

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Julian Parker
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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 small children's home is registered to provide care for up to two young people of either gender, aged between 10 and 18 years. The home's location is within easy reach of the local main town centre and convenient for access to nearby leisure and company educational facilities, while being discretely situated away from neighbouring properties. The home offers spacious accommodation in a four-bedroom detached property where each young person have their own room. The home has two lounges, large kitchen/dining room, bathrooms on each floor and staff office. A large garden and detached garage that houses leisure equipment provide additional functional space that enhances the property's suitability as a children's home.

While being registered for two young people in practice the provider has found that the home is best suited to looking after the particular needs of only one young person.

Summary

Although this was a full unannounced inspection only the three key outcome areas were examined on this inspection due to prior arrangements having been made by the home for the young person. Only one young person is living in the home who was present during the inspection but declined to actively participate. The inspection focussed on areas relating to health needs, keeping young people safe, and how the home was organised.

On this occasion the home was judged as satisfactory due to shortfalls in the being healthy standards. Young people receive individualised care that is consistently applied while being sufficiently flexible to adapt to changing needs. This has been determined by monitoring behaviour when the home has more than one admission. The manager continues to provide effective direction and leadership to the staff team. This ensures that staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and are focussed upon the needs of young people being looked after.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the registered manager was recommended to ensure that children in the home were kept safe by making amendments to the homes policies concerning privacy and to ensure that they always had the opportunity to access a person independent of the home following any unauthorised absence. The registered manager has ensured that these changes have been put into practice.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people's health needs are being addressed by staff following the company policies that promote health and wellbeing and by adapting their practice to meet young peoples particular needs. Care Plans contain details of health needs and areas where the involvement of other professionals is desirable. Young people are registered with local health professionals and staff maintain suitable records of all appointments. First Aid arrangements in the home are good with staff receiving regular training that equips them should they have to deal with minor accidents or ailments.

Young people's case files contain important information about their health and medical needs, specifically in their health plan. These records demonstrate that young people's health is actively being monitored and promoted by staff at the home. The home uses a medication policy which includes appropriate procedures and practice guidance for staff. Medication is safely stored in a wall mounted lockable cabinet in the staff office however the homes compliance with the administration for the disposal of medication is inconsistent.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young peoples right to privacy and appropriate levels of confidentiality are demonstrated, practically by providing young people with their own en-suite equipped bedroom, by protecting sensitive personal information and by staff being careful with how they communicate about young people with other professionals.

All concerns or complaints made by young people living at the home are regarded seriously by care staff. Wherever possible concerns are effectively addressed before they become a complaint. The home has a clear and effective complaint policy and procedure and this is summarised in the young person's guide to the home. Young people confirm that they know how to complain and who they can complain to. They are provided with access to an independent advocate should they require help or support in making their concerns known. Any complaints arising about the home itself are addressed by the homes manager even if this involves other resident children.

The safety and welfare of young people living at the home is promoted by company policies. These have been developed to recognise regulatory requirements and good practice in areas of child protection that include countering bullying, effective behaviour management and safeguarding children by knowing the requirements of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board including how to recognise signs of abuse. The company provide regular staff training to ensure young people are looked after by staff who practice safely.

Staff base their management of behaviour on the active encouragement of acceptable behaviour, by providing consistent expectations and by praising positive behaviour. Young people confirm that the standards of behaviour expected are clearly known by responding positively. Staff treat the young people with a positive regard and this is generally reflected by good behaviour and a minimal need for the use of sanctions or behavioural controls. Staff are trained in behaviour management which includes the safe use of physical restraint using an approved intervention. The views and opinions of young people are sought as part of this process to improve the transparency and effectiveness of staff practice.

The home demonstrates its awareness of potential dangers to looked after children by producing a range of risk assessments for all aspects of safety in the living environment, for example, the risk from fire and hazards, or from young people's behaviour and recreational activities. To remain effective these assessments are reviewed regularly and take into account daily tasks and any changes affecting the home such as staffing levels or changes in occupancy. The absence of effective risk assessment for changes to the complement of the home have generated disruption to the stability of young peoples placements. Young people living in the home take fire safety seriously and play a compliant part in responding to fire precautionary drills.

The home has effective procedures in place for monitoring all visitors to the home. No unauthorised person can access the building or young people living there. Staff personnel files were not available for this inspection during this inspection as they are held centrally at the company head office. The registered manager confirmed that no staff started working with children ahead of all statutory checks being completed.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is not judged.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The homes Statement of Purpose includes the information prescribed by schedule 1 of the Children's Home Regulations.

Young people living at the home are supported with all aspects of their daily living by the small team of competent and qualified staff who show commitment to providing safe and consistent care. The Registered Manager support staff with regular supervision and ongoing access to ongoing professional training. Staff have attended all statutory training and additional courses to help them provide the care designed to meet young people's particular needs in an individualised manner. Young people currently appear to recognise this by their generally cooperative behaviour.

The staff rota confirms that the complement of the home is as identified by the home's Statement of Purpose. Any shortfalls are covered by house staff or known staff from other of the providers children's homes to reduce the potential for disruption to the young person's care routine. The arrangements for safe one to one work with young people are fully addressed by the home's risk assessments, while remaining subject to constant staff review to ensure everybody's safety.

The manager has established a clear process to regularly monitor the operational efficiency and quality of care being provided by the home. The content of the in-house monitoring remains at a good standard. Independent monthly monitoring takes place through the use of a regulation 33 visitor to confirm that the home is operating within the scope of its Statement of Purpose. Young person's feedback is enlisted during these visits to influence aspects of the service being provided by the home. The future operation of the home is outlined through the production of a Development Plan.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The particular level of detail contained within the young people's plans, case files and daily recording documents confirms that staff know of young people's particular differences and difficulties. From this level of detail staff can develop practice that fully supports individual developmental and any particular cultural needs.

The home evidences that it is well organised as young people's individual case files are confidentially stored and arranged in a manner that is familiar to the staff team and young people. Young people are made aware of the contents of their files and can request access to them.

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
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Recommendations

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

- ensure that the policy for the disposal of unused medication is adhered to. (National Minimum Standard 13.10)