

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Mick Earl
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Date of last inspection	10/08/2010
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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 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 six young people, aged from eight years old up to 17 years old.

The home is a large three storey detached house. The ground floor comprises a kitchen, lounge, dining room, quiet room, laundry, toilet and staff office. On the first floor, the house has three bedrooms and one family size bathroom. Office space and sleep-in accommodation for staff is also provided on this floor. On the second floor, there is a further office and sleep-in accommodation for members of staff, in addition to three bedrooms with en-suite shower and toilet facilities used by young people, and a family size bathroom. Included on the second floor, is a corridor that leads to a separate self-contained flat. The flat has its own bathroom with toilet, an open plan lounge/dining room, kitchen and bedroom. A further bedroom is available for members of staff to use as an office or sleep-in accommodation.

The home is close to a local park. There are bus routes nearby to the town where young people can access shops, leisure and transport facilities.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

The purpose of the visit to the home was to carry out an unannounced inspection to inspect the key national minimum standards.

National minimum standards were sampled in all outcome areas and identified the home has good strengths. These are in promoting young people's health, providing privacy and confidentiality for young people, supporting young people's education, involving young people and obtaining their views, providing a wide range of activities and social outings, providing comfortable accommodation and individual support.

There are areas for improvement in ensuring that the home and each young person is provided with a 'looked after children' placement plan, to make sure that restraints are appropriate, ensure a current development plan is available and that the home's plans contain more detail.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection there were two actions and two recommendations. These were in connection with including all required areas in the Statement of Purpose, the consistency of placement plans, fire drills and staff training.

All actions and recommendations have been met.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people are enabled to be healthy through the provision of a nutritious and varied diet. The home has a planned menu and within that young people can exercise choice and express their wishes. They shop for food with staff and are encouraged to help with meal preparation. Young people are encouraged to eat together with staff to promote social interaction. Staff advise young people about healthy eating and also broaden young people's experience of food by providing a range of cultural meals. There is a supply of fruit readily available in the kitchen, which is always accessible to young people during waking hours, and other snacks are available on request.

Young people's health needs are identified and met appropriately. They have health care plans in place which look at all aspects of their physical and emotional wellbeing. Routine appointments are carried out and monitored with local dentists, doctors, opticians and more specialist services are accessed where necessary. Health promotion, including smoking cessation, alcohol and drug awareness and sexual health are addressed in key working sessions and also through specialist resources.

There are suitable arrangements in place for the storage, administration, recording and disposal of medication to ensure young people's health needs are met and their welfare is safeguarded. Staff receive regular training in medication awareness and appropriate policies and procedures are in place to guide their practice. All staff have received first aid training and staff know how to seek appropriate medical advice.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people's privacy is respected and information is confidentially handled. Young people have their own room and staff do not enter without permission unless there is a good reason to do so. Clear procedures are in place to authorise room searches and these are recorded. This helps to protect young people's rights.

Young people know how to complain and their complaints are dealt with swiftly and taken seriously. Young people are given information about advocacy services and have details of who they can contact if they are unhappy about any aspect of their care. There have been no complaints since the last inspection.

Young people are safeguarded from abuse and protected from bullying through comprehensive policies and procedures in which staff receive training. The procedures are readily accessible and staff have information on who to contact should this be necessary. Staff are very clear with the young people that they will not

tolerate any bullying in the home. The potential risk of bullying is assessed for each young person and the young people and staff say there is no bullying in the home.

Young people who go missing without authority are protected through written guidance. Staff have clear written procedures that include how quickly they need to alert the police and how they are to respond to the young person on their return. There have been no episodes of young people missing since the last inspection.

Young people are assisted to develop socially acceptable behaviour through the encouragement of positive behaviours. Staff use clear responses to inappropriate behaviour and the sanctions used in the home are appropriate. Young people said that they thought the sanctions were fair. There have been six records of restraint since the last inspection. Two of the records stated that the young person was restrained because they wanted to leave the building without permission and a third because they refused to comply with what was being asked of them. The records do not clearly show that restraint was necessary in these cases.

The home provides young people with a good level of physical safety and security. There are regular maintenance checks on electrical and gas appliances to ensure their safe operation and these are serviced at appropriate intervals. Fire safety checks and tests take place at the right times and there is a current fire risk assessment in place for the home. Fire drills take place monthly and all staff receive training in fire safety.

There is an effective system in place to monitor any visitors to the home. Security systems throughout the home are good and protect young people at all times.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people are provided with good individual support in line with their needs and wishes. Guidance and advice is available from external professionals regarding health, social and personal matters. Young people are encouraged to develop friendships and have access to people independent of the home.

Staff liaise closely with teachers at the school and employment professionals to ensure young people are supported to achieve their potential. Young people said they get good support with their education and they are involved in meetings to discuss their progress. Young people have access to computers at home and educational and career materials to aid study and develop interests. Personal education plans and other plans and reports are available and set out the support to be provided for young people to achieve and attain. Young people say they get enough help and support with their school work.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

There is a thorough and effective admissions process for supporting young people to settle into the home and procedures allow for planned arrangements. Risks are well managed to try and ensure that the impact of any new young person moving into the home is a positive experience for all the young people.

The Looked After Children information is still not present on all young people's files. The manager and members of staff said that despite constant requests they do not always receive the appropriate looked after children documentation and plans from the placing authorities. There is evidence on file to show that the home makes regular requests for the information. This must be provided to ensure young people's needs are met effectively.

Each young person has an individual person-centred plan. Observations during the inspection and discussion with members of staff show that the format of the plans does not fully reflect the good work carried out by staff. The plans do not clearly describe the goals set for each young person and how they will be evaluated. Young people are involved in their plans. They have regular time with staff to talk about their progress and any issues and they say their views and wishes are listened to. There are good relationships between young people and staff, who provide a nurturing and caring environment and young people are able to develop well.

Young people can have regular contact with their relatives and friends as long as this is in line with their placement plan and is not putting them at risk of harm. There is very good support from the home to help young people with travel arrangements to ensure contact is maintained.

Young people's views are valued and there are opportunities for them to express their opinions through group meeting and individual sessions with staff. The home's provider sends a personal letter to each young person every six months to ask them their views on the service. This gives the young people the message that their views are important and valued.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people get good support to help prepare them to become independent. They are able to learn and develop living skills that they will need for independence. Young people are involved in plans and decision making about where they want to live when they leave the home and the support they will need to make this successful. Staff ensure there is regular contact and support from other professionals and agencies involved when young people are preparing to leave care.

Young people enjoy homely accommodation that is decorated, furnished and

maintained to a good standard and young people are included in decisions about changes to the home including new décor and furnishings. There is plenty of space and a very good range of facilities. Young people like the leisure and games facilities the home has to offer and this includes the farm owned by the service.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The Statement of Purpose, updated and approved in January 2011, and the children's guide give good information in to anyone who is considering using the service on what to expect. The policies and procedures reflect the aims and objectives of the service.

Young people are cared for by sufficient numbers of competent staff to meet their needs. There is a duty manager system to cover in the absence of the registered manager. Shift patterns allow for a handover period to enable good communication to take place and staff to care consistently for the young people.

There are good monitoring arrangements in place to ensure the home is operating well and meeting the needs of the young people. The visits undertaken under regulation 33 are thorough. Reports are written each month using a standard format which covers key National Minimum Standards highlighting any areas which require action. The manager undertakes monthly monitoring of all the relevant records and discusses this with the provider. The home's current written development plan is out of date and the manager said that it is currently being rewritten.

Children's records contain appropriate information to give a good account of their time in the home and are stored securely and confidentially. Files are well organised and well maintained.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Young people's differing needs are assessed thoroughly and identify any specific aspects relating to equality and diversity issues. The home takes a proactive approach in introducing young people to a variety of cultures through trips and themed nights.

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
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2	ensure that there is an up to date placement plan and looked after children documentation provided by the placing authority for each young person accommodated at the home (Regulation 12)	18/04/2011
22	maintain an accurate and up to date record of measures of control used, as set out in the regulation and ensure that restraint is not used as a means to enforce compliance with instructions (Regulation 17)	04/04/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the requirements of each young person's placement plan are reflected in their individual in-house plan and that these plans are in a format that shows the progress that the young people make (NMS 2)
- ensure that the written development plan is reviewed annually and includes information on how young people, families and placing authorities are consulted (NMS 33.5).