

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Robert Curr
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Date of last inspection	21 January 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 setting provides up to six long-term placements for young people aged from 11 years old up to 17 years old. The accommodation consists of single bedrooms and spacious communal areas for eating, studying and relaxing. Further accommodation is provided in a bungalow situated in the large garden at the rear of the main house. This provides separate accommodation for one young person as part of the overall registration of six young people. The home is situated in a small coastal town. There is easy access to public transport, leisure facilities, health services and education.

The home aims to offer longer-term care and provide support for young people with emotional and behavioural needs.

Summary

This was an unannounced inspection. All of the key standards were checked and improvements made since the last inspection were noted.

This is a good service. Young people's education is encouraged and promoted. Leisure needs are met and a multi-disciplinary approach ensures young people's views are taken into account when planning their future.

A policy on equality and diversity is in place and the staff demonstrate an appreciation that individual young people may have a range of possible needs arising from diversity.

Young people's welfare is enhanced by the positive relationships fostered by the staff team. The service is monitored, thus enabling the registered provider to oversee the operation of the home.

Training and supervision records are not comprehensive. The aim to have the appropriate number of staff hold a National Vocational Qualification must be maintained.

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 the registered person was asked to take action in relation to aspects of staying safe and organisation. This included fire safety training and record keeping in relation to physical interventions and the monitoring of the young people's care and welfare.

There have been no incidents requiring the use of physical intervention since the last inspection. Fire drills take place monthly and all young people take part.

The proprietor arranges monthly internal monitoring as part of the quality assurance system for the home; these reports include the involvement of young people.

Although progress has been made in relation to staff training, National Vocational Qualification ratios do not meet current standards.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people benefit from healthy and nutritious meals. They are well supported to become involved in choosing and preparing their own food. Comprehensive information about food values and healthy eating are available in the education room.

Fresh fruit and vegetables are offered as part of very well planned menus. Young people enjoy a variety of dishes that reflect the preferences of the group. Young people said that they sometimes choose to have a take away.

The health needs of each individual young person are carefully identified and regular links with healthcare professional services that meet individual needs are sought. Records are maintained and show that dentists and opticians have been used as required. Staff demonstrate a genuine concern for the young people who receive positive support within the home. There are sufficient staff trained in first aid to ensure consistent support at all times.

Systems for the administration and storage of medicines are maintained. Staff have received training in the safe handling and administration of medication to enable them to safely store, administer and record the medication that they are responsible for.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The systems that are in place ensure the safety, protection and well-being of young people living at the home.

Staff demonstrate respect for young people by not entering their bedrooms without permission. All confidential information is kept in lockable cabinets. Young people have access to a telephone to make and receive calls. Sufficient space is available to enable young people to meet with visitors and have key work sessions in private.

All complaints are taken seriously by the home and fully investigated. Young people are aware of the complaints policy and feel any of their concerns are addressed promptly.

Systems are in place to report child protection concerns and staff have received relevant training. Sensitivity is demonstrated by staff in their understanding of the complex needs of young people.

Individual risk assessments are in place for managing young peoples complex needs. Close links are maintained with the placing authority regarding the level of risk or vulnerability of the young people who abscond. Staff use diversion techniques to deter young people from leaving the home. Constructive support is available for young people when they return to the home that includes counselling about keeping safe.

Anti-bullying is promoted in the home in line with the organisations policies and procedures. Young people agree that they do not always get on with each other, but confirm there is no bullying at the home. Staff endeavour to create a harmonious atmosphere and openly challenge any form of bullying, including verbal abuse.

Behaviour management involves rewards for positive behaviour. Young people are aware of the consequences of their unacceptable behaviour that can result in the temporary withdrawal of a privilege. It is clear that when measures of control are put in place, staff consider the age and understanding of the young person concerned. Restraints are rarely used to manage behaviour considered to be a risk to young people or others. Staff receive training in the use of such interventions.

Effective systems are in place to ensure all statutory health and safety checks are carried out within the required timescales.

Checks on fire fighting equipment are up to date and fire drills take place monthly. Records of fire drills accurately record who was present. All staff and some of the young people have undertaken fire awareness training. This upholds the health and safety of the young people residing at the home.

Young people are protected by the recruitment and selection process as pre-employment checks are carried out to ensure staff are suitable to work with children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Care plans reflect the individual needs of young people and are based on full initial assessments with regular reviews of progress. Two young people said that their key workers set up regular meetings for them to 'discuss things'. It was clearly evident that key workers have developed positive relationships with the young people.

The range of activities is good. Young people enjoy outings to the cinema, the local leisure centre, dance classes and other outside activities.

School and educational attendance is encouraged, even with people who have a history of poor school attendance and exclusion. Educational achievement is valued and young people are well supported with accessing a variety of educational placements. One young person shared their gratitude for the staff assisting them securing education and planning their future. This is improving young people's prospects in later life.

At this time young people do not have access to a computer within the home to undertake schoolwork or pursue leisure interests.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people benefit from placement plans which set out how the home will meet their assessed needs. Young people and their key worker attend reviews. Together they effectively contribute to the reviews and reports are up to date which enables staff to measure any progress that has been made.

Young people say that they are able to maintain valued relationships with family and friends through appropriate contact arrangements. These arrangements are agreed with the young person and any restrictions are clearly recorded. Young people have full access to a telephone.

All the young people are positive about their involvement in the day-to-day running of the home. One young person stated, 'we are always allowed to make our views known'. The house meetings are chaired by a nominated resident and one young person said staff will advocate for them if they do not have the confidence to speak out. This system is highly effective in ensuring young peoples decisions are valued.

Staff are able to fully understand the perspective of the young people with whom they work. Staff respond appropriately and constructively to challenge the young people's use of inappropriate or offensive language. Interactions between staff and young people are genuinely positive and relationships formed are valued.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The opportunities provided for the young people to buy their own clothing and toiletries gives them experience in expressing their individual preference and develop skills, such as budgeting that will be essential throughout their life. They are allowed to spend money freely unless they have been found spending it inappropriately.

The main house and bungalow are in very good decorative order. Individual bedrooms are well proportioned and young people's personal belongings are in evidence, according to their individual preferences. One young person noted in their survey that they are involved in choosing furniture and décor in the home. However, there is no blind fitted to the bathroom window in the main house. This does not provide complete privacy.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

This is a well managed service which provides a safe setting for young people with complex needs, and a positive and supportive learning environment for staff. The staff team are very motivated and professional. The promotion of equality and diversity is good.

The statement of purpose sets out what the home will provide but is clear about the way in which this will be achieved. A welcome guide to the service is given to all young people on their first visit and the guide is presented in a child friendly format.

Staff state that they receive regular supervision sessions which provides them with support and professional guidance and receive training on a wide range of subjects such as safeguarding and managing conflict. However, training and supervision records are hard to retrieve for all the staff team. It is not clear when all of the staff have had training in the various subjects. This does not evidence that at all times staff working in the home are suitably qualified, competent and experienced.

Not all of the appropriate staff have achieved a qualification at National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 3 in caring for Children and Young People. This means that the qualification recommendation is not met.

Staffing levels are appropriate to meet the needs of young people.

There are a number of quality assurance processes arranged by the registered provider, including monthly monitoring visits that include consultation with young people. The manager also

produces a monthly report. Action points from the visits are followed up and these lead to improvements in practice.

Young people's individual case files are confidentially stored and are arranged in a manner which make them readily accessible to staff. This upholds young peoples privacy and confidentiality. One young person said that they are aware that they can access their files and have done so. The files examined are very well maintained and organised.

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 there is a computer for young people to carry out educational work and for leisure pursuits (NMS 14.5)
- ensure that the bathroom window provides privacy (NMS 25.4)
- keep a written record of the details of supervision held for each member of staff, in particular the time, date, length of each supervision and signed by the supervisor and member of staff (NMS 28.3)
- ensure a minimum ratio of 80% of all care staff complete a National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People or an equivalent (NMS 29.5)
- maintain a comprehensive written record in the home of all training for all staff. (NMS 31.4)