

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Liz Driver
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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 setting is a family sized home, which provides accommodation and care for up to two young people who have experienced emotional and behavioural difficulties. A private company owns and operates this setting. The house has, on the ground floor, a lounge, a kitchen and breakfast room, computer room and toilet. Bedrooms and a bathroom and shower room are on the first floor. There is a small garden to the rear of the property.

Summary

This key inspection was unannounced taking place on a weekday. Three recommendations made at the last inspection were revisited during this inspection. All key national minimum standards were assessed during this inspection with one action and four recommendations made.

Young people have their health needs met well with sound procedures in place. Young people's dietary needs are well catered for. Robust procedures and policies ensure young people are protected with appropriate safeguarding training provided to staff. Individual needs are addressed with care planning and reviews highlighting all aspects of care. Young people have numerous avenues where they can voice their views and opinions about the running of the home and their lives. They live in a very comfortable home which is child focused and maintained to a good standard. The home is organised and managed well with staff suitably trained to provide good standards of care. The home is safe, with all health and safety areas fully addressed. Young people are able to raise concerns or complaints either formally or informally.

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 last inspection the setting were asked to update their child protection and safeguarding policy which has been actioned. It now contains details of the Local Authority Designated Officer. All sanctions are now endorsed by the manager or manger covering the setting. There is now a written response plan following regulation 33 visits.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people's dietary needs are fully assessed with a nutritious and varied diet provided. Young people have the opportunity to choose and help prepare meals. The young people in the home are encouraged to eat a healthy and balanced diet. They plan their own meals at least four times a week as part of life skills development and are given advice from the staff as to what constitutes healthy eating. They are able to prepare snacks when they wish and have access to fresh fruit.

Each young person's health needs are fully assessed and reviewed at regular intervals. Physical, emotional and medical health needs are contained within individualised health care plans with placement objectives that are regularly reviewed. All routine medical appointments are made and they are registered with a local dentist, doctor and optician. Any specialist medical appointments are arranged by the home and young people encouraged to meet with health

professionals for specific advice. The setting liaises very closely with other health related professionals to ensure good outcomes for young people. The promotion of a healthy life style is clear with information provided about issues such as smoking, drug and alcohol misuse and sexual health. Young people are cared for by staff who are trained to administer first aid.

There are good procedures in place that ensure the storage, stock control and administration of medicines is safe and secure. Young people have medicines administered by appropriately trained staff. The current medication policy is brief and could be improved with the use of more specific language. Consents for the administration of medicines, first aid and emergency treatment are obtained prior to admission.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people have keys for their own bedroom door. Members of staff knock on doors before entering a young person's room. There is a policy in place with regards to searching a young person's room and a record is kept if this occurs. Any confidential information kept on the young people is kept securely stored in locked cabinets in a secure office. There is a comprehensive policy regarding client access to records. There is a telephone which the young people can use in private and each young person has a mobile telephone. Members of staff are aware of the need for sensitivity in respecting young people's privacy and also know that there are occasions where information has to be shared with others, for example, in the case of child protection issues.

The right of a young person to complain about their care in the home is made clear to them on their admission to the home. The young person's handbook gives clear guidance to the young people about who they can complain to and their contact details. Staff receive training in complaints and whistle blowing as part of their induction process. Recording systems for complaints are in place although no entries have been made since the last inspection.

Young people are cared for by staff who receive appropriate training in safeguarding, including the home's and local authority's protocols in identifying and responding to child protection concerns or incidents. All members of staff are aware of what they need to do in the event that they have concerns about a young person's welfare. There is a child protection policy in place for the staff to follow and they have a copy of the local safeguarding procedures in the office to which they can refer. There is no designated child protection log in the home as current practice is to record in individual files. Procedural guidance for staff clearly demonstrates the systems required in order to protect children and minimise the risk of abuse whilst young people are living in the house. Staff are very well informed of the setting's whistle blowing policy although to date it has not been activated.

The home has a very clear policy in place with regards to managing bullying. Any admissions to the home are assessed to ensure that stability is maintained in the home and that the chances of bullying are minimised. Behavioural expectations are made clear to the young people when they are admitted to the home and the policy emphasizes that there is no tolerance of bullying behaviour.

The home has a clear policy in place for the staff to follow in the event that a young person goes missing. Each young person's care plan clearly records what course of action will be pursued should the young person leave the home without permission or not return to the home at the

agreed time. This strategy is also explained to the young people so that they are clear as to what the consequences are if they are missing. The home manages this issue extremely well and consistently.

Each young person has a behaviour management plan in place which outlines what support they need to achieve positive behaviour. Triggers for distressed or challenging behaviour are recorded in each young person's behaviour management plan. Targets can be set on a weekly basis to enable young people develop coping skills and anger management techniques. If targets are achieved then the young people can earn rewards such as extra outings or activities.

All members of staff receive training in the method of restraint chosen by the organisation which owns the home. There have been no recorded incidents of restraint in the home since it was opened in 2007. Sanctions are recorded and endorsed by the manager as part of the monitoring process. The setting's sanction policy does not clearly identify permissible and non permissible sanctions to be used. Behaviour in the home is of a good standard. The staff are aware of the fact that good relationships with the young people underpin good order in the home rather than relying on imposed control via disciplinary measures.

The manager ensures that any risk assessments related to the premises, activities or young people are updated and reviewed regularly. The home has up to date checks carried out on electric, gas and fire safety systems. Additionally, there are regular fire drills. Internal checks are also carried out on a weekly basis by members of staff to check the fire alarms, smoke detectors, emergency lighting and fire extinguishers.

The organisation operates a robust recruitment process which ensures that all members of staff have the correct checks made on them before commencing work. Files evidenced staff have enhanced criminal record bureau checks and the standards for safe recruitment are met. All visitors are vetted, supervised if appropriate and asked to sign the visitor's book.

Systems operated in the home ensure that the young people are kept safe and that their wellbeing is promoted and protected.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The individual needs of young people are seen as paramount. Staff provide good levels of individual support and are positive about the outcomes this enables them to achieve. Care plans clearly highlight the individual needs of each young person. The religious and cultural needs of young people are established prior to arrival and where necessary actions are implemented to ensure these are met. A key working process is in place to ensure young people have regular opportunities to discuss their care plans and voice their wishes, concerns and aspirations. The setting is excellent at encouraging young people to have a voice and provide them with the tools to raise issues about their present and future lives with the home's staff, their social workers or other relevant professionals if necessary.

The staff work very hard to ensure that each young person has the opportunity to attend an educational placement. Staff liaise with local authority education departments and arrange meetings to prepare individual education plans (IEP) and personal education plans (PEP). The staff assist young people in attending their education placement and will incorporate rewards into their behaviour management plan and targets to give an incentive for the young people

to attend. The home has an ethos where education is highly valued and young people are encouraged to take advantage of the support and opportunities given to them. Links with local work experience and employment companies adds to the education provision and transitional support into adult life.

Young people have the opportunity to take part in a range of activities both in and out of the home. Preferences for activities are ascertained during key work sessions and during the admission process.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people have a robust assessment of their needs and placement plans that identify how their needs will be met. A structured review process continually assesses young people's needs throughout the placement to ensure positive outcomes are achievable. Excellent avenues are in place for young people to have a positive contribution about their present needs, the way the home is run and their future. Regular reviews of care plans occur. Where necessary specialist advice is sought to address particular issues young people may have and incorporated into care plans. The setting has experienced difficulties in gaining all the looked after children's legal paperwork from placing authorities and records show that they follow this up robustly.

Contact is fully promoted for young people and their friends; any restrictions are for valid reasons that are fully understood by young people and staff.

Young people are given a range of avenues to express how they feel. They have high levels of access to adults caring for them. There are regular key work sessions, formal reviews and the young people are able to voice their views on an informal basis constantly.

The way the home functions enhances every young person's independence and opportunities to make every day choices. It is clear that the young people's views are highly valued and that the ethos of the home means that their needs are of paramount importance. The staff approach ensures that the young people feel valued and listened to.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Good procedures are in place for young people as they approach adulthood. This includes liaising with social workers and contributing to pathway plans or leaving care plans.

The home provides a good standard of accommodation throughout. Recent decoration and renewing of fittings and furnishings have taken place as part of an ongoing programme. Suitable toilet and bathing facilities are provided although some bathroom tiles are in need of replacing. The young people choose the décor in their rooms and are able to personalise them with posters and pictures. The young people all have their own key for their room and there is separate sleeping in accommodation for the staff. The garden has recently been decked to make it a more socially used area. The home has enough space for the young people to meet visitors in private.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The individual needs of young people at the home are properly considered in relation to religion and cultural needs together with health and dietary needs. Recruitment procedures ensure staff are recruited fairly and without discrimination.

The setting provides suitable information regarding the facilities and services available for young people. The statement of purpose, updated in 2009, highlights all areas of care provision and identifies the aims and objectives of the service. Young people are given a children's guide that is comprehensive and clearly states what they can expect and what is expected of them.

Young people benefit from a strong staff team consisting of experienced staff who are all fully supported by the manager and other senior staff in the organisation. An extensive induction programme is offered to newly recruited staff with continued training after this period. Staff receive regular and a good standard of supervision and feel well supported. Sickness and holidays are covered by bank staff. A good staff to young people ratio is in place to ensure high levels of support and individual attention for young people. Staff undertake mandatory training throughout the year plus other appropriate training as identified.

Additionally there are regular team meetings to discuss the running of the home and the young people's behaviour and progress. All members of staff have clear job descriptions which outline their duties and responsibilities. The staff have access to a number of written policies and procedures which are kept in the staff office. Additionally the staff have regular access to a child psychotherapist who can give advice and an oversight in their work with the young people.

More than 90 per cent of the staff team have achieved NVQ Level 3 Caring for Children and Young People. The staff team have access to a variety of training courses. The competency of the staff is underpinned by an active and ongoing training program. Staffing is maintained on a basis of two members of staff to one young person and this ensures a high staff presence and excellent levels of support.

The home is well managed with appropriate and suitable cover in place for absences. There is an annual development plan in place for the home and this describes the home's intention to develop areas such as décor and maintenance, training, meeting National Minimum Standards, increasing the staffing complement and encouraging feedback from stake holders such as the young people and placing social workers.

The home has regular visits undertaken by an external manager from within the organisation. These are the subject of reports which ensure that key areas in the home are monitored.

All required records are accurate and up to date and clearly reflect the needs and progress of young people living at the home.

The management of the home and systems operated therein, ensure that the staff are well trained and supported. This in turn ensures that the young people are cared for to a good standard and that their needs are promoted and their wellbeing protected and developed.

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
2	ensure all Looked After Children's paperwork gained from placing authorities is in place in a timely manner (Regulation 2)	29 August 2009

Recommendations

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

- review the current sanction policy to ensure it identifies all permissible and non permissible sanctions staff can use (NMS22)
- update the medication policy to ensure more specific and comprehensive information is provided about all areas from ordering, storage administration, and disposal of medicines (NMS 13)
- continue with the maintenance for the house identified by staff, especially replacing bathroom tiles (NMS 24)
- commence a designated child protection log to enable monitoring of all allegations and referrals (NMS17).