

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Mark Kersh
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Date of last inspection	17/03/2010
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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 a privately run children's home, which provides care and accommodation for two young people of either sex, aged from 10 years to 17 years of age.

The home is a detached four bedroom property, situated in a residential area. On the first floor of the house, there is a bathroom and four individual bedrooms, two of which are staff sleep-in rooms. One of these bedrooms is also used as an office. On the ground floor, there is a lounge, kitchen with dining area, toilet, utility room and conservatory.

The home has an enclosed rear garden and to the front of the property there is a driveway, providing car parking for a number of cars.

One young person was present during this inspection and their views were ascertained during the visit.

Summary

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

This was an unannounced full key inspection during which all key national minimum standards were assessed. Actions and recommendations following the previous inspection were also checked for compliance.

The home provides a satisfactory standard of care with some good features. The home ensures that young people's care planning, health and education needs are effectively met and that there are appropriate systems in place, to ensure young people live in a safe environment and that they are protected from abuse.

Some shortfalls have been found in relation to records to be kept when young people are absent without permission, information for young people and staff supervision. A good practice recommendation has been made in relation to arrangements for key worker reports.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection actions were raised in relation to recruitment information, monitoring visits and checks, room search records, maintenance and repair programme and consultation with significant others. Evidence from this inspection demonstrates that these have now been met.

The provider was also asked to improve practice in supervision for staff, this is not met and has been carried forward following this inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people receive a well balanced, healthy and nutritious diet. Staff actively encourage young people to eat healthily and to take regular exercise. Young people's individual dietary needs, including their likes and dislikes in relation to foods, are all considered to ensure that mealtimes are enjoyed by them. Young people are able to participate with the planning, preparation and cooking of meals and they are able to prepare their own snacks and drinks in between mealtimes.

Young people's good health is promoted and appropriate services are provided to meet young people's identified health needs. Young people are registered and supported to attend their routine health appointments with doctors, dentists and opticians and where needed, they receive additional support, through the involvement of specialised services.

Young people have their medication administered safely. Medication records are regularly monitored and these demonstrate that safe medication procedures are followed. There are clear arrangements in place for the safe administration of prescribed and non-prescribed medication, including medical consent for staff to attend to young people's health needs. Staff are trained in the safe use of medication and in the safe administration of first aid.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

There are suitable arrangements in the home for promoting privacy and confidentiality. Young people have their own bedrooms which can be locked from inside and keep their personal possessions safe. Young people confirm staff always knock on their bedroom door before entering. Staff use work practices that respect young people's privacy and confidentiality. The staff are aware that in any event in which room searches are carried out, all such searches must be fully recorded, and documentation available for this meets requirements.

The home has a complaints procedure through which concerns about care can be raised both informally and formally. Young people are informed of the various ways that they can make a complaint and they are provided with relevant contact numbers of agencies they can make a complaint directly to if they wish. No complaints have been received. Young people say if they have a concern they can talk to staff and the manager and any issues are quickly resolved.

There have been no safeguarding concerns or referrals made relating to the home. There are suitable child protection policies and procedures in place. All staff have

received relevant child protection training and they are aware of actions to take, in response to any allegations or suspicions of abuse. These actions show that the home takes appropriate measures, to ensure young people are protected from abuse.

Bullying is not an issue for young people at the home. The home has appropriate policies in place, to address any issues of bullying and they have carried out risk assessments on times and places bullying may be most likely. Staff work with young people, to help them develop their understanding of other people's views and beliefs and the importance of tolerance of others.

The home has a procedure for reporting young people who are absent without permission, including reporting the absence to the police. Overall young people comply with the expectations of the home and return at an agreed time. However, some records of instances when young people have been absent without permission are not fully complete or available for inspection. This prevents effective monitoring of instances when young people fail to return home. Staff demonstrate well their understanding to report significant events to other relevant agencies.

The home operates a clear behaviour management system. Staff aim to work positively with young people and reinforce and reward good behaviour. Sanctions may be imposed on young people, for inappropriate behaviour and they agree and sign to say they accept any sanction imposed on them. Staff are aware of the types of sanctions they can impose and those they must not use. All staff receive training in the home's preferred method of physical intervention, which is regularly updated. Staff are clear of the circumstances when physical intervention may be used and that it should only be used as a last resort, when other strategies have failed. No restraints have taken place.

Regular health and safety checks of the premises are carried out and relevant risk assessments are in place and regularly reviewed. All fire drills, fire alarm tests and fire safety equipment checks are up to date, with accurate records kept of each check. All staff have received fire safety training. All electrical appliances and installations are patent tested annually. All gas installations and appliances receive a safety check. These actions show that the home takes all reasonable measures, to ensure young people live in a safe environment.

Recruitment records for staff are held securely within the manager's office. The organisations policy for recruiting staff was found to meet regulations and be consistently applied in practice. The home operates a signing in and out book and visitors do not have unsupervised access with young people.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people receive good individual support and they have staff to whom they can go to, if they have any concerns or problems. All young people have a key worker. Young people have the opportunity to meet regularly with their key worker, although in the main informal conversations take place daily rather than planned key worker sessions. However it is unclear that key workers are monitoring the placement plan to ensure that the plan is effectively implemented on a day-to-day basis and that goals are identified and met within suitable timescales.

Young people attend school regularly and their files contain individual education plans compiled by their school. The home maintains good working links with schools that young people attend. The organisation has an appropriately registered school near to the home, through which young people accommodated may access formal education. Young people are assisted with their studies and there are areas where they can study in private and do homework if they wish.

Financial arrangements provided by the organisation for young people allow them to pursue their preferred hobbies and leisure interests. There is good use of local leisure facilities and young people enjoy holidays with the staff annually.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The care planning documentation consists of a number of documents. Written placement plans are compiled for young people and individual looked after children's care plans are in place. Between them the plans cover all areas required and suitably detail the individual needs of young people and how these will be addressed. Staff have a good understanding of the individual needs of the young people.

Statutory reviews take place in line with requirements. Young people participate in their review meetings with support from staff. The home liaises well with placing authorities, to ensure any statutory reviews take place within the permitted timescales or if it is felt necessary to arrange and conduct further reviews. Young people are encouraged to be involved in the compilation of reports for such meetings and they are consulted before, during and after the reviewing process.

Young people are encouraged and supported to maintain contact with their families. Staff promote contact and are proactive in ensuring any contact issues are resolved. Staff are able to provide young people with transportation and supervision, where required to ensure contact is maintained.

The home has appropriate policies, procedures and practices in place, for young people moving in to the home. Generally, young people visit the home before admission or the manager and staff from the home will visit them. Referral

information is considered by the manager and staff and any identified likely impact on young people already accommodated in the home are discussed with senior management within the organisation.

Young people's views and those of their parents and the placing authority, are sought regularly and taken in to account on any issues that are likely to affect young people. The home has good systems in place, to enable young people and significant others, to express their views and opinions on relevant issues.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

There are no young people living at the home who are of an age where they need formal pathway planning. Young people are encouraged, from an early age, to engage in tasks such as cooking and tidying their rooms, which will equip them with the skills they need as they progress into adulthood.

The home is fit for purpose, spacious and well furnished, but shows some usual signs of wear and tear evident in any domestic dwelling. Repairs are completed within reasonable timescales, and young people have a say in their bedroom décor and general furnishings within the home. There are no outstanding repairs and at the time of this inspection professional decorators were in the home, attending to the areas of wear and tear.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The Statement of Purpose meets with regulatory requirements. It provides an accurate description of the operation of the home and details the home's commitment to promoting equality and diversity. All staff receive a copy of the statement and a further copy is available in the staff office if required. The young people's welcome pack is in a user friendly format, however, the welcome pack, does not contain all of the relevant and correct information about the home, that young people need to know.

The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Several members of staff have attended equality and diversity training, and young people have access to services in a diverse community. Individual planning reflects young people's diverse needs. The staff team is balanced in terms of age and gender. Effective working with young people's families enables young people to retain an important sense of identity and belonging.

The manager ensures the staff team are supported through regular team meetings and the organisation provides staff with opportunities to undertake both mandatory and refresher training. Planned supervision of staff does not always take place at the required intervals.

The staff team are competent in their roles. In the manager's absence, other suitably experienced senior staff take over managerial responsibilities. The home has some staff qualified in the National Vocational Qualification in Caring for Children and Young people with the remainder of staff enrolled to complete this course. The home is adequately staffed at all times and there are suitable systems in place, to ensure they can cover for any periods of staff sickness or absence.

The practice of the home is subject to internal and external monitoring to identify any shortfalls in the service. Reports are produced following each audit, identifying any action noted to improve practice.

Young people's case files provide a detailed account of the progress they make while living in the home. Young people have access to the information written about them and can request this through staff or their key worker.

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
19	ensure the procedure is followed when any child accommodated in the children's home is absent without permission (Regulation 16.4.b)	20/08/2010
1	keep under review, and where appropriate, revise the children's guide (Regulation 5.a)	20/08/2010
28	ensure staff receive appropriate supervision and appraisal. (Regulation 27.4.a)	20/08/2010

Recommendations

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

- improve records to demonstrate how the placement plan is effectively monitored by the key worker. (NMS 2.2)