

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Lucy Ansell
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Date of last inspection	22/03/2010
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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 is registered to accommodate and care for up to three young people. The home provides short- to medium-term residential care for children and young people aged between 8 years and 17 years old on admission.

The home is a three-storey property in a residential area, with a basement flat that is not designated for use by the children's home. The house is situated very close to the town centre and all the local amenities are easy to access.

There is a mainline rail connection, shops, cinema, sports facilities, parks and the beach within a five minute walk. Medical and dental services are available locally.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This was an unannounced key inspection. This is a strong service with some outstanding outcome areas. Young people's welfare is enhanced by the excellent relationships that exist between staff and young people, and the therapeutic work being completed. Healthcare is very well managed and this home ensures safeguarding procedures and practice are robust. The individual outcomes for the young people are very positive and a lot of work has been completed on helping young people manage the transition into independence. The manager provides strong leadership and demonstrates high standards of child care.

Due to a change in staffing the home has not yet achieved the target of having 80% of all care staff with National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in caring for children and young people. Although staff are already enrolled on the course and attending the appropriate training.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the manager was asked to ensure no staff commenced work in the home until their Criminal Records Bureau check was in place. This is now strictly adhered to by the company and ensures robust safeguarding of the young people.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are able to enjoy healthy and wholesome meals. Young people chose their own menu each week and the menus are approved by an external nutritional expert to ensure a balanced diet. Staff promote healthy living through healthy eating, a range of physical activities, education and information giving.

Each young person's health is closely monitored and the service provides well-managed health care planning. All young people attend routine and more specialist health appointments appropriate to their individual needs. Dedicated comprehensive health files are kept on all young people to provide records of health interventions.

Medication administration is very well managed with detailed recording of all dosages and treatments. Medication is kept securely and two staff administer to ensure medication is delivered safely. All staff receive suitable first aid training.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Young people's privacy is respected in this home. Staff members enable all young people to have time alone and staff will not enter bedrooms without first knocking on the door and awaiting invitation. Young people are provided with a telephone so that they are able to contact friends and family. All information regarding young people is kept confidentially and their personal information is handled sensitively.

If young people wish to complain, a robust system of complaint is available. This system is well managed and overseen by the manager. Young people are kept informed of the progress of the complaint and the final resolution is discussed with them. They also have an opportunity to make further representations if they are not happy with the outcome of the complaint. Young people say that they know their rights and will complain if they are unhappy with any aspect of their care.

Young people are protected by well-managed safeguarding systems. Clear and comprehensive safeguarding guidance is provided for all staff and training is mandatory for all new staff with refresher training compulsory. The home's manager is a qualified social worker with many years of experience and is the dedicated child protection co-ordinator; he ensures suitable action is taken when they have safeguarding concerns. All matters of safeguarding are recorded and detailed within the home's records and documents.

Policies and procedures are in place for reporting and returning young people who are absent without permission. Discussions with the young person about the reasons why they absconded are placed in their files. Staff take prompt action to deal with any incidents of bullying, with high levels of supervision and behaviour plans to ensure the young people are protected.

Young people enjoy positive and supportive relationships with staff members. Any disciplinary measures are constructive, child focused and help reinforce positive behaviour messages to the young people. Young people who act in a less positive manner are encouraged to address this behaviour with guidance and the use of approved sanctions. All sanctions are recorded and provide analysis of the incident and the success of the resulting sanction and discussion of the therapeutic value. Young people say that sanctions are fair. Training in positive handling techniques for staff is up to date. The restraint log books were seen; management have signed off incidents, and complete monthly monitoring of the outcomes to show suitable measures are being used and are effective.

Health and safety is maintained well in this home and staff carry out risk assessments for both the young people and the environment, ensuring reduced risks to young people's health and safety. Regular checks are completed to reduce any risks from fire hazards. All electrical and gas equipment is regularly serviced and checked.

The company uses robust vetting procedures to recruit suitable staff to work with young people. All the statutory checks are now completed before a staff member is allowed to work in the home. All visitors to the home must sign in and no visitor is allowed unsupervised access to the home.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

All young people receive individual support appropriate to their needs and care plans. Young people have regular key working sessions completed by all the staff, this offers them an opportunity to discuss any matter and form close relationships with all the staff team. Young people say that they are also individually supported by their key and co-key workers. The key worker as well as spending time with their key child, will also liaise with their school/education resource and any professionals as required.

All young people receive education and the staff will support them in this. Arrangements are made for the young people to attend school or college and support is offered in the home after school to complete homework. If the young person is not attending formal education an individual curriculum will be sought within the company's education facilities. Each young person has a dedicated education plan and staff meet with the school for open days and consultation evenings.

The young people are encouraged to engage in individual as well as group leisure activities to help them develop their skills and self-confidence; for example, biking, swimming, bowling, pamper evenings and sports night. All weekly activities and trips out and any plans for holidays are discussed in the house meetings. The young

people are encouraged to be involved in the local community and with the company's other houses as well as local clubs.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The young people have placement plans and 24-hour management plans which include details of how individual needs are to be met. There are also key worker action plans with priority targets to ensure work with young people is focused. Young people are encouraged to be involved in the development of their plan of care. However, the risk assessments are neither robust or comprehensive and the overall paperwork does not enable a streamlined approach. Formal reviews are undertaken within the required timescales and young people are enabled to contribute to and attend reviews. All corresponding paperwork is reviewed in a timely manner, which ensures the plans meet the young people's needs and young people continue to get the most appropriate support.

Young people are supported to have constructive contact with family and friends. A strength of the company is working closely with the families and to make funds available to support activities between young people and their family. Individual contact arrangements are clearly recorded on the files, and good communications between staff and family ensure contact remains a positive experience.

Young people said that staff listen to them and that there is plenty of chances for them to speak out. For example, daily key worker sessions; weekly house meetings and informal chats with staff. Regular consultation is undertaken and comprehensive monthly reports sent to the social workers. Young people are routinely involved in the process of gathering and recording information about themselves, contributing to assessments and to the formulation of placement plans.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The young people receive care and support that encourages independence and helps prepare them for adulthood. Where appropriate this is part of their care plan, which promotes semi-independent living within the home, including encouraging them to budget, shop and then with assistance cook for themselves. Pathway plans are drawn up with other professionals and implemented to ensure the young person has the skills and knowledge required for independent living.

The home has a comfortable homely lounge and a big dining room, which all staff and young people can sit round situated, on the ground floor. The office, one bathroom, games rooms and one bedroom are on the first floor and staff sleep in the office. On the top floor is a further bathroom and the three further bedrooms one of which is a staff bedroom. Young people's bedrooms are individual and reflect personal tastes. There are a sufficient number of toilet and bathroom facilities on all

the floors. The home is well decorated and laid out and is suitable to meet the needs of the young people.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home's updated Statement of Purpose accurately reflects the services, but does not reflect the current staff team. The young people's guide is available in a child-friendly, easy-to-read format.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The home actively promotes equality and is able to challenge issues of discrimination, racism and inequality. The home promotes uniqueness and the value of respect and positive self-image.

An efficient manager and management support structure ensure the delivery of high quality care to the young people who live in this home. The home provides clear arrangements for management cover with an off-duty rota to cover management outside of working hours. The home is below the required ratio for staff already possessing or enrolled on a National Vocational Qualification at level 3. Staff receive regular supervision and all received an annual appraisal and personal development plan. There are regular team meetings to ensure staff are fully informed and are working consistently with the young people. The staff team at the home are a very committed group, with good training and support, who are successfully promoting positive outcomes for young people. There is a good mix of both male and female and new and experienced staff.

The home is able to constantly adapt to the needs of the young people and strives to always deliver the most effective service. The manager completes monthly and quarterly reviews on the quality of care in the home. The home provides a comprehensive robust record of the young people's needs, development and progress. The Regulation 33 reports provide useful support to aid the managers quality assurance processes.

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
29	ensure staff have the qualifications necessary for the work they perform. In particular that 80% of all care staff are qualified to	31/03/2011

	at least National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in caring for children and young people, or an equivalent qualification (Regulation 26.3 (b))	
1	ensure the Statement of Purpose provides all the information required in Schedule 1 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001. (Regulation 4(1))	23/12/2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure the plans of care sets out clearly the assessed needs of the child along with clear risk assessments to meet the objectives of the placement. (NMS 2)