

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Mark Blesky
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	30 September 2009
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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 is a 3 bedded children's home in a location just outside a small seaside town. This home is built on two storeys and in 2009 underwent a major refurbishment.

Summary

At this unannounced full inspection all key standards were inspected. All young people at the home were spoken to and their comments discussed.

This is a satisfactory service with many good features. Young people's welfare is enhanced by the good relationships that exist between staff and young people, and between young people and their peers. Young people are encouraged to eat healthily and take regular exercise. The home works closely with a wide range of outside agencies in order to meet the full range of young people's needs.

The home is extremely well maintained and furnished. Staff are quite well supported by the new manager who has a strong commitment and focus on improvement. However, current Regulation 33 monitoring and reporting against the Statement of Purpose is not evidenced as being maintained effectively. Regulation 34 monitoring and actions taken are also not well evidenced.

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 asked to ensure improvements were made to all aspects of documentation and practice. These related to Regulation 33 and Regulation 34, reporting and monitoring, maintaining healthcare and medication, safeguarding and anti-bullying. In addition, the Registered Manager was asked to improve support and services for education, independence planning, risk assessment, behaviour control, and complaints.

Regulation 33 reporting is being carried out, however, the reports have not been submitted to Ofsted in accordance with the regulations and a further requirement is made. Regulation 34 monitoring is now in place and conducted by the Registered Manager. Medication administration and healthcare support have been reviewed and effective systems are in place.

Safeguarding and anti-bullying procedures are now in place, along with anti-bullying policies and procedures.

The Registered Manager has improved support for education within the home, which includes detailed recording of educational performance and effective liaison with the school.

Independency planning has begun, but currently there is limited evidence of effective planning and support. Risk assessment is now effectively carried out and efforts are made to reduce known and perceived risks.

Behaviour control records accurately detail the behaviour of the young person and the action taken by staff and improved arrangements are now made for any young person that wishes to make complaint or representation.

Therefore, appropriate steps have been taken by the Registered Manager to keep children safe with appropriate care planning.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people enjoy healthy and nutritious meals, which they are able to choose and help prepare. Staff ensure that young people can make choices regarding different foods and staff encourage healthy eating. House meetings and key working sessions are used to discuss meals formally, although young people are able to express choice at any time. Mealtimes are orderly occasions and all staff and young people sit with one another similar to a that of a traditional family mealtime. A good range of home prepared meals are provided in this home.

Young people have dedicated healthcare files to record their historic, current, and future health needs. All young people are provided with routine healthcare and are registered with a GP, dentist, and optician, promptly following admission. Health conditions and any known allergies are clearly identified for each young person and all staff receive guidance on meeting healthcare needs. Young people's healthcare is well maintained by good systems of support and planning. Young people are treated as individuals and are able to make choices and express their diversity and preferences in treatments and healthcare interventions.

First aid and minor illness treatments are recorded in the home's first aid documentation, although it was noted that a minor treatment had not been recorded in one identified situation. All staff receive a good standard of training in first aid, which is in accordance with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) regulations 1981. This ensures that young people are treated by adequately qualified staff. In addition, all staff undertake training and guidance on other first aid interventions and the handling of medications. Medication is kept safely and securely to ensure young people are only given the prescribed medication. Records are kept of all medication administrations and this is generally well managed. Some initial confusion over stock was experienced although this was of a minor nature and quickly remedied. The manager is currently introducing running stock totals of medication to minimise any further confusion.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The staff in the home ensure young people's privacy and confidentiality is respected and staff guidance reflects this philosophy. In practice, staff knock on bedroom doors before entering and keep young people's information private. Staff do not openly discuss any sensitive matters publicly. Young people say that staff allow them time alone and they are able to use the telephone privately.

When young people wish to make a complaint or representation they are supported by detailed procedures and staff support. Young people are able to make representations about any matter that troubles them and all complaints are overseen by the manager. Few complaints are made in this home. There are detailed methods of recording any complaint; however, the guidance

and procedures provided do not make explicit key elements within the national minimum standards.

Young people are protected by detailed safeguarding procedures and practice. The home's guidance mirrors that of the local authority and all staff receive mandatory safeguarding training. It was noted that the home's safeguarding procedures are being updated and some initial confusion was apparent regarding the current version in use.

If any young person was to experience bullying the home has an anti-bullying procedure to address this. All staff discuss matters of bullying and behaviour regularly in staff meetings. All staff receive guidance and training on signs and symptoms of bullying and methods to counter bullying. Young people say that the staff are caring and supportive and would not tolerate bullying in the home.

There have not been any episodes of unauthorised absence, although there is detailed guidance and procedures to ensure young people are protected in such circumstances.

To encourage positive behaviour from the young people, the home maintains procedures to manage behaviour. Incidents of poor behaviour are typically addressed through discussion and encouragement of more positive behaviour. Young people benefit from this ethos as they are encouraged to manage their own behaviour and consider making alternative choices. When sanctions are used, the home maintains detailed and comprehensive records and uses one-to-one key working sessions to discuss matters. The home's staff work hard and strive to reinforce non-punitive methods of control.

To ensure that the home is safe and hazards are minimised, risk assessments have been undertaken within a range of key areas. Fire risk assessment and health and safety audits have been undertaken and areas of known or perceived risk addressed. Fire evacuation drills are routinely carried out and all fire equipment is maintained by authorised engineers. All staff undertake fire safety training and all new admissions of children or new staff, triggers reviewed fire safety instruction.

Appropriate staff recruitment procedures are in place to protect young people. Staff files are well maintained and detail all reference checks and statutory person checks. All staff must undertake performance review and appraisal and any areas where shortfalls are assessed are addressed with training or other formal review. All newly recruited staff must undertake interview and mandatory training and instruction during their probation period. All visitors to the home must sign in and out and no visitor is permitted to have unsupervised access to the young people or home.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people receive individual support from all staff members and specifically from one-to-one meetings at key working sessions. To ensure young people are supported, key working provides an opportunity for a staff member and young person to form a close and supportive relationship. A key worker would typically be the person to liaise with the school or with a parent or friend. Key working sessions also offer staff and young people an opportunity to discuss care planning and behaviour in more detail.

To ensure that young people have the opportunity to progress in education the home's staff and the school work together closely. Liaison in this area is very successful and young people are well supported by this effective collaboration. Staff support young people with homework and after school pursuits. Each young person has a dedicated file to record all school achievements and assessments.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people are supported by effective care planning and review. Staff use the local authority care plan to devise a placement plan, which addresses the day-to-day needs of the young people. Key working supports the care planning and young people are supported to achieve their goals and desired outcomes. Placement plans are maintained to address all areas of the young person's needs and staff will regularly liaise with the placing authority. All care plans and placement plans are regularly reviewed to ensure developing needs and provisions continue to be addressed by planning effectively. Young people are able to express their views and preferences regarding care planning and the support they receive. Staff in the home produce a detailed review report to demonstrate the care and support that the young person has been given, along with their consideration of future needs. Care planning and placement planning is well managed and young people benefit from this support.

Young people's contact with their friends and family is promoted by the staff and young people benefit from both practical support with travel and supervision along with the additional emotional support. It was noted that although telephone contact is well documented, supervised contact records are not well evidenced. In the absence of supervised contact records, staff and indeed the placing authority may struggle to demonstrate assessment of the benefit of current contact and future contact planning.

The home maintains a policy regarding admissions to the home and addresses both planned and emergency situations. The current procedure does not make reference to the need for an emergency placement review and does not address planned and emergency departures. It was noted that this procedure was already under review and these elements are being included.

Young people are encouraged to contribute their opinions regarding the running of the home and regular children's meetings are convened. All meetings are recorded and this provides young people with a good opportunity to speak collectively on their views of the home. Staff and the manager encourage young people to voice their opinions and will consider any reasonable suggestions that the young people make.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

Although formal pathway planning has not been started for either young person, it was noted that little effort is currently being made to record day-to-day independency preparation. Following discussion with the staff and young people, it is apparent that support is being provided in this area; however, there is little evidence of any records to demonstrate this in a planned manner.

All young people are able to choose, plan and buy their own clothes and other personal requisites. Staff encourage the young people to make choices and express their individuality.

Young people say that staff supervise their shopping in most cases, but also encourage them to take some responsibility to budget and purchase items. Young people are also encouraged to decorate their own rooms and express their diversity and cultural preferences. Young people are supported in looking after their money and budgeting and staff will help young people set up bank or savings accounts.

The home has recently been extensively refurbished and is of an exceptionally high standard. Planning and decoration in this home has been thoughtfully and carefully planned and all furnishings are of a very high quality. All areas of the home are well maintained and provide a very pleasant environment for all the young people. This home provides sufficient space and facilities in accordance with their Statement of Purpose.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The promotion of equality and diversity in this home is good. The home has a detailed Statement of Purpose and a children's guide. Collectively, these accurately describe what the home sets out to do for the children accommodated, and the manner in which care is provided. The Statement of Purpose and related policies express the importance of treating young people as individuals and ensuring young people's diverse and specific wishes and needs are fundamental to their care.

All staff receive regular supervision, which is held at the appropriate intervals and of sufficient duration. Supervision provides staff members with an opportunity to discuss their performance, training needs and other matters relevant to their role. Supervision is generally well managed, however, it was noted that planning for supervision was not evidenced and session focus does not follow elements identified within the national minimum standards.

There are sufficient number of suitably competent staff to manage the home both day and night and the home has a waking staff member overnight. An on-call system is also in operation and out-of-hours support can be deployed to provide extra staff or assistance. In the absence of the manager, a suitable senior staff member can deputise.

There are five full-time staff members in the home and three part-time staff covering shifts in the home. Although training for National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) in caring for children continues, the home has not yet reached the minimum standard of 80% qualified staff. All staff members are aware of their duties and responsibilities and all staff have a detailed contract of employment. All staff members receive mandatory training regarding key areas of childcare and staff also have the opportunity to develop training and advance within their role.

Regulation 33 visits reports could not be evidenced as carried out or submitted over some months in 2009 and 2010.

Regulation 34 monitoring is being carried out and effective work is being produced in most cases. However, all sections under 34(1), Schedule 6, are not consistently being covered in accordance with the children's homes Regulations 2001.

Young people have a well-maintained personal file, which contains appropriate information for their care and support. All young people's files are maintained and kept up to date and stored securely.

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
32	undertake monthly visits as set out in Regulation 33 and supply a copy of the report required to be made under paragraph (4)(c) (Regualtion 33.1-5)	11 June 2010
33	undertake Regulation 34 monitoring and action in accordance with regulation 34.1. (Regulation 34.1, schedule 6)	11 June 2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure the complaints procedures are written and maintained in accordance with the National Minimum Standards (National Minimum Standards 16.3)
- ensure there are systems in place to promote the safety and welfare of children and to ensure that children are protected from abuse, which are known and understood by all staff (National Minimum Standards 17.1)
- ensure that staff are provided with written guidance which clarifies where it is necessary to supervise contact visits (National Minimum Standards 4.3)
- ensure that there are procedures for children leaving the home covering both planned and emergency departures. Also, that review is initiated as soon as possible and never more than 72 hours later, after any emergency admission (National Minimum Standards 5.4/5.6)
- ensure that there is a comprehensive plan for young people preparing to leave care and to move into independent or semi-independent living (National Minimum Standards 6.1)
- ensure that supervision is planned and addresses the elements of performance in accordance with the National Minimum Standards (National Minimum Standards 28.4)
- ensure that 80% of staff have completed their National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) in caring for children and young people level three (National Minimum Standards 29.5)