

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Sarah Oldham
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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 provides care and accommodation for two young people of either sex, aged between 10 and 16 years of age. The home is owned and managed by a private company.

The property is a semi-detached house with good access to local amenities. The home comprises three separate bedrooms, washing facilities, kitchen, lounge and dining area. To the front of the home there is off-road parking available for staff cars and to the rear of the property is an enclosed garden.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

The key inspection of the home was unannounced. All key national minimum standards were inspected.

This is a good service. Young people's health and welfare are promoted effectively. The young people are supported by staff who provide positive role models.

Young people's placement plans are well written and these reflect young people's needs for individual support. Information made available by placing authorities is used well to inform the home's own care planning arrangements. Young people's risk assessments are clearly written and these provide staff with good information, which enables them to respond to young people's needs appropriately.

However, support provided with education has presented some difficulties and there is some inconsistency with the level of home tutoring support provided.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection five actions and five recommendations were made. The actions related to supporting young people with health care, ensuring that fire drills are undertaken, obtaining all information about staff due to commence work at the home, promoting education and maintaining the home to a suitable standard for young people living there. These actions have now been addressed. All young people are registered with health care professionals to ensure that health care needs are effectively met. Fire drills are undertaken on a regular basis and all young people and staff are aware of the procedure to follow in the event of a fire. Recruitment of staff complies with the Children's Homes Regulation 2001. The manager liaises with placing social workers regarding young people's education. Refurbishment of the home is ongoing and young people have been consulted regarding the décor and

furnishings.

The five recommendation related to young people having access to appropriate therapeutic support, appropriate records maintained for young people who are absent from the home without authority and management and support of staff. Three of the five recommendations have been met. Health care needs, including therapeutic support are currently being met for young people. Records are in place for any young person who is missing from the home and staff are aware of the procedures to follow. Staffing levels and experience of staff are appropriate to meet the home's Statement of Purpose. However, clear arrangements for staff to deputise in the absence of the Registered Manager are not consistently in place. There is a training and development plan in place. However, some training has yet to be completed by staff although this training has been booked

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people are actively involved with the home's menu planning. This enables young people to develop skills in the planning, budgeting, shopping and preparation of meals. Menus developed provide a range of meals, offering choice and support healthy eating, ensuring young people enjoy a diverse range of foods. Staff assist with meal preparation. However, not all staff have completed food hygiene training although this training has been applied for.

All young people are registered with a doctor, dentist and optician and, where appropriate, specialist health care support, including access to children and adolescent mental health care services. Young people's health needs are covered within their individual placement plans. Their records include signed medical consent, which enables staff to attend to their health needs. Health care needs are monitored and any changes in specific health are clearly recorded and appropriate action taken to address them.

Young people's medication is stored and administered safely. The home is staffed so that at least one staff on duty, is trained in the use of first aid. Should first aid be required, there is suitable first aid equipment available in appropriate first aid boxes within the home.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people's privacy is respected and their private records are securely stored for confidentiality purposes. Computers are password protected. Young people have their own bedrooms that they are able to lock, these locks can be over ridden in an emergency. The home has a phone available for young people to use and they are able to make and receive phone calls in private. There is a complaint procedure in place and young people are aware of how to make a complaint. Complaints are

responded to in accordance with the policy and the manager maintains an overview of all complaints made. Staff are aware of the complaints policy and procedure.

Bullying is not an issue at the current time. Staff are aware of the signs of bullying to be aware of and the importance of supporting both the person being bullied and the instigator to ensure that issues are resolved. Staff receive relevant training in safeguarding and care and control, to help staff safeguard young people's welfare. However, there has recently been a change of staffing at the home and some staff are awaiting to attend safeguarding training. This has been booked and staff have received some guidance in induction training to promote the safety of young people in the interim period.

Young people who absent themselves without authority are reported missing to promote their safe return. Their behaviours are managed safely and the use of sanctions and restraints are rare. When they have occurred, they have been conducted fairly. Staff and young people have positive relationships and this was observed during the inspection and discussion with young people.

Health and safety systems are good. There is a home risk assessment and fire risk assessment in place. Maintenance of equipment is undertaken and this includes the electrical, gas and fire equipment. Fire drills take place and staff and young people are aware of the procedure to follow in the event of a fire. Evacuation drills are undertaken but the time at which they take place is not recorded to evidence that they take place at different times of the day and night.

Individual risk assessments are in place. These are reviewed on a regular basis and any changes to them clearly identified and appropriate action taken to the changes. This further promotes the welfare of the young people living at the home.

Recruitment and selection policies and procedures are in place. All appointments are subject to the completion of an application, interview, receipt of references and enhanced Criminal Record Bureau disclosure being undertaken. Records of visitors are maintained and proof of identification is requested where appropriate. These practices reduce potential risks to young people living at the home.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people are provided with good support in accordance with their assessed needs, which are outlined sufficiently, within detailed placement plans. The home is staffed in such a way, to ensure that staff are always available to respond to young people's needs or requests for support. There are two staff on duty at all times.

The arrangements made to promote young people's education and learning are satisfactory. Young people unable to attend school are provided with education on site, through home tuition. The service employs qualified teachers to promote young people's learning. However, some of these sessions have been cancelled and this has

not ensured that educational needs of the young people are addressed as agreed. The manager and staff liaise with placing social workers to enable school placements to be sought to further promote education and enable young people to socialise with their peers. Personal educational plans and statements of special educational needs are not always available to describe young people's needs, targets and individual achievements although the staff from the home request these from placing authorities.

Staff encourage and support young people to pursue a number of leisure activities including horse riding, the Duke of Edinburgh awards scheme, use of local leisure facilities and youth clubs. This enables young people to develop their skills and to socialise with other young people.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people's individual needs are covered within their placement plans, which provide staff with the information they need to work with young people and review their needs and progress. The home has used a wide source of information to inform young people's placement plans, including the involvement of the young people. This ensures that the young people's needs are well documented and young people feel involved in planning their placement.

Young people's needs are reviewed during the review process, with meetings held within the recommended timescales. Young people are encouraged and supported to attend their reviews, to enable them to have a say in the care provided to them. Staff support young people in meetings and in their absence may represent their views, if required. Staff maintain minutes of review meetings to ensure that they have the appropriate information in place when there have been any changes identified. This ensures that if there is a delay in statutory review minutes being received, staff are aware of any changes to care plans and can implement these effectively.

Young people enjoy planned contact with friends and family and these arrangements are supported and encouraged by staff. Young people have detailed contact information within care plans, this provides staff with up-to-date and relevant information which enables them to properly manage contact arrangements. Where there are restrictions on contact these are clearly recorded and known to staff.

Arrangements are in place for young people to visit the home prior to moving in, wherever possible. This enables them to meet with the staff and to view the facilities that the home has.

Young people are supported and encouraged to express their views both formally and informally about issues that affect their lives including practice within the home. Young people's views and opinions are taken seriously and enable staff to change

practice within the home where appropriate. This creates a culture of placing the young people's needs at the centre of staff practice.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people are supported to develop independence skills to enable them to prepare for adulthood. This includes skills with budgeting, shopping, cooking and accessing local community facilities as well as planning for future careers.

Young people live in accommodation which is kept clean and tidy. The home is in the process of being redecorated, with additional facilities being provided. This includes the bathroom being refitted with the addition of a shower as well as a bath. The living room, dining room and one young person's bedroom have been redecorated with additional decorating to another bedroom ongoing. Young people have been fully involved in the plans for refurbishment and redecoration. Young people's bedrooms are appropriately furnished and decorated to reflect the individuality of each young person. Due to recent refurbishment work being undertaken, the carpeting to the stairs and landing is heavily stained and does not reflect the décor of the rest of the home. The kitchen is showing signs of wear and tear and planned refurbishment of this is due to be undertaken.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home has a written Statement of Purpose in place. This document details the aims and objectives of the home and the services that it provides. This document is made available to all interested parties, including placing social workers and where appropriate, parents and carers. The young people are provided with a children's guide. This is in a child-friendly format and provides young people with information about the home and what it will be like living there.

Staff receive supervision from the manager. However, due to recent changes in staff members and the manager working some shifts within the home, formal supervision has not consistently taken place within agreed timescales. Staff receive informal supervision on a daily basis.

The home has a manager and three senior team leaders. Staffing levels are adequate although there are currently two vacancies, these are being covered by existing staff and agency staff. The home uses the same agency staff to enable a continuity of care to be provided to the young people.

There is a training and development plan in place for staff. However, some core training for staff has not been undertaken due to changes within the staff team. The manager is addressing this appropriately. The number of staff holding the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 3 in the Caring for Children and Young People

is below the required 80%. Some staff have recently been enrolled on this course to develop their training and for the home to achieve a higher number of NVQ trained staff.

The home is regularly monitored through monthly visits of behalf on the registered provider. The reports that are produced as a result of these visits provide an assessment of the care practices within the home and include any issues the young people raise during the visit. In addition the manager undertakes comprehensive monthly monitoring and completes a report of any issues or outstanding tasks that require to be completed. This provides the manager with an objective view of the home and any issues raised are dealt with transparently. Young people therefore benefit from having their care arrangements internally and externally monitored.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good, young people are provided with care and support which directly links to their individual needs. Young people enjoy positive social links with the local community and care is given in accordance with young people's cultural identity.

Young people's case files which are kept securely. Case files contain most of the required information which is accessible and up to date which provides staff with relevant information about the young person's needs and circumstances enabling them to provide appropriate care. Where there is a shortfall in documentation, the manager and staff actively pursue this from appropriate sources, including placing authority social workers. This is to ensure that the staff have the necessary information to provide the young people living at the home appropriate care and support at all times.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Recommendations

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

- ensure that 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 (NMS 26.8)
- ensure that staff and children involved in preparing food for others have received appropriate training and/or are appropriately supervised in safe food handling and hygiene (NMS10.9)
- ensure the interior of the home is maintained in a good state of decorative repair. This relates to the carpeting of the stairs and landing (NMS 24.3)
- ensure there are clear arrangements for staff to deputise in the Registered Manager's absence (NMS 29.2)
- ensure that all staff working within the home receive at least one and a half hours of one-to-one supervision from a senior member of staff each month (NMS

28.2)

- ensure all childcare staff have a personal development plan, and receive at least 6 paid days of training per year. A written record of all training for all staff is maintained at the home (NMS 31.4)
- ensure a minimum ratio of 80% of all care staff have completed their National Vocational Qualification in Caring for Children and Young People at level 3 (NMS 29.5).