

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Bill Drumm
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Date of last inspection	16 October 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

The home has made significant improvements since the last inspection and is now judged to be good in most outcome areas and is good overall. Young people are supported by a trained, skilled and experienced staff team. Relationships between young people and staff are based on mutual respect. Young people are supported to develop socially acceptable behaviour and to gain new life experiences. Young people who live at the home attend full time education. This will help them in later life to improve their life chances and to find work.

Internal and external monitoring of the operation of the home is effective and the quality of care provided to young people is good. The home's records are maintained to a good standard and information relating to young people is kept secure and confidential.

Care planning arrangements for young people need to improve if new members of staff are to understand what their individual needs are and how they can be met. Young people are actively consulted about the home, the care they receive and how improvements can be made.

At the time of the inspection two young people lived at the home, both of whom, contributed directly to the inspection process.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection the manager has improved the systems used within the home for the safe handling and administration of medication. In addition, all members of staff have successfully completed training in this area. Written records used within the home for recording full details of when it has been necessary to hold or restrain a young person have been introduced. Similar written records have been introduced to record sanctions imposed for negative behaviour and any rewards given for positive behaviour. All members of staff have received training in fire prevention, child protection and food hygiene. Further training has

been arranged for members of staff with regard to understanding countering bullying strategies. Members of staff are well supported and supervised by the home's manager.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people said that they are provided with a healthy diet and that the food at the home is good. Menus are drawn up in consultation with young people and are generally healthy and nutritious. The home maintains well stocked supplies of foods and fresh produce. Young people can access a good range of fresh fruit which is openly displayed and available. One young person said, 'there's always fruit in the bowl if we want it'. Young people are provided with the opportunity to participate in shopping for food items, preparing meals and baking. All members of staff have successfully completed training in safe food handling and hygiene.

Young people's health care needs are promoted. Young people are registered with a local GP, dentist and optician and are encouraged to attend regular check ups and appointments. Young people said that staff are 'good at helping us stay healthy.'

The home has improved its systems and procedures for the safe handling and administration of medication. The quality of these is now good and the action raised at the last inspection has been met. However, a small number discrepancies were noted in the recording of the administration of medication. All staff have been trained in the safe administration of medicines. These measures help to ensure that young people's welfare is safeguarded.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people are treated with dignity and respect. Each young person has their own bedroom which they are encouraged to keep clean, and tidy and to personalise in a style of their choosing. One young person said, 'my bedroom's really nice.' Good arrangements are in place to ensure that information relating to young people is kept safe, secure and confidential. All members of staff have signed a confidentiality agreement as part of their contract of employment. The home has policies and procedures in place with regard to making a search of a young person's bedroom. No room searches have been carried out since the last inspection.

There are good procedures and systems in place to support young people who may wish to make a complaint. Young people said that they knew about the complaints process and who they could complain to if they were unhappy about anything. Young people were observed to speak freely and openly with all members of staff.

There has been one complaint made since the last inspection. Records show that the complaint was investigated and that the young person was satisfied with the outcome. Members of staff have not received training in the complaints process.

Young people living at the home are protected from exploitation and abuse and said they felt safe living there. A copy of the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures is available in the home. There have been no child protection referrals made since the last inspection. The home also has its own child protection guidance. All members of staff working at the home have undertaken training in child protection.

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 does include information for young people about what action they should take if they feel bullies are targeting them. Members of staff working at the home have all received training in countering bullying. Young people are fully protected from being targeted by bullies.

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 fully comply with national minimum standards. There have been no occasions since the last inspection when a young person has been absent without authority. One young person said, 'I wouldn't run away, where would I go?'

The home has policies and procedures in place relating to the safe holding or restraint of young people, and all members of staff have received appropriate training. Staff training is reviewed and up dated regularly. Restraint records are retained within a separate bound and numbered book used specifically for that purpose. There have been a small number of holds used within the home since the last inspection. Records examined were completed fully and accurately. Restraints used were not found to be excessive or inappropriate. Members of staff promote socially acceptable behaviour by offering help, support, advice and encouragement to young people. The home also has policies and procedures in place relating to the sanctions that can be used to help young people improve their behaviour. Members of staff also keep written records of when young people have earned treats or rewards for displaying maturity and positive behaviour.

Young people are protected from fire and other hazards within the home. There are good systems in place to ensure that young people, members of staff and visitors to the home are kept safe and free from hazards. Fire drills are carried out at regular intervals, including those held at night.

Members of staff working at the home have undergone a thorough recruitment and selection process to ensure that they are suitable to work with young people. Young people themselves are actively involved in the recruitment process and their thoughts and opinions are valued. This helps them to feel empowered and to have some control over who helps to look after them. Staff personnel files contain comprehensive information about each staff member. However, one member of staff did not have the correct number of personal references retained on their file. The home has appropriate arrangements for the vetting of all visitors.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people living at the home receive individual help and support quickly when they need it or when they request it. Young people said, 'It's ok here, staff help you.' Young people have their own key worker and meetings between key workers and young people take place at frequent intervals. The outcome of these meetings is shared with other members of staff in order to ensure that essential information is shared and that young people receive the care and support they need.

Young people living at the home attend school and their attendance is excellent. One young person said, 'I like school,' another young person said, 'School's alright.' The home has a very proactive approach to helping young people progress with their education and to achieve their

maximum potential. In addition, young people are actively encouraged to develop their own hobbies and interests. This helps to increase the life chances of the young people as they get older and to achieve their maximum potential. Young people were observed to interact in a friendly positive manner with each other.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Care planning of young people's needs is not good. Local authority placement and care plans are in place. Meetings are held prior to admission to help to ensure all essential information is available and that the placement has the greatest chance of success. However, the home has not developed an in-depth residential plan for each young person which covers the 'Every Child Matters' five outcome areas. The specific care needs of young people may not be identified or met.

The overall care needs of young people living at the home are reviewed and their progress is monitored. Shortly after the admission of a young person to the home has taken place, a formal review of their placement is undertaken. The manager and members of staff attend review meetings with all partner agencies, and strategies are developed to help meet their overall needs quickly and effectively.

Contact with friends and family is discussed at each young person's planning meeting, prior to admission. Where appropriate, young people are supported and encouraged to maintain regular contact with their friends and families.

Arrangements for the admission and discharge of young people are good. The home provides long term care and all admissions are planned. Young people said that they were able to visit the home prior to admission and were consulted about the decision to admit them.

Young people are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence how the home is run. Regular meetings take place between members of staff and young people both formally and informally at mealtimes. Young people are encouraged to raise issues which affect their lives, to influence how the home is run and what can be done to improve their lives whilst living there. Formal consultation takes place with each young person every month where consultation questionnaires are completed. Young people are also given the opportunity to meet with the home's owner informally in order to express their views as to what it's like to live at the home.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

There are no young people living at the home who are eligible to have a formal pathway plan. However, the manager and members of staff encourage and support young people to take responsibility for their actions and to develop maturity and adult responsibilities. In addition, young people are encouraged to participate in activities of daily living and to learn independence skills. This will help prepare them for independent living and adulthood.

Young people enjoy homely accommodation that is decorated, furnished and maintained to an extremely high standard. Members of staff help to maintain the building and to keep it clean

and tidy. Young people living at the home are actively encouraged to personalise their bedrooms and to keep their home clean and tidy.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

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 accurately describes what young people can expect from living at the home and provides comprehensive information for those needing it. However, the Statement of Purpose does not contain any information relating to the structure of the organisation or the specific skills, qualification and experience of staff members.

Young people are looked after by members of staff who are fully supported by the home's management. Regular staff meetings are held and a record maintained. Staff receive monthly supervision. The content of the individual supervision meetings covers all essential areas. The manager also makes herself available to talk with members of staff should they need to do so. One staff member said, 'yes, it's good hear. We get great support, it's a great team to work in'.

Members of staff are sufficient in number, experience and qualification to meet the needs of the young people living at the home. There are clear arrangements in place so that members of staff and young people know who is in charge when the manager is absent.

Staff rotas allow for staff handovers and satisfactory deputising arrangements are in place. Staff have access to extensive policies, guidance and procedures, the quality of which is generally very good.

Members of staff have received training in all essential areas. On-going staff training is scheduled to take place at regular intervals. Only one member of staff is on duty at night within the home. A lone working risk assessment has not been undertaken. This could place young people or members of staff at risk.

The care of young people living at the home is monitored regularly. A system is in place to ensure performance is monitored, and any patterns or issues requiring action are highlighted.

The home maintains all the information and records required by regulation in respect of young people. Records are maintained in an accessible format and recordings are of good quality.

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
2	prepare in consultation with the child's placing authority a written plan for the child. (Regulation 12)	14 March 2010

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 systems for the administration of medication (NMS 13.2)
- ensure all members of staff receive training in the home's complaints process (NMS 16.6)
- ensure that all members of staff have provided suitable character references prior to commencing work in the home (NMS 27.2)
- review the home's statement of purpose to ensure it fully complies with national minimum standards (NMS 1)
- write a lone working risk assessment, identifying any likely risks to young people, staff and members of the public. (NMS 30.5)