

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Lindy Latreille
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Date of last inspection	16 February 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

Channel House is a semi-detached three storey property in a residential area. There is a basement that is designated as the Registered Manager's office. The house is situated very close to the town centre and all the local amenities are easy to access.

There is a main line rail connection, shops, cinema, sports facilities, parks and the beach within a five minute walk. All health services are available locally.

The home is registered to accommodate and care for up to three young people. The home provides medium to long term residential care for children and young people aged between eight and 17 years old on admission.

Summary

This was a unannounced social care inspection of all the key standards. This is a good service with some outstanding features.

The Registered Manager has robust monitoring arrangement within the home so that young people follow healthy lifestyles and develop maturity and independent skills.

The home works closely with a range of outside agencies to meet the identified needs of the young people. There is a culture that supports staff to improve practice through training and four of the team are beginning their professional qualification. Staff provide a strong commitment to seek solutions for each young person.

The young people are actively engaged in education soon after admission and the level of individual support is very high. Though there is consultation with the young people, it is not recorded.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

There were no actions set at the last inspection only recommendations.

The Registered Manager has required staff not to use correction fluid on documents relating to the young people, and none was seen in records sampled.

Records of Criminal Record Bureau checks are scrutinised by the Registered Manager and recorded appropriately.

The induction process is now recorded as completed.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The young people are provided with a varied diet by staff with current training in food and drink preparation. Their choice of meals is discussed at the young people's weekly meeting; allowing for preferences to be made.

Mealtimes are well ordered and enjoyable, encouraging good eating habits. The home helps the young people develop their own cooking and catering skills as part of preparation for adult life.

Staff work hard to ensure young people are registered with relevant local health services, receive regular check ups on their health. Records show that any health concerns that do emerge are dealt with promptly and effectively. Health care plans address the individuality of each young person's needs. There are good links with the looked after children's nurses and the home's consultant psychotherapist has a significant input into the health and emotional care of each young person.

All requirements for administration of medication are in place with secure storage, administered by trained staff and with appropriate records kept. All shifts have a first aider on duty.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The home maintains the privacy of young people and safeguards personal, confidential information. Telephones are available for the young people and the landline for supervised calls; however some young people have mobile telephones. Room searches that are carried out follow policy and procedure.

The young people are aware of the complaints policy and say that staff respond to their concerns. Complaints are managed promptly with investigation and satisfactory outcomes. There have been no external complaints since the last inspection.

Good attention is paid to ensuring the safety of young people. Staff are confident and familiar with safeguarding procedures and follow the home's policy. All staff have received recent training last year and further training is arranged. The Registered Manager liaises with a named person on the Safeguarding Board to explore professional issues.

Staff are proactive to identify any bullying traits. The young people confirm that staff are quick to challenge and support the victim of any bullying. Bullying is known to be unacceptable within the home.

There have been no occasions when young people are absent without authority and appropriate procedures are in place. Staff consistently follow procedures to ensure risk reduction.

The young people feel that their care is fair. The behaviour of young people in the home is generally good with encouragement through appropriate boundary setting and negotiation. Poor behaviour is usually managed by higher levels of supervision.

Records are well maintained, recorded and monitored. Themes and trends are reviewed through monthly bar graphs. These, when shared with the young people, add a useful pictorial dimension that enables discussion. Sanctions are generally suitable and reviewed through quality audit to confirm appropriateness.

Physical intervention is seldom used and records meet regulatory requirements with staff trained in physical intervention.

Fire prevention measures are in place; monitored and recorded. All aspects of health and safety are well managed and risk assessments are in place for the home, individual young people and their activities. Emergency lighting is managed through annual contract but not checked by the home inbetween. One staff member has a lapsed certificate in Fire Awareness.

Recruitment is rigorous and recorded, with no agency staff being used. Where staff have been employed prior to Criminal Record Bureau checks being returned a letter informs of their supervision and their supernumerary status. Such a period is used for induction. All visitors to the service are vetted and the young people's safety is maintained.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The young people say that they are encouraged and praised to achieve, and there is always someone they can talk to.

There are frequent one-to-one support sessions several times each week providing, through a key worker system, opportunities for guidance and advice on all aspects of the young people's care. These events are clearly recorded and monitored. The staff in the home provide an high level of personal support. The young people have access to the monthly regulatory visitor and the Responsible Individual makes visits to coincide with meeting them.

External therapy with one of two consultants is arranged in consultation with placing authorities for young people who will engage. Outcomes from therapy are positive and are displayed through more mature behaviour.

Detailed reports are submitted each month to placing social workers who confirm that they are kept fully informed. The devised action plan for the subsequent month is planned in consultation with the young people but this is not evidenced in the records.

The young people admitted to the home are encouraged immediately, by degrees, to engage with education. Many of the young people have been previously excluded or none attendees. Feedback from them is very positive and their achievement has contributed to enhanced self-esteem.

The young people have Statement of Educational Needs, Personal Education Plans and Individual Education Plans in place at either school or in-house tuition. The home's tutor and support worker offer a range of individualised curriculum and project work. This enables young people who are not able to attend education off site to maximise their learning and achievement.

The home's staff have good levels of ongoing communication with education providers which supports the young people's progress. The Registered Manager actively plans to re integrate the young people into off site schooling when possible to strengthen social development and peer relationships.

The young people have access to a wide range of activities that are suitable for them and stimulate their interest in sports and leisure pursuits. Placing social workers confirm that the home funds all activities and required kit and the breadth of activities has a significant benefit to young people placed at the home.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The plan of care is based on needs assessment alongside those of the placing authorities. They are current and reviewed at least with each review or as required. They detail targets and goals that are achievable.

Young people reflect that the care they receive has supported a reduction of anti-social behaviour and greater consistency with engagement with staff.

The home facilitates the review process by collecting placing social workers and family members to attend. The home is active in challenging local authorities where required documents are not forthcoming.

Reviews are held timely and reflect on the changing needs of each young person. Summary notes from reviews confirm actions to be taken and amendments needed to the plan of care.

Young people are encouraged to attend, but on occasions this is too challenging. Reports which identify the achievements and progress since the last review are submitted.

Staff provide supervision for a number of contact arrangements and record outcomes. The home is welcoming for families who wish to visit. Staff frequently transport the young people and their families to facilitate contact. Contact arrangements are detailed on file and staff support the young people and family members in line with placing authorities. Staff record behaviour changes that may follow from these meetings which some young people find extremely emotional.

Arrangements for admission are thorough and there is a high level of liaison with placing authorities. As the home utilises psychotherapist support this has been of significant assistance to admissions.

Young people say that they feel well listened to and staff response quickly to meet their reasonable requests. There is a documented weekly meeting managed by staff and following a consistent agenda offering a forum for discussion all aspects of the home and peer behaviour. Staff provide many informal opportunities for young people to be involved in choices within the home.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

No young people are of an age to have a Pathway Plan.

The home is comfortable and maintained to a good standard with easy access into town and to all local amenities. The young people have single bedrooms that are personalised and their choices are respected for appropriate decoration. There is limited outdoor space at the home but access to the beach is close.

Damage seldom occurs and is quickly repaired by the organisation's maintenance person.

A placing social worker commented that bedroom furniture has been rapidly replaced once identified as damaged.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. There is mixed staff team in relation to gender, age and ethnicity within the company. The planned menus offer cultural dishes but the home has limited resources or artefacts to prompt wider discussion of diversity. The home has a strong culture of individual care which, though not the same for each young person due to differing needs, is equal in priority and focus.

The Statement of Purpose is available and meets requirements. There is mention of the flat in the basement the home but does not clarify that this is the Registered Manager's office. The children's guide is informative for literate young people and provides information about external agencies that support young people in care. The guide gives a strong message on smoking. No young people in the home smoke.

There is a strong culture of training within the home and the organisation which supports the development of staff competency. The Registered Manager, who is a director, holds a social worker degree and the Registered Manager's Award.

Staff deputising in his absence hold the required qualifications and is studying at National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) Level 4. Staff confirm the ongoing support contributes to their achievement. Formal monthly team meetings sustain good communications.

The home provides at least one-to-one staffing at all times and this is increased when any young person is unsettled or following admission.

There are opportunities for staff to follow a range of relevant training. The induction devised by the Children's Workforce Development Council is studied during induction and contributes to further qualifications. Training is discussed within monthly supervision. The staff team does not meet the requirement of being 80% trained, though four staff commence their National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) in September 2009.

Thorough inspections take place each month by a professional with regulatory experience. These reports monitor all aspects of the home and provide an opportunity for the young people to share information.

There are robust internal audits carried out weekly and monthly that contribute to the Registered Manager's report to meet the regulation requirement.

Case files are current, well ordered and stored securely. There is no recorded evidence that the contents are shared with the 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 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
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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 80% of the staff team are qualified at National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) level 3 in child care NMS 29
- ensure that consultation with the young people in relation to their care is recorded NMS 2
- ensure that there are regular checks on emergency lighting in between the annual contract NMS 26
- ensure that training in fire prevention is in date NMS 26