

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Robert Hewston
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Date of last inspection	3 February 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

The home is registered for up to seven young people aged between 12 and 17 years. It accommodates young people with emotional difficulties for medium to long stay periods. It is owned and operated by a private organisation. The premises are situated in a residential area, within walking distance of shops and public transport. The home accommodates young people with emotional difficulties for medium to long stay periods.

The ground floor has a lounge; an education room; a kitchen; the main office; laundry; meeting room and a self-contained young person's flat. On the first floor there are six single bedrooms with washing facilities, two separate toilets and one communal bathroom. The manager's office is also on this floor. The garden has a hard area for sports activities. Currently, seven young people are living here.

Summary

This unannounced key inspection concentrated on key National Minimum Standards. Five young people were available to contribute their views to the inspection. The inspection focused on the outcome areas of Being Healthy, Staying Safe, Enjoying and Achieving, Making a Positive Contribution, Achieving Economic Wellbeing and Organisation. Progress with the two actions and nine recommendations made at the last inspection is also considered.

The overall quality rating is inadequate, notice of action to improve. There are significant weaknesses in how the home currently meets the health, welfare and individual needs of the young people. The practise of giving young people 'roll-up' cigarettes without any written consent or consultation with young people's parents, social worker and medical professionals is a concern.

There are 17 new actions and four recommendations arising from this inspection.

The overall quality rating is inadequate.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, that took place in February 2010, two actions and nine recommendations were made and the outcome judgement was satisfactory.

This visit has established that the two actions have been fully addressed. Seven recommendations have been met but two recommendations remain outstanding.

Although staff personal files were not fully checked on this inspection, the CRB's, references and applications have been inspected in the other homes within the company and have shown to have met this requirement.

The second action from the previous inspection was to ensure where the registered manager has been absent from the children's home for a continuous period of 28 days or more the registered person shall without delay give notice in writing to Ofsted specifying the matters mentioned in sub-paragraphs (a) to (e) of paragraph (2) (Regulation 37(4)). This has been met satisfactorily. The acting manager is completing an application to become the registered manager

of the home. Notice given in writing shows clearly the management structure for the home and the forthcoming application.

The first recommendation which was not met was to ensure both the needs of the child concerned and the likely effects of their admission upon the existing group of residents are taken into account and recorded in decisions on admission to the home. Recent difficulties in young people's behaviour has been because of the poor pre-placement assessment which has not met this expectation.

The second unmet recommendation (which is now an action) is for all staff to receive at least one and a half hours of one-to-one supervision from a senior member of staff each month. Supervision records show gaps where staff are not receiving any supervision for months.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is inadequate.

The home has in place an unsatisfactory approach to the care and promotion of health. Staff are provided with a suitable range of policies to ensure they maximise opportunities to help young people. However these are not being followed. For example the new policy on smoking identifies how staff should discourage young people from smoking using different techniques. Observation during the inspection showed staff handing out roll-up cigarettes to young people. Explanations given for handing out cigarettes to young people are not matched in any health plan, looked-after-children document or behaviour management plan. This potentially impacts negatively on their health and well being.

The home has not obtained up-to-date, completed looked-after-child paperwork for some young people, and some required signatures from the person with parental responsibility for medical treatment, administering immunisations and emergency treatment. There is, therefore, a potential that should an emergency arise there could be a significant delay in addressing health needs.

The home has in place a suitable policy and procedure for the safe management of medication. Staff know how to handle medication correctly and receive an appropriate level of training. However the storage of medication is unsatisfactory. The medical cupboard, holding young people's prescribed and non-prescribed medication is too small.

Young people are consulted about menu planning and are provided with a balanced and varied diet. Comments from children include 'we do know what's healthy and what's not'. When appropriate, they are encouraged to learn food preparation skills, including planning and preparing a complete meal. Young people have full access to a domestic kitchen which is of a satisfactory standard in terms of appearance, cleanliness and equipment. Staff encourage young people to be involved in menu planning, and food shopping. Young people are able to follow basic food hygiene when preparing, cooking and eating food.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The home continues to provide satisfactory arrangements for the promotion, protection and care of young people. Staff are provided with suitable training in safeguarding and they are

aware of their roles and responsibility in matters related to child protection. Further refresher courses in safeguarding have been arranged for the forthcoming months.

Young people's right to privacy is well understood by staff. Confidentiality is managed appropriately. Young people's comments include, 'yes staff knock before coming in' (to their rooms), and they also confirm that they are able to make and receive private telephone calls. However the issue of an electronic monitoring system upstairs still requires the consent of the young people's placing authorities.

Appropriate actions are taken to safeguard young people should they go missing without consent. Notifications are made to the police, staff endeavour to maintain contact with the young people by phone and they are provided with support and guidance on their return.

Young people know how to make a complaint. They are provided with guidance within a children's guide issued to them on admission. Young people's understanding of the complaints procedure is evidenced in the recording of the complaint, the support offered through key-working sessions, and the written and verbal feedback given by management. Comments from the young people confirmed that they know the complaints procedure and have been involved and happy with the final actions and outcomes when used. However, the home's Statement of Purpose and young person's guide do not include the contact details of the regulator, or of independent organisations, for anyone who wishes to make a complaint.

Young people are encouraged to improve their behaviour. The staff team have undertaken new and updated behaviour management training since the last inspection. However the behaviour management plans do not reflect the staff experience and knowledge. The behavioural plans are been written with specific clinical therapeutic input. The staff team are not knowledgeable, nor have they received training, in therapeutic techniques. Sanctions and rewards are given and recorded, however there is no evaluation of the effectiveness of these actions. All staff are trained in the use of physical intervention which is used infrequently and for a minimal length of time.

The home has systems and procedures in place to ensure that the health and safety of young people is monitored and promoted. Fire evacuation drills are undertaken on a monthly basis and alarms are checked each week. Comments from children include, 'yes I have been shown what to do if there is a fire.' Care arrangements are informed by a fire safety risk assessment undertaken in 2009. Changes in locking devices to an internal door could prevent young people managing to evacuate safely and quickly. The door used to be on a key pad, the lock has now changed to a and staff do not keep this key to hand.

Staff personnel files were not accessed at this inspection. Visitors sign in when entering the house and provide appropriate identification. This promotes safe practice for the care and welfare of young people.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people receive good levels of individualised personal support. Young people are able to access professional counselling sessions and this helps address complex needs and issues. Staff are effective with helping young people move on from past disruptive experiences. Staff understand the importance of acknowledging young people's differences so that needs relating

to areas such as ethnicity, religion, gender and disability can be identified and met. The recording of discussions does not always reflected the positive work achieved.

The home satisfactorily supports and enables young people to achieve satisfactory educational attainments. Young people are provided with a range of opportunities to learn and develop. However, the majority of young people are refusing to attend full time education. Input from the education coordinator for the home does give young people the opportunity for focused educational activities, however this is quite limited in practice.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

The home does not have in place clear arrangements for the admission of young people to the home. The initial referral and assessment of each young person shows their requirements for a therapeutic environment with an experienced staff group. Although training is to be provided for the staff in a therapeutic, at present there are no therapeutically qualified or experienced members of staff.

Young peoples looked-after-children documents are limited in information and do not contain the required signatures. In-house placement plans recognise young people's religious, racial, linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Staff respect young people and value diversity. However, young people views are not included in their plans. Therefore, they do not contribute fully to decisions about their lives and do not influence the way the home is run.

Young people are consulted about care arrangements. Although not consistently used, young people may be asked to complete a questionnaire which highlights key information from the child's perspective to inform placement planning. House meetings are held during which young people are consulted about activities and day-to-day life in the home.

Young people are provided with support to maintain contact with family, friends and significant people in their lives. Staff are knowledgeable about these details and there is clear recorded information on file about the agreed contact arrangements and the circumstances in which it can take place.

Young people's views and opinions are sought. There are formal house meetings on a weekly basis. Key-worker meetings are also taking place. Staff focus on their working relationship, and getting to know the young people is actively promoted. Regular discussions take place with young people about how care is provided and how this impacts on their lives. Staff show a keen willingness to improve areas that are raised.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people are being supported to develop skills, knowledge and experience in preparation for leaving care and the achievement of independence. Staff provide adequate support and encouragement to help young people focus on their aspirations and goals as they move towards adulthood. Staff at the home encourage young people to develop age-appropriate living skills, such as cleaning, cooking and doing their laundry. Young people can assist with meal planning by being involved when they draw up shopping lists and menus, so that they may learn by example. Young people may also practice skills they will need when they leave care.

Young people are provided with individual bedrooms which are suitably maintained and personalised. Young people have access to sufficient levels of communal space which gives them choices regarding their recreational and leisure time. The home provides young people with sufficient bath, shower and toilet facilities with appropriate locks to ensure their privacy is maintained. Suitable laundry facilities are also provided to meet the needs of the home.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The home is currently managed by a manager, who is not registered by Ofsted; an application for this will be submitted shortly. The home has a Statement of Purpose which sets out the services and facilities provided. However the Statement of Purpose is offering services the home is not registered for or equipped to manage. For example, the home is not registered for young people who have a physical disability such as deafness or visual impairment. Training for staff to be competent in a therapeutic model has not been offered and the home is not a therapeutic environment in the strictest sense.

The home's staffing arrangements are sufficient to meet the needs of the young people placed. The home has the capacity to increase staffing according to young people's assessed needs. Staffing ratios are good and there are sufficient numbers of staff for young people to receive good quality care. Supervision records show staff are not receiving supervision sessions. This could effect the overall care and service the young people receive.

Management systems are satisfactory in monitoring the work of the home and the standard of care that is given to young people. The manager checks and signs all documents regularly and produces reports on the findings. An independent person visits the home every month to complete checks on the care of young people, and reports of these visits are made available to the manager and to Ofsted. However, issues identified within these reports had not been identified within management checks, highlighting that current management monitoring fails to ensure that needs are fully met.

The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Policy, training and care practice helps young people to know that their individual needs on the basis of race, ethnicity, sexuality, gender, age and religion are identified and supported. However the lack of specific training in the areas of therapy and staff receiving regular supervision could effect young peoples well-being and safety.

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
1	ensure that the children's home is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its Statement of Purpose (Regulation 4.6)	18 July 2010

34	ensure the person managing the home on a day-to-day basis submits an application to register with Ofsted at the earliest opportunity (Part 2(11) Care Standards Act 2000 and Part 2, Regulation 3(3) The Care Standards Commission (Registration) Regulations 2001)	30 June 2010
22	ensure the written record of any measure of discipline includes the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure (Regulation 17(4)(f))	30 June 2010
2	ensure, before providing accommodation for a child in a children's home, the arrangements for their care will be met (Regulation 12)	30 June 2010
7	improve the recording of significant views, discussions and expressed opinions of young people (Regulation 11)	30 June 2010
1	ensure the young people's guide includes the address and telephone number of Ofsted (Regulation 4)	30 June 2010
5	ensure that the home is conducted to promote and make proper provision for the welfare and supervision of young people accommodated there and make proper provision for their care, education, and, where appropriate, treatment (Regulation 11)	30 June 2010
34	improve the Registered Person's quality of care monitoring by providing for consultation with young people accommodated in the home, their parents or carers (where appropriate), placing social workers and local authorities (Regulation 34.3)	30 June 2010
12	ensure young people's comprehensive health plans reflects their needs and are regularly reviewed and updated, particularly how smoking is to be addressed (Regulation 20)	30 June 2010
26	ensure unnecessary risks to the health or safety of children accommodated in the home are identified and so far as possible eliminated, this refers specifically to the changes to the lock systems to one of the internal fire doors (Regulation 23(c))	30 June 2010
26	ensure, after consultation with the fire authority, that adequate precautions against the risk of fire are taken; specifically undertake checks and maintenance of equipment within agreed timescales; ensure staff receive fire training; and fire exit doors open without the use of a key (Regulation 32(1)(a-e))	30 June 2010
35	maintain in respect of each child who is accommodated a record in permanent form that includes information specified in Schedule 3(18), specifically that the young people's looked-after-child documentation from their placing authority is complete, and signed consent from the person with parental responsibility is obtained (Regulation 28)(1)(a))	30 June 2010

14	ensure the routine of the home is organised so as to further young people's participation in educational activities (Regulation 18 (1)(a)(b))	31 July 2010
9	ensure that the child's placing authorities give consent to the use of electronic monitoring devices (Regulation 22)	30 June 2010
31	ensure that all staff receive appropriate training. In particular this relates to all staff attending specific training in therapeutic techniques and administration and safe handling of medication training (Regulation 27.4)	31 July 2010
28	ensure all persons employed receive appropriate training and supervision, and have opportunities to obtain further qualifications appropriate to the work they perform. (Regulation 27)	30 June 2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure that measures of control are fair and consistently applied, and follow individual behaviour management plans (NMS22)
- ensure both the needs of the child concerned and the likely effects of their admission upon the existing group of residents are taken into account and recorded in decisions on admission to the home (NMS 5.7)
- ensure that young people are actively discouraged from smoking (NMS12)
- review and where appropriate revise the behaviour management plans in line other plans such as arrangement plans, therapeutic plans and care plans. (NMS 22)