

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Bill Drumm
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	26 June 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

The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three young people of either sex, aged between eight and 17 years old, who may be experiencing a range of social, emotional and behavioural problems.

The home is a terraced cottage with an enclosed rear garden. The ground floor comprises of a kitchen/dining room, lounge, another room used as the manager's office and a single toilet. On the first floor, there are four bedrooms and bathing facilities. Three bedrooms are used by young people the other bedroom is used as a staff sleep in room. Each young person has their own single bedroom.

The home is close to local shops. Bus routes are nearby if young people wish to visit the larger towns in the area with their larger shops and leisure facilities.

There are three young people currently living in this home, two of whom were present during the inspection. One young person agreed to contribute to the inspection process.

Summary

This was the first inspection of the home since it became registered. The inspection was an unannounced key inspection and all of the outcome areas for young people were inspected. The outcome areas for being healthy were satisfactory and the outcome areas for enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and economic wellbeing were good. The outcome areas for staying safe and organisation were found to be inadequate. Overall, this is an inadequate service.

Members of staff are pleasant and friendly toward all the young people who live at the home, and treat them with respect. Young people were observed to have open and honest dialogue with all members of staff and appeared comfortable in approaching them with their concerns or problems. Members of staff recently appointed to work in the home show commitment to improving the life chances of the young people living there. However, members of staff have not undertaken formal training in a number of essential areas and some policies and procedures need to be reviewed if they are to fully comply with national minimum standards.

Monitoring processes within the home are not thorough enough and do not ensure that minimum standards are met, any shortfalls may not be identified and improvements may not be made. Staff recruitment procedures are not comprehensive. Gaps in employment history have not been fully discussed with applicants and the reason for the gaps not recorded. Policies and procedures relating to the safe handling and administration of medication are not comprehensive and do not fully protect the welfare of young people. Young people and members of staff actively share ideas about what the home does, and how standards and quality can be maintained or improved.

The overall quality rating is inadequate.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

This was the first inspection of the home following its registration.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people living at the home enjoy a healthy and well-balanced diet and healthy eating is promoted. Members of staff ensure young people have easy access to fresh fruit and vegetables. Nutritious meals are provided and young people participate in the planning of menus. Young people are encouraged to participate in shopping for food items and cooking meals. One young person spoken to at the time of the inspection said, 'my favourite is steak and I sometimes get involved in cooking'. The home ensures that young people living there are able to follow the diet of their choice. The home also ensures that young people are able to sample food from different countries and cultures. Not all members of staff working at the home have received training in safe food handling and hygiene.

The healthcare needs of young people are promoted. Young people living at the home have their health care needs identified. Young people are supported and encouraged to attend meetings and appointments with all healthcare professionals. At the time of the inspection one young person had recently returned from seeing the dentist. Further appointments had been made in order that treatment could be carried out.

Young people living at the home are not fully protected by the home's medication administration systems. Policies and procedures relating to the safe handling and administration of medication are in place. However, the policies and procedures do not take full account of specific safeguards that are necessary when handling and administering medication. Members of staff working at the home have not undertaken formal training in the safe handling and administration of medication. An audit of the home's administration records was undertaken during the inspection and no entries had been made. One young person who lives at the home occasionally uses an inhaler for asthma, a written record of these occasions had not been made.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

Young people living at the home are treated with dignity and respect, and members of staff were observed to be pleasant and friendly towards the young people living there. There are sufficient bathrooms and toilets to meet the needs of the young people living at the home. Each young person has their own bedroom. Young people are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms in a style of their own choice and to keep the rooms clean and tidy. One young person spoken to at the time of the inspection said, 'I'd like pictures of cars in my room, I just haven't been to buy any yet'. The home has policies and procedures in place which explain what action members of staff should take when it is necessary to search a young person's bedroom. The room search records comply with national minimum standards. Personal information relating to each young person is stored securely to prevent unauthorised access.

There are policies and procedures in place for dealing with complaints in an effective and timely manner. However, members of staff have not received training in the complaints process. There have been no complaints made since the home opened. Young people were observed at the time of the inspection to speak freely with all members of staff and to make their needs known.

Young people living at the home are not fully protected from exploitation and abuse. A copy of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures are available in the home and there have been no child protection referrals made since the last inspection. However, not all

members of staff working at the home have undertaken training in child protection. One young person spoken to at the time of the inspection said he felt safe living at the home.

Young people are not fully protected from being targeted by bullies. The home has policies and procedures in place with regard to countering bullying and there have been no recorded incidents of bullying since the last inspection. The young people's guide to the home includes information for young people about what action they should take if they feel they are being targeted by bullies. However, members of staff working at the home have not undertaken training in countering bullying. The home's manager has not carried out a risk assessment of the times, places and circumstances in which the risk of bullying is greatest.

The home has policies and procedures in place with regard to what action members of staff should take if a young person is absent without authority. Procedures need to be reviewed in order to fully comply with national minimum standards.

The home has policies and procedures in place relating to the safe holding or restraint of young people, and members of staff have received appropriate training. There have been two restraints used within the home since the home opened. Restraint records are not retained within a separate bound and numbered book used specifically for that purpose. The home also has policies and procedures in place which relate to the sanctions members of staff are permitted to use to help young people to modify their behaviour. Sanction records are not retained in a separate bound and numbered book used specifically for that purpose.

Young people are not protected from fire and other hazards within the home. Not all members of staff have undertaken training in fire prevention or fire awareness. Fire drills are carried out at regular intervals, although it is unclear whether any are carried out at night. One young person spoken to at the time of the inspection said, 'if it were a real fire we'd go out the front and stand over the road'.

Recruitment and selection processes are not comprehensive or rigorous. Staff recruitment records were examined as part of the inspection process and found to be inadequate. Gaps in employment records had not been fully explored and fully safety checks had not been carried out. Each member of staff has provided references from previous employers or those that know them and the files did include a recent photograph of each member of staff to help ensure proof of identity. The home has a limited staff team although further recruitment is underway.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The progress of each young person is monitored. Young people living at the home receive individual help and support when they need it or when they request it. Each young person has their own key worker. Meetings between key workers and young people take place at regular intervals. The outcome of these meetings is recorded and changing needs are highlighted.

Young people living at the home are encouraged and supported to attend school, or to undertake educational activities within the home. The home has a proactive approach to helping young people progress with their education and to achieve their maximum potential. Young people living at the home are actively encouraged and supported to develop their own hobbies and interests.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people living at the home are appropriately placed. Each young person has their own placement plan, which outlines what their needs are and how they will be met. In order to help ensure that needs are met, the manager and members of staff undertake individual risk assessments of each young person and devise more detailed care plans following admissions.

The needs of young people living at the home are regularly reviewed. The manager regularly attends review meetings with partner agencies and remains in regular contact with, placing authorities and each young person's social worker. Changing needs are highlighted and appropriate actions are taken.

Where appropriate, young people are supported and encouraged to maintain regular contact with their friends and families.

The admission procedure for the home includes, where appropriate, arrangements for the young people to visit before a placement is agreed. Members of staff try to make young people feel welcome and to understand what it will be like to live there. One young person spoken to at the time of the inspection said, 'the staff are friendly, I can talk to any of them'.

Young people are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence how the home is run. Meetings between young people and members of staff take place at regular intervals. Young people are encouraged to raise issues which affect their lives. One young person spoken to at the time of the inspection confirmed that regular meetings do take place.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Members of staff encourage young people to take responsibility for their actions. Young people are encouraged to participate in all activities within the home and to develop independence skills. No young people living at the home have formal pathway plans, as they are not old enough.

Young people enjoy homely accommodation that is decorated, furnished and maintained to a very high standard. Members of staff help to maintain the building and to keep it clean and tidy. Young people living at the home are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms and they are encouraged to keep their home clean and tidy.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Members of staff support and enable young people to participate in community based activities on an equal basis and to develop their own identity. The statement of purpose does not accurately describe what relevant qualifications, skills and experience each member of staff has.

Young people are not looked after by members of staff who are fully supported and managed. Not all members of staff receive regular, formal supervision or an annual appraisal.

Not all members of staff working at the home are trained to a minimum National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People, although a programme of training has been developed. Training is also required for members of staff in complaints, safeguarding children, fire prevention and countering bullying. This issue has already been raised in another part of the report. There are no clear arrangements in place for members of staff to deputise in the absence of the manager.

Members of staff are sufficient in number to meet the needs of the current young people living at the home. Further recruitment is underway to increase the staff compliment and to provide a greater level of expertise and skill.

Young people living at the home are looked after by members of staff who are not fully trained to meet their needs. This issue has already been raised in another part of the report.

The person carrying on the home does not adequately monitor the welfare of the young people living there. Regular visits are made to the home by the responsible individual to ensure that the home is properly run and written reports are provided following these monitoring visits. However, the content of the written reports lack detail and it is unclear if all essential areas have been monitored.

The home's manager monitors the care of the young people accommodated in the home. Care services are adapted in light of these visits to ensure the needs of the young people are met and that the home is run properly.

The needs of young people are recorded, to reflect their individuality and daily records are maintained. Information relating to the care that young people receive is stored securely. Young people are able to access this information within the home if they request it.

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
13	make suitable arrangements for the recording, handling, safekeeping and safe administration of any medicines recieved into the home (Regulation 21 (1))	15 January 2010
22	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, restraint or discipline, a written record is made in a volume kept specifically for that purpose (Regulation 17 (4))	27 November 2009
26	make arrangements for persons working at the home to recive suitable training in fire prevention (Regulation 32 (1)(d))	27 November 2009
27	ensure that all person's employed to work at the home are fit to do so (Regulation 26 (Schedule 2 (2)(a))	27 November 2009

28	ensure that all persons working at the home receive appropriate training, supervision and appraisal (Regulation 27 (4)(a)).	27 November 2009
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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):

- review the home's procedures for recording the management and administration of medication (NMS 13)
- review the home's complaints procedures and ensure that all member's of staff receive training in the home's complaints process (NMS 16.6)
- ensure that all members of staff receive formal training in child protection and safeguarding children (NMS 17)
- maintain a countering bullying risk assessment of the times, places and circumstances in which the risk of bullying is greatest and ensure that all members of staff have undertaken formal training in the awareness of, and effective strategies to counter bullying (NMS 18)
- review the home's absence without authority procedures to ensure all member's of staff know what action to take if a young person goes missing because of alleged abuse at the home (NMS 19.5)
- review the home's statement of purpose to ensure it fully complies with national minimum standards (NMS 1)
- review the home's systems for monitoring the welfare of children in the home (NMS 32)
- ensure that all members of staff have undertaken training in safe food handling (NMS 10.9).