in finding work experience in their specific areas of interest. This means that young people are well equipped to face the future positively.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home has a Statement of Purpose which accurately reflects what the home sets out to do for the young people it accommodates. Young people are issued with a guide when they move in to the home and this has recently been updated. The guide is bright and colourful and contains useful information on issues such as bullying and how to make a complaint.

There are currently four members of staff employed at the home including the manager. Staffing is adjusted to suit needs and staff state that more staff will be employed at the home as and when necessary. The organisation is also planning a managerial re-shuffle and staff state that one staff member has applied for the post of manager at this home and has been successful. They state that this person will be applying to register with Ofsted and the home's current manager will be moving to another home. Staff state that they feel well supported in their work and receive regular supervisions. The organisation has also recently introduced a new system of annual appraisal for staff.

Staff state that they are pleased with the training on offer to them. All staff receive a comprehensive two week classroom based induction which covers all essential training such as food hygiene, first aid and non violent crisis intervention. There is then a three month probationary period on site and if this is successful staff are registered for National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 3 in care. The member of staff designated to take on the new role of registered manager is currently studying for a Master's degree in psychology and has been registered for NVQ at level 4 in management.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good throughout all the standards inspected. Evidence suggests a strong commitment to equality and diversity in practice. Young people's individual needs are well met and they are encouraged to respect themselves and each other. The organisation employs staff from a variety of cultures in order to ensure there is a broad understanding of different cultural needs.

The home is monitored on a regular basis by the manager and also by the organisation's senior managers.

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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13	ensure that any medication which is prescribed for a child is administered as prescribed [Regulation 21 (2) (b)].	1 July 2010
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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 a more up to date copy of the Local Safeguarding Children Board's procedures is kept in the home (NMS 17.2).
- ensure that the regular review of risk assessments can be evidenced (NMS 26.2).
- keep a written record of key worker sessions (NMS 8.1).