

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Bridgette Lowe
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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

This home is operated and managed by a national organisation and provides accommodation for young people who attend an associated residential special school.

The home provides care and accommodation for up to five young people aged nine to sixteen years who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. It is located in a rural area but close to community services.

A commitment to a therapeutic approach underpins the philosophy of care within a homely environment.

The home promotes social inclusion and aims to provide each young person the opportunity to develop their maximum potential through the delivery of an extended curriculum that is based on education and care.

Young people are afforded single bedrooms with proportionate communal space which includes a large kitchen/diner and two other reception areas. One of the young peoples' rooms has the facilities of a self-contained bed-sit which can be used to support preparation for independent living.

There were four young people accommodated at the time of inspection.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This was an unannounced key inspection. The purpose of this inspection was to assess if the home is continuing to meet the national minimum standards and regulations for children's homes and protecting and promoting the welfare of the young people accommodated. One young person contributed to the inspection.

The home offers a good standard of care for young people. Staff are extremely effective in supporting young people to manage their behaviour. Young people's needs are comprehensively assessed and well met and they were observed to accept support and guidance from the staff team. The health and emotional needs of young people are well met. The staff team continue to ensure all young people are suitably protected and their welfare is promoted to a high degree. Staff are proactive in responding swiftly to young people's individual needs and provide a consistent approach to managing behaviour. The home continues to work towards development and improvement and has effective systems to monitor the quality of care in the home. Young people are supported by a committed, qualified and positive team that

are very proactive in providing good levels of support and guidance to young people. Educational attendance is good. The management is highly effective and ensures young people's welfare is paramount. No regulatory actions or recommendations have been made as a result of this inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the Registered Manager was asked to ensure the safety of young people and staff, in particular by risk assessing the positive physical intervention techniques that may be used with each young person (Children's Homes Regulations 2001 23(c)). Individual risk assessments now state specific instruction relating to physical intervention.

The Registered Manager was also asked to clarify which areas of maintenance are the responsibility of the provider and which are the responsibility of the landlord and subsequently ensure compliance with Children's Homes Regulations 2001 31(2). The Registered Manager has confirmed through with the letting agency where each person's responsibility lies.

The Registered Manager was also asked to establish an admission and discharge register. (Children's Homes Regulations 2001 29(1) Schedule 4 (1)). An admission/discharge register is now in place.

A final recommendation was made to achieve consistency between the policy and practice relating to play fighting. The Registered Manager is keeping the behaviour management policy under review. Current practice is that young people do not play fight. The current group of young people are happy with this arrangement.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people's health and emotional needs are very well met. All young people have access to a vast range of health professionals to meet their individual needs. Staff demonstrate a committed and comprehensive awareness of young people's health and emotional well-being.

Staff consistently promote healthy eating by young people and ensure this is closely monitored by key workers and staff. Young people are able to make choices about meals and are positively encouraged to try new foods. Work is undertaken on an individual basis to respond to any concerns relating to eating and diet. Young people are actively encouraged to plan and prepare meals with an emphasis on healthy eating and work towards independence. Meal times provide a social occasion in which staff and young people can have open discussion around the table. Young people reported their enjoyment in helping prepare meals and learning new cooking skills. Young people are actively encouraged to prepare cultural meals of their interest for all young people and staff to try.

Staff are highly committed and proactive to ensure young people's health needs are fully met. Prescribed medication administration records for each young person are well maintained and monitored. All staff are suitably trained and hold a first aid qualification. Extensive and comprehensive health information is maintained for all young people with staff being proactive in ensuring regular health appointments are made and attended by young people. One young person was proud to state that he no longer needed medication since being at the home. Staff work closely with health professionals to try and work with young people's behaviour and reduce the need for medication to be used to manage this.

Medication is safely stored to ensure young people's health is protected including provision for the storage of controlled drugs. Detailed records are held of any medical intervention needed with a clear audit of medication held within the home.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people are clearly protected from the risk of harm or abuse and live in a safe home environment. Staff have a very good understanding of key child protection matters and are supported by regular training. Staff demonstrate a very good understanding of the individual needs of the young people and how to appropriately safeguard them.

Young people's privacy is well respected by the staff and young people have their own private bedrooms. There is an independent living flat attached to the home where young people can be supported to prepare for independence if deemed appropriate.

The complaints system is clear and understood by staff and young people. Clear records are kept of any concerns raised. An open and honest culture within the home which fosters positive relationships with young people enabling them to feel comfortable with raising concerns. The complaints form is easily accessible for young people to use. The suggestions box enables young people to raise issues confidentially should they wish. There have been no concerns or complaints since the last inspection. The Registered Manager works closely with the neighbours and community to ensure any concerns are aired and resolved.

Staff are very proactive in dealing with any bullying issues within the home and continue to educate young people about relationships and the impact of group living, as well as current issues such as internet safety. One young person confirmed there was no bullying just 'bickering' between the group of boys accommodated. There is an anti bullying co-ordinator who conducts a bullying workshop for all newly appointed staff ensuring best practice is followed at all times.

The staff work extremely well in positive behaviour management and undertake appropriate training to manage challenging behaviour. It was evident on inspection that young people are supported to manage their behaviour and respond well to staff

intervention. Additional support is gained from services to meet individual needs to promote positive outcomes for young people. The Registered Manager closely monitors the levels of physical intervention used within the home and these have proven to decrease over time. Records of physical intervention are well maintained and meet the regulation. Staff expressed that physical intervention is only used as a last result. Observation on inspection was of a committed team working well and using humour to positively manage young people's behaviour. Staff focus strongly on praise and rewards in order to boost young people's self esteem and manage behaviour in a positive fashion. One young person was proud of his ability to manage his own behaviour since joining the home and boasted, 'I have not had to be restrained for over two months'.

There are clear systems for reporting and recording any event where a young person has been absent without authority. There are not significantly high numbers of incidents where young people are absent without authority. Incidents of high risk behaviour are closely monitored and staff are extremely vigilant to ensure young people remain safe within and outside of the home environment. Risk assessments and records clearly detail actions to safeguard young people. Staff implement the organisation's policies and procedures promptly should a young person leave the home without authorisation. There has only been one incident since the last inspection, the young person phoned staff to let them know he was safe and where he was. Staff act promptly to ensure young people are returned to the home safely.

Young people are encouraged to access the local community through a balanced risk assessment process. Young people are actively encouraged to develop positive independent lives dependant on their age and ability, through a range of staff support.

The health and safety policies and procedures are robust. Designated staff maintain records of all checks undertaken and of staff training, for example in fire safety. Young people and staff practise fire evacuation procedures and fire safety records are clear and up-to-date. One young person confirmed he knew the evacuation procedure and they practised at different times throughout the year, including early morning and night time evacuations.

Staff recruitment procedures provide safeguards for young people's welfare. Evidence showed no member of staff commences employment until satisfactory Criminal Records Bureau checks and references have been received. There has been no new staff recruited since the last inspection.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The individual needs of each young person are highlighted through detailed care planning and review. Individual support is fundamental to the success of young people developing and achieving whilst living at the home. Staff demonstrate a real commitment to the young people to ensure they are supported to achieve in all areas

of their lives. Young people feel they have their individual needs met and it was evident that they felt able to talk to staff on matters affecting their lives. Observations made were of good relationships between staff and the young person present, and consistency within the staff team helps this to flourish.

Young people are encouraged and supported to attain their educational goals. Suitable and up-to-date plans ensure that the particular educational needs of each young person are assessed and incorporated into realistic education programmes. Young people are assisted to maintain their educational placement through good attendance records. Young people attend the organisations school or local colleges. Young people have settled into the school/home routine since leaving the main school campus boarding house and moving to their new home, which is situated fairly close to the school.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people are supported by a very committed staff team and effective systems to make a positive contribution to their lives and placement whilst living at the home. Good care plans comprehensively detail the care needed and how this is to be provided to young people. Staff are successful in engaging with young people, enabling young people to develop and achieve positive progress whilst living at the home. One young person stated he liked living at the home.

Regular reviews of care planning ensure that young people have their progress assessed routinely. When necessary care plans are amended to meet changing needs or circumstances. Staff are able to review the care provided to young people through regular team meetings and supervision.

Young people are supported to maintain contact with family members where appropriate. Young people have access to a private phone. Staff foster positive relationships with parents and ensure good communication is maintained. Young people have mobile phones and maintain contact with staff when they are home with families should they wish. Staff maintain close contact with young people's families should they go home on school holidays and provide support should families need it. Three young people were home visiting families in half term at the time of inspection. Staff are able to further safeguard young people by keeping in regular contact while young people access the community.

Initial referral information to the home is suitably gained, ensuring the young person's needs are known and understood prior to placement. This ensures the suitability of the placement and highlights how staff can provide the best possible individually planned service. The home's Statement of Purpose clearly defines the admissions procedure and criteria. Young people are able to have visits to the home prior to placement if possible; this enables a positive move into the home and helps them settle in quickly.

The atmosphere in the home is open and friendly and young people are clearly able to express their opinions easily. Regular young people's meetings allow a formal approach to be considered in respect of their views. Motivated and committed staff ensure that young people are supported to express their views through other means should they not wish to attend the young people's meetings. One young person had great joy in informing the inspector the boys had renamed the young people's meetings to Boys Unit Meetings, and that the group of boys had great enjoyment in announcing the abbreviation of the meetings! If young people opt not to participate, staff ensure the young people have opportunity to voice any concerns or issues through individual support. Any issues or queries are responded to in good time and young people are able to suggest agenda items for discussion. Staff promote young people's independence and provide opportunities for them to advocate for themselves.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people are encouraged through their placement to be as independent as possible and staff work closely to support them with a range of independent living skills in order to prepare them for leaving care. Transition plans and careful planning and thought are put in place to ensure young people move onto future placements in a positive manner. The homes independent living flat is a valuable resource enabling young people to prepare meals and live independently with appropriate support where needed.

The home provides spacious well maintained homely accommodation for young people. Young people enjoy living in the home with good facilities and leisure areas provided. Young people have access to television games room as well as a comfortable lounge area. A large garden allows opportunity for activities such as football. One young person commented that the home is uncomfortably hot at times. The Registered Manager is aware of his concerns and actively responded by providing a fan for his room and looking at ways to monitor the heating within the home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The management of the home is very efficient and effective. The Registered Manager demonstrates a considerable understanding of the home and the needs of both staff and young people. There are systems in place to support both staff and young people and it was clear that this has helped young people to develop and achieve since being at the home.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Staff work extremely well to support young people's individual cultural and diverse needs. Specific attention is given to young people that have a cultural need and staff are deployed to enable young

people links with people that come from the same cultural backgrounds.

Staff duty rotas indicated that there are very good levels of staff on duty at all times. Staff undertake a range of training to equip them with the relevant skills to meet the needs of individual young people. The vast majority of the staff are qualified to National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in care. The Registered Manager is suitably qualified for her role. The staff team are proficient in delivering a good standard of care to young people. Training provided equips staff with a good range of skills and knowledge in order to meet the needs of young people accommodated and promotes good outcomes. Training includes a number of annual e-learning opportunities in areas such as child protection.

The welfare of young people is protected and promoted by a professional, positive and committed staff team that are able to fulfil the home's Statement of Purpose. A thorough induction programme is available for new staff and all staff have access to a wide range of training opportunities, which are both encouraged and supported.

Young people enjoy the benefit of a home that is suitably staffed by day and night. Staff are extremely vigilant to ensure young people are suitably safeguarded. The staff team consists of both male and female members, offering a good mix of skills to the young people in their care.

Young people are safeguarded and their welfare promoted by the effective monitoring carried out by the Registered Manager. Monitoring visits by the regulation 33 visitor occur on a monthly basis and reports are submitted to Ofsted in a timely fashion. These reports highlight areas for development to improve standards of care and provision for young people. The Registered Manager confirmed these are a productive tool to promote further developments and reflect on current practice within the home.

Young people benefit from well maintained informative case files that they can access if requested. They are stored securely and confidentially. They contain clearly written records and provide comprehensive accounts of the young person's history and progress. Staff work well to ensure paperwork is maintained to a high standard and information held on young people is accurate and up-to-date. It was evident that young people can access information held on them if requested. One young person gave the inspector permission to view his file and was happy to discuss information about him.