

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Sarah Oldham
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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

The home provides care and accommodation for up to four young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties, aged between 10 and 17 years.

The home is a detached bungalow. The accommodation includes a lounge, an open-plan kitchen, dining area and single bedrooms for young people. The home provides education and a separate school building is located in the grounds. There is a garden for the young people to use at the rear of the house. The home is situated in a village in a rural area, approximately six miles from the nearest town. A village shop is within walking distance of the home.

Four young people are currently living in the home and three of them participated in this inspection.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This was an unannounced inspection and all the key national minimum standards were inspected.

Young people benefit from good relationships with staff who provide clear guidance and act as positive role models. Young people are supported to maintain healthy diets and actively involved in the planning, budgeting, shopping and preparation of meals to support them with planning for independence. Young people are supported to attend education to enable them to have the opportunity for pursuing their chosen careers. The home works closely with a range of outside agencies in order to meet the full range of young people's needs. Staff are supported within their roles by a newly appointed manager who has submitted an application to Ofsted to be the Registered Manager. Staff have the opportunity to further develop their skills through ongoing training. However, due to the recent changes in staffing there is a shortfall of staff who hold the National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People. This is being addressed through the training and development programme for staff.

Four young people were present and participated in the inspection process.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection, the home did not receive any actions or recommendations. The manager and staff at the home continue to work effectively

to provide a good standard of care and support to the young people living at the home.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people enjoy a varied, substantial and well balanced diet. Menus are prepared in advance and reflect the individual preferences of young people and are written using healthy eating guidelines. Meals are taken in the dining room where staff and young people eat together in a sociable and relaxed environment. Fresh fruit and snacks are available during the day and young people contribute to constructing menus through residents' meetings.

Young people's health needs are promoted and safeguarded. Placement plans contain details of young people's specific health needs and how they will be met. Staff have good links with health care professionals, including the looked after children nurse. Case files contain parental consent in relation to securing emergency medical attention, administering medication and minor treatment. Young people have regular routine appointments with a dentist, optician and doctor.

All staff responsible for the administration of medication have received training on medication administration, recording and storage. Medication is stored securely and there is documentation in place stating when medication has been administered and by whom. However, there were some signatures missing from one record and staff on duty had to ensure that this medication had not been administered. The policy and procedure was appropriately followed. Overall, young people have good access to support and advice in relation to health and medical issues.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people's privacy is respected and there is no unnecessary intrusion whilst they spend time alone. Staff observe simple etiquette by knocking before entering a young person's room. Staffing levels at the home are on a one-to-one basis, however, staff try to ensure that young people are able to spend time on their own within the home. All written records are securely kept and discussions with or about young people are held privately and discreetly.

Young people have access to a formal complaints procedure and when a concern is raised this is responded to fully and appropriately by the manager. Young people are encouraged to put in writing any concerns or issues they have and these are also responded to by the manager. The complaints procedure can also be accessed by significant others, including parents, social workers and carers. The manager gives a full and detailed written account of what measures have been taken to address a concern or complaint. The system for dealing with complaints is transparent, accessible and young people's complaints are taken seriously.

All staff attend mandatory safeguarding training and there is a close working relationship with the Local Authority Safeguarding Unit for discussion and advice. Staff are aware of how to deal with a concern or allegation and the system for referring to a senior manager is clear. Young people's welfare is therefore appropriately safeguarded. Staff work closely with young people to reduce any incidents of bullying. Where bullying has happened, staff support both the young person being bullied and the person instigating it to ensure that there is a clear understanding that bullying is not acceptable and to ensure that young people feel able to discuss the impact that bullying has on them.

Young people who are vulnerable as a result of going missing are protected by robust practice and effective liaison with appropriate agencies. On their return, appropriate support and guidance is provided by staff to enable young people to evaluate the reason for them leaving the home.

Young people benefit from having clear and consistent expectations regarding behaviours. All young people have a detailed behaviour management plan in place. This enables staff to provide a consistent approach to the young people to support them with developing and maintaining appropriate behaviour. Sanctions and physical interventions are used appropriately and the manager is vigilant about evaluating the records to establish any trends and patterns. Staff work positively with young people to enable them to develop alternative and positive behaviours.

There are comprehensive health and safety policies and procedures in place. This ensures the health and safety of young people and staff is promoted at all times. Fire drills are held at different times of the day and evening to ensure that young people are aware of the procedure to follow. All safety certificates are in place and up-to-date.

Visitors to the home are vetted to ensure the safety of young people. Young people are protected by an effective staff recruitment process that ensures that all necessary checks are in place prior to a member of staff commencing employment at the home.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are given excellent support on a day-to-day basis and also through regular key worker sessions. Individual support in relation to specific needs identified in young people's placement plans is also very good and ensures that they are cared for appropriately in line with their needs. Staff are accessible at all times during the day and are very caring and attentive to young people ensuring that they are kept positively occupied and have the opportunity to discuss or raise any issues.

Young people are given good support in attending the on site education facilities which is independently inspected by Ofsted. Staff work extremely well in conjunction

with education staff to support the young people in lessons. Staff also support and give their full encouragement to young people to complete homework. This promotes the educational opportunities and achievements for young people very well.

Young people are very well supported to participate in a variety of leisure activities, these include accessing the local community leisure facilities, cinemas and horse riding. Staff are very proactive in engaging young people in leisure pursuits that young people show interest in.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Placement plans clearly identify the young people's care needs. They outline information about young people clearly. This enables staff to have a comprehensive understanding of individual needs and how those needs are to be met. Young people are involved in the development of placement plans and are supported to be involved in the review process. Monthly reports are prepared by key workers to outline individual progress made and placement plans are amended as required through the review process.

Young people are assisted to maintain contact with family and friends. Contact arrangements are clearly recorded on placement plans. Young people are able to make private calls. There are appropriate safeguards in place to monitor calls in accordance with any restrictions on contact. Staff provide transport, escorts and support for contact visits as required.

Wherever possible, young people are encouraged and supported to visit the home prior to placement. When a placement is made in an emergency, young people are provided with information about the home. Young people say that they were able to visit the home prior to moving in and meet other residents and staff.

Young people are able to make decisions about their lives. Regular young people's meetings are held and records are maintained of discussions held at these. In addition, a daily meeting is held to discuss issues that affect people within their daily lives and a wide range of topics is discussed. Consultation also takes place informally, for example, at meal times or during activities. Young people confirmed that their views regarding the home were sought on a regular basis.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people receive care and support to assist them to prepare for adulthood. Detailed pathway plans are developed with young people and cover a wide range of issues. These include preparation of food, budgeting, use of local transport facilities, understanding tenancy agreements, accessing Connexions advisors and promoting individual health care needs through accessing appropriate community health care

resources.

Young people are supported to maintain their individuality and personal preferences in terms of clothing and personal requisites. A system is in place for keeping money safe on their behalf.

The home provides good quality domestic style facilities. It is furnished and decorated to a good standard providing a comfortable and homely environment. The enclosed rear garden provides a safe play area. Young people have single bedrooms which they are supported to personalise and decorate.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Cultural, religious, language and racial needs are documented in care plans. Staff put a strong emphasis on challenging inappropriate or discriminatory comments by young people. Leisure opportunities ensure that young people are able to access community resources.

The home has a detailed Statement of Purpose in place. This document accurately reflects the facilities and services available. This document is provided to parents, carers and any placing authority. Young people are provided with a children's guide. This is in a child-friendly format with good information about house rules, expected conduct and behaviour as well as explaining what support they can expect from staff.

Good staffing levels enable high levels of support to be provided. Previously, there had been a change of staff. However, staffing levels have remained consistent over the past twelve months. This ensures that young people are provided with consistency and enables a family style atmosphere to be promoted. New staff attend a comprehensive induction and foundation programme over six months to fully prepare them for their role. An ongoing training programme ensures that staff's skills and knowledge are regularly updated. The company has a strong commitment to staff development. Following completion of the six month induction and foundation training, staff are nominated to undertake a National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People. Currently, due to the change in staff there is a reduction in staff holding this qualification.

There are quality assurance systems in place to monitor the performance of the home against its Statement of Purpose so that standards of care are maintained. This includes the manager monitoring the necessary records and visits to the home by the responsible individual to undertake comprehensive assessments of how the home is functioning. Reports from these visits are maintained at the home and provide information about how well the home is delivering care and support to young people living there. They enable the manager to have an overview of how the home is running and bring to light any issues that require action to be taken to improve the care and support provided for young people. Copies of these reports are also

provided to Ofsted in accordance with the Children's Homes Regulations 2001.

Young people's care files are detailed and maintained to a good standard. All staff at the home are required to read these files to ensure that they have the appropriate information and knowledge to provide individual support to young people.

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
13	ensure that any medicine which is prescribed for a child is administered as prescribed. (Regulation 21 (2)(b))	04/12/2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure that a record is kept of when prescribed medicines are not administered or when refused (NMS 13.3)
- ensure that a minimum of 80% of staff have completed their National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in the Caring for Children and Young People. (NMS 29.5)