

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Paula Eaton
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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

This children's home accommodates up to five young people between the ages of 10 and 17. The home is owned and managed by a local authority. Features include a garden which backs on to woodland, an activities room, a lounge with an open fire place and single bedrooms. There are office spaces and a separate kitchen and dining area on the ground floor as well as a laundry room.

At the time of the inspection, there were four young people living in the home. Four young people were at home during the inspection, two of whom were spoken with.

Summary

This was an unannounced key inspection that looked at all of the key national minimum standards. The home provides a safe and comfortable environment for young people and the standard of care is good.

Records are detailed, kept up to date and regularly reviewed to reflect the changing needs of young people. Staff build positive relationships with young people and strive to meet their individual needs.

Young people are supported and encouraged to actively engage in education and are rewarded for their efforts which results in young people maintaining educational placements. Young people are also supported to take part in a variety of leisure activities.

Staffing levels and consistent practice have been maintained despite significant changes in the permanent staff team.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection the provider was asked to find a solution to the risk posed by having doors closed in communal areas. The provider has installed new doors with glass panels which allow staff to observe young people in communal areas and reduces associated risks posed by the previous doors.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people benefit from a varied and nutritious diet that takes into account their likes and dislikes and any special dietary needs including those based on their cultural and religious identity. Staff monitor the diets of young people. Staff explore ways of involving young people in preparing meals and making choices about what they are going to eat. Although menus are prepared young people always have the option of an alternative choice and snacks and drinks are available for young people on their return from school.

The health needs of young people are met. The home has established effective links with healthcare professionals and has good systems in place for recording, responding to and

monitoring the health needs of young people. Individual health profiles are maintained in young people's case files and include any healthcare appointments and the outcome of these. Staff promote a healthy lifestyle and actively discourage smoking, drug and alcohol misuse. The home also accesses specialist services such as the children and adolescent mental health service to provide support for young people and guidance for staff when required.

Robust systems are in place for the safe storage, administration and disposal of medication. This includes excellent monitoring systems that minimise the risk of errors being made. However, the dose of medication being administered to young people is not always recorded, especially with regard to painkillers. Staff monitor any adverse effects that medication may have on young people and ensure that medication is reviewed if any concerns are raised. Consent forms are in place for the administration of medication and any medical treatment and homely remedies used for young people are approved by their general practitioner.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The privacy and dignity of young people is respected. Bathrooms and bedrooms have appropriate locks on them and there are areas within the home where young people can meet with visitors in private. Records are kept securely and satisfactory policies and procedures are in place with regard to confidentiality.

The home has a sound complaints procedure in place and young people are encouraged to voice their concerns. Young people state that they feel listened to by staff. The level of complaints in the home is very low and any complaints that are made are responded to promptly and comprehensive records maintained.

Robust systems are in place for protecting and promoting the welfare of young people. All staff receive child protection training as part of their induction and there are clear policies and procedures in place. Safeguarding issues are discussed at each handover period between shifts which ensures that the protection of young people is constantly being considered. Any concerns are addressed immediately and all staff are aware of their responsibilities in terms of reporting and recording any issues that arise. Staff monitor relationships between young people and respond to any signs of bullying promptly and effectively. There is an anti-bullying policy in place and information about bullying is also included in the welcome booklet for young people. A new policy has been introduced for when young people are absent without authority or abscond from the home. The systems for responding to such incidents are sound.

Staff strive to build positive relationships with young people and manage difficult behaviour in a constructive manner using a restorative justice approach where appropriate. There are clear boundaries in place and staff and young people treat each other with respect. Staff also benefit from a debriefing session on shift that allows them to discuss how they are feeling before going home which is especially beneficial during challenging periods. Records are maintained for any sanctions imposed and any physical restraint used. The home also has incentive schemes in place such as a school rewards scheme that encourages positive behaviour.

Appropriate health and safety policies and procedures are in place. All fire safety equipment is tested at regular intervals and all gas and electrical safety checks take place as required. Any health and safety issues are promptly reported and addressed.

There are robust recruitment policies and procedures in place to ensure the protection of young people.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Staff strive to meet the individual needs of young people and take into account their likes, dislikes and preferences when planning shifts and activities. Each young person has a key worker who supports them. Individual risk assessments are completed for each young person for any identified risk such as self harm, absconding and aggression. These are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure they are kept up to date. Shifts are planned with the individual needs of each young person in mind, cultural and religious needs are considered.

Young people benefit from a high level of support to meet their educational needs. They are supported to maintain school and college placements. Staff advocate on their behalf when communicating with schools about any difficulties they are facing. Staff support young people with their homework and encourage daily routines that are structured to include time for study. There is also a school rewards system in place that encourages good attendance and behaviour at school for a small weekly monetary award. At the time of the inspection all of the young people in the home had educational placements and had just finished school for the summer holidays.

Young people benefit from the choice of a range of activities and staff support young people to pursue their leisure interests. For example, one young person has been actively encouraged to pursue his interest in performing arts and attends a theatre club on a weekly basis. The home has a large garden which has basket ball hoops and a home made assault course constructed by young people. There are also local parks nearby and the home has a range of books, games and computer equipment for the young people to use.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people's needs are assessed prior to their admission to the home and then a comprehensive care plan is developed clearly outlining how the home will meet their needs. Care plans are very detailed working documents that are regularly updated to reflect the changing needs of young people. Statutory reviews take place at the required intervals and staff support young people to contribute to these meetings. Detailed reports are written following review meetings and these are kept on individual case files.

Staff ensure that young people maintain contact with their families and encourage them to form and maintain friendships. For example, young people are supported to visit friends at their homes and staff facilitate contact with family members. Contact arrangements are included in individual case files and any restrictions are made clear. In addition to this any contact young people have with family members is monitored in terms of the impact this has on the young person. There is a telephone that young people can use in private to maintain contact with family and friends and most young people also have access to their own mobile telephone.

There are clear procedures in place for admitting young people to the home and for when they move on. Planned moves are made wherever possible and young people are involved in the

process and kept informed of the plans being made. Young people are encouraged to bring their personal belongings with them into the home.

Young people are consulted with in a variety of ways. Young people's meetings take place on a regular basis and young people have one to one meetings with their key worker. The home provides a safe and secure environment to enable young people to openly express their views. Young people have access to outside agencies that they can contact for advice and support. This includes independent visitors that meet with young people on a regular basis.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people are supported to develop skills for independent living. This involves household chores, meal preparation and budgeting as well as supporting young people to apply for further education courses and training or work.

The home is located in a fairly rural area close to a small town. There are local shops nearby. Young people benefit from a clean, warm and bright environment. The furnishings are homely and of a good quality and provide a comfortable living space for young people. Young people benefit from an environment that is maintained to a good standard and systems are in place for responding to any maintenance issues.

Young people are accommodated in single bedrooms. They have sufficient furniture and are able to personalise their rooms, for example by displaying personal art work. There are ample communal spaces that young people can access and meet with visitors in private and a large outdoor space for young people to explore and use to participate in outdoor activities.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The Statement of Purpose for the home contains the required information and is updated on a regular basis to reflect any changes in the operation of the home. There is an informative and colourful welcome booklet that is given to young people on their arrival at the home. It is written in plain English and contains details about the service provided at the home, the expectations and information about key policies including the complaints procedure and bullying.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Staff strive to meet the individual needs of young people. This includes meeting their cultural and religious needs. Staff also routinely consider the preferences and views of young people as individuals.

Staffing levels are maintained to a good level and the home has a motivated staff team committed to meeting the needs of young people. Although there have recently been a substantial number of staff changes the home has maintained a good standard of care for young people. There is an excellent system in place for handing over between shifts. This is used to discuss the immediate needs of each individual young person, their whereabouts and plans for the shift ahead. A shift leader takes responsibility for each shift and there are clear lines of accountability within the home. Absences are generally covered by agency staff who are familiar with the home. Staff have access to a wide range of training courses and are encouraged to attend training.

Robust monitoring systems are in place. The Registered Manager monitors records and Regulation 33 visits take place on a monthly basis as required. A local councillor also visits the home and talks to staff and young people on a regular basis.

Young people's statutory files are well maintained and accessible. Young people's confidential files are stored securely.

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
13	ensure a written record is kept of the administration of any medicine to any child. In particular this relates to the dosage of medication that is administered. (Regulation 21(2)(c))	20 August 2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure at least four fire drills, including evacuation of staff and children from the building and fire drills held at night, take place in a 12 month period and are recorded. In particular the time at which fire drills take place is recorded. (NMS 26.8)