

Inspection report for Children's Home

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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 three storey period house in a small town near the coast, and provides individual care for one young person with emotional and behavioural difficulties. It is not easily accessible to young people, staff or visitors with restricted mobility or visual impairments.

The bedrooms for young people and staff are on the first floor, and the staff office is on the second floor, the latter reached by very steep steps. Young people and staff share a bathroom.

There is a kitchen and lounge space for dining and relaxing. The home has a very small garden at the front and back. Sports and leisure facilities can be accessed by car, and there are many local places of interest to visit.

Education is provided either locally or at the company's own school, situated at another children's home approximately half an hour's drive away, or at local colleges.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This was an unannounced full inspection and all key standards were inspected.

This was a positive inspection and the overall judgement for the service is good. Particular strengths are the fact that the staff and manager have responded well to individual needs of young people and have particularly advocated on their behalf to achieve positive educational outcomes. They have also promoted good practice and represented young people's interest in some decisions taken by the placing authority.

The positive contribution outcome group is judged as satisfactory as a result of some placement documents not being held by the home and some reviews not taking place within statutory timescales. Whilst this is the responsibility of the placing authority, there was no evidence that the home was pro-active in reminding them of review dates following each placement change. All the remaining outcome groups are judged as good.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection one recommendation was made. This was that the manager continues to work toward achieving a recognised management qualification. The

registered manager has now completed the training and now holds a recognised leadership and management qualification. This recommendation is now met.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people's good health is promoted by encouragement to eat a balanced diet, and meal planning with young people. Young people preparing to leave the home receive a fixed budget and are expected to shop for and prepare their own meals. This task is shared between young people and staff. All food consumed by young people is recorded and regularly monitored; these records show a high number of refused meals. These are frequently breakfasts and meals that young people are expected to prepare meals for themselves and staff. Meals are eaten together in the living room at the dining table. They are pleasant social occasions. Young people are able to make drinks and snacks when they wish.

All young people are registered with a doctor, dentist and optician; they are able to retain their previous doctors if it is practical to do so. One young person said he was very happy with his choice of doctor, who he was registered with at a previous placement. All medical appointments are recorded along with any treatment that may be necessary. Young people have detailed personal health plans which include physical and emotional health, which enable staff to ensure that identified health needs are able to be met. Specialist support from a consultant psychotherapist is available if required. Young people are encouraged to make their own appointments with the support of staff, as part of the independence programme. Appropriate consent for medical treatment is in place ensuring that any emergency treatment can be rapidly arranged.

All staff receive training in the administration of medicines and are familiar with the company policy on the safe administration of medicines. Some medicines are self administered by young people but most are administered by staff, because of perceived high risk factors. However no formal risk assessment covering self administration is thought to be necessary. All medicines are kept locked in a metal safe inside a locked room. All medicines issued including non prescribed medicines are recorded and regularly audited. However despite this the records of paracetamol held in the home did not accord with the stock held. All unused medicines are returned to the pharmacy and a receipt is obtained.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people's privacy and confidentiality is promoted by clear policies and practice guidelines which are known by and followed by staff. Young people have their own bedrooms and confirm that staff respect their privacy and always knock before entering their bedroom. Young people hold bedroom door keys or ask staff to hold them on their behalf. Young people have their own mobile telephone, subject to a

risk assessment and in accordance with their placement plan. They may also request the use of the office telephone if they wish. Young people have supervised access to the internet and e-mail facilities. The staff are managing well, the tension between encouraging greater independence and ensuring that all identified risks are safely managed, in consultation with the placing authority.

The home follows the company complaints procedure and all staff are trained in supporting young people if they wish to make a complaint. The young people's guide provides information on how to raise any concerns that a young person may have. Young people say that they know how to make a complaint but haven't felt it to be necessary. The complaints record has a section to record all the necessary information and is regularly audited by the manager and a visiting manager. There are no recorded complaints since the last inspection.

Staff receive training in child protection policies and procedures as part of their induction programme and receive regular refresher training. Staff are aware of the company safeguarding policy and referral procedures however are not aware of Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures or how to access them on a computer. The local authority child protection policy and procedures held in the home are no longer applicable.

Young people are protected from incidents of bullying, by an effective anti-bullying policy which is known to and followed by staff. This policy includes the risks of cyber bullying. Young people say that bullying is not an issue in this house. All young people have a personal risk assessment, which identifies any risks to young people or others should they be absent from the home without authority. If a young person is absent from the home there is a clear policy which is followed by staff which is dictated by risk assessment. All young people are given the opportunity to discuss the reasons for any absence on their return to the home.

There are good systems in place for ensuring that all required notifications of significant incidents are reported to the appropriate agencies. Staff are aware of the need to notify senior staff and other agencies of serious incidents; no notifications have been made since the last inspection.

Young people are encouraged to develop socially acceptable behaviour through the use of a reward system. Young people are able to negotiate rewards and sanctions and say that these are fair and reasonable. Staff are trained in an approved method of physical restraint, only one sanction has been imposed since the last inspection and there are no incidents of physical restraint being used. Despite the limited use of restraint and sanctions the records are regularly monitored by the manager and visiting manager.

The safety of young people and staff is promoted by the use of risk assessments, for individual young people, the premises, equipment and activities. These are regularly reviewed and updated. The home has an emergency action plan in place and all electrical equipment is regularly tested. The fire safety records show that fire drills take place regularly including at night. The fire safety records are well maintained

and the number of fire safety evacuations exceeds the requirement.

A sample of staff files examined at the company headquarters office, held all of the information required. There is a robust system for the safe recruitment of staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people's needs are very well understood and met by the staff. Each young person is allocated two key-workers and in one-to-one staffing placements all staff are fully aware of young people's individual needs. Young people say, 'the staff are brilliant and understand me well', they say they are able to talk with all staff members and with the manager. Young people are also able to get individual support from external specialist services such as a consultant psychotherapists, youth offending team workers and drugs and alcohol advice services. One young person said that he was making good progress but needed more time, however his placement was being brought to an early end by the placing authority. The manager advocates on behalf of young people.

Young people's education is promoted by the staff and manager who are pro-active in seeking educational services that will meet each young person's needs. As a result of advocating on behalf of young people, if they are excluded from school, young people with a long history of school exclusion are supported back into school or college. This is strength of this service.

Young people are encouraged to participate in a wide variety of physical activities in order to promote good health. However not all young people enjoy physical activity, some preferring to play computer games or other less physical activities. Young people say that there is a wide choice of activities available to them if they wish to pursue them.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

All young people have comprehensive placement plans that are reviewed following each placement review or any significant changes. These provide essential information for staff in ensuring that they are able to work towards meeting identified needs. However when a young person moves from another home within the company, new placement plans and new placement agreements are not drawn up, as a result not all young people have agreements for their current placement, and none of the pre-placement information is held in the home. Despite this staff are very aware of the young people's needs and are working hard to meet them. Staff support contact between young people and their families, all contact arrangements are known to staff and accord with the plans of the placing authority.

All young people are encouraged to participate in planning for their future lives and are invited to attend their placement reviews. However as a result of multiple moves within the company's group of homes, the frequency of reviews has not been maintained within statutory timescales. When this has occurred, this has not been pursued on the behalf of the young person by the staff or manager. Some placements do not follow the plan agreed at the most recent placement review, without re-convening further review. This has led to a placement being terminated by the placing authority, without all parties to that plan, including the young person, being fully consulted about the change of plan. The company does make representation to the placing authority on young people's behalf, in these circumstances. However the company are unaware of the need for new placement planning and review schedules following each subsequent move within the company.

Young people say they are consulted on a daily basis about their views and wishes regarding the day-to-day running of the home.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people are encouraged to take increasing self responsibility for their behaviour, and the day-to-day organisation of their lives. Young people preparing to leave care are expected to manage a budget and shop for and prepare their own meals. Young people have leaving care plans and staff liaise closely with leaving care workers from the placing authority. Young people say that they are well supported and prepared for leaving by the staff, however one young person said that he did not feel adequately prepared to leave the home despite the efforts of the staff as his leaving date had been brought forward by the placing authority. The home does provide after care support for a limited period if required.

Each young person receives a clothing allowance in addition to their pocket money. They are able to choose their own clothes and personal requisites, staff will provide guidance and support if requested to do so.

The home is a three storey period house in a small town near the coast. It is well suited to the needs of young people however it is not easily accessible to young people, staff or visitors with restricted mobility or visual impairments.

The bedrooms for young people and staff are on the first floor, and the staff office is on the second floor, the latter reached by very steep steps. Young people and staff share a bathroom.

There is a kitchen and lounge space for dining and relaxing. The home has a very small garden at the front and back. Sports and leisure facilities can be accessed by car, and there are many local places of interest to visit.

The home is comfortably furnished and decorated throughout and is generally well maintained. However, there are signs of damage to the home which have not yet

been repaired. These include a damaged electrical socket in one bedroom, damage to bedroom furniture and no lock on the bathroom door.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity in this home is good. Staff are very aware of young people's individual needs and work hard to meet them. Young people's opinions and preferences are sought. This is reflected in practice across each of the outcome groups.

The Statement of Purpose is up to date and accurately describes the service. The home does not take emergency placements.

Staff are supported in meeting young people's needs through regular supervision, annual appraisals and a comprehensive training programme. All staff have personal develop plans. There are regular handovers, team meetings and training events, which ensure sound practice.

The home is well managed and the manager has completed a suitable management qualification, he provides clear leadership to staff. The staff team is well qualified and experienced. All staff are registered to undertake National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 3 one successful completion of their induction and probationary period. The manager and one staff member hold NVQ level 4. There are sufficient staff to adequately cover the rota.

The quality of the service is regularly monitored by the manager and is checked each month by a visiting manager. Not all of the required documentation is on file to meet the requirements of Schedule 3 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001.

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
35	obtain the information specified in Schedule 3 in respect of each child, in particular copies of the placing authority's plan for the care of the child, for each new placement. (Regulation 28 (1) (a))	31/10/2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure that an accurate record of all medication given to a young person is kept in the home (NMS13.2)
- ensure that current copies of Local Safeguarding Children's Board policies and procedures are available in the home and known to staff. (NMS 17.2)
- ensure that the registered person contacts the placing authority to request emergency or statutory reviews of placement plans when these are due, if the placing authority has not arranged the review (NMS 3.3)
- ensure that the interior and exterior of the home are maintained in a good state of repair throughout. (NMS 24.3)
- ensure that each child has a suitable bed and storage for clothes (NMS 24.6)
- ensure that bathrooms and toilets are fitted with suitable locks ensuring that staff are able to open doors in an emergency. (NMS 25.6)