

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Anne Bannister
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Date of last inspection	25 August 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 five bedded children's home is one of two run by the company. The home is in a small village with education being provided in a purpose-built school on the company's other site. It is a detached house with its own grounds. All young people have single en-suite bedrooms. The quality of the accommodation provided is of a high standard. Young people enjoy homely accommodation which is well furnished and decorated. The home has access to a range of local facilities in a nearby city and villages. It is registered for five males, aged from 14 years old up to 17 years old with emotional and behavioural problems.

Summary

This was the home's first inspection since registration. It was a key inspection. During the course of the inspection all key standards were inspected. The home admitted its first young person in September 2009 and is establishing a quality service for young people. There is an experienced management team, who support the care staff team and enable them to address young people's assessed needs. The judgement is that the care of the young people is satisfactory overall. However, many of the outcomes for young people are judged to be good, but the overall judgement is judged satisfactory due to actions raised in relation to keeping young people safe from harm. The care of young people meets many of the key national minimum standards (NMS), but requires further development in some areas.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable. This is the home's first inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Meal times are relaxed social occasions in which appropriate social skills are encouraged. Records indicate that staff endeavour to involve young people in menu planning. Staff have an understanding of what constitutes a balanced healthy diet which meets young people's nutritional needs. All staff involved in food preparation hold basic food hygiene certificates.

Systems are in place to ensure that young people's assessed health needs are monitored and assessed. Young people's files contain a detailed health plan which is collated by the organisation's school nurse. The home's care plans do not differentiate between assessed needs to be addressed by the school nurse and the care staff team. All appropriate medical consents are on file for young people living in the home. The storage and administration of medicines are monitored both by the registered manager and the school nurse. The nurse visits the home each week and provides a source for advice on health related issues to the care team. All staff have received training in safe medicine handling and basic first aid training.

The registered manager is developing links with the education team, as well as the school nurse, to ensure that young people are receiving advice and information which will help them to make positive life choices in relation to relationships, drugs and alcohol.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Overall arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the safety and welfare of young people are satisfactory with some of the outcomes being assessed as good. The staff team are committed to ensuring that young people in their care are protected from harm.

Suitable policies on privacy and confidentiality are in place. Staff spoken to are aware of the need to show respect for young people's right of privacy and are fully aware of the importance of maintaining confidentiality.

The home has a written procedure for how staff must respond when young people are absent without authority. Any incidents will be monitored by the Registered Manager. None have occurred since the home was registered. The home have discussed a protocol for handling such incidents with the local community police officer.

Staff take concerns and complaints raised by young people seriously. Young people spoken to confirm that they are aware of the various ways they can raise a concern or complaint. They feel that staff do respond to issues they raise with them, which are usually sorted out informally. There is one incident where a concern raised by a parent was dealt with by the senior management team. There was insufficient documentation to evidence the outcomes of this investigation.

There are systems in place to ensure young people are protected from bullying if it should occur. There is a clear understanding that it will not be tolerated in any form. Staff spoken to indicated they would respond quickly when issues arise. Documentation indicates that an incident of verbal bully which occurred during the school day was not dealt with by the education staff but handed over to the care team to address. Senior managers are clear that incidents occurring during education hours should be dealt with by teaching staff and are taking steps to ensure that this occurs in the future.

Staff base their management of behaviour on encouraging acceptable behaviour. Staff are trained in the Team Teach method of behaviour management, and use their skills in de-escalation to try to respond to negative behaviours shown by young people. When incidents of physical intervention do occur they are well documented and records show that the young person is asked to reflect back on the incident. Records which indicate staff involved have also been given this opportunity are yet to be developed. Staff and young people are familiar with the sanctions which can be used for unacceptable behaviours and sanctions are appropriately recorded and reviewed by the Registered Manager.

The home has risk assessments in place for all aspects of the safety of the premises and grounds. There are also risk assessments relating to young people's behaviours and planned activities they undertake. These risk assessments are regularly reviewed and updated, to ensure young people's continued safety. However, a problem with water temperatures was referred for action in September 2009 and has not yet been addressed adequately. Visitors are welcomed into the home, once they have satisfied staff of their identity, the purpose of their visit and they have signed the visitors book. All fire alarm tests and fire safety equipment checks are up-to-date. However, the self closing mechanism on the fire door for one bedroom requires attention. All gas and electrical appliances receive an annual check. These actions show that the home is

committed to ensuring young people live in a safe and secure environment. However, when risks are identified the maintenance program addressing them is not adequate.

The company has in place procedures, relating to the selection and vetting of all staff working at the home prior to employment, that meets the requirements of standard 27 of the children's home national minimum standards.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

All young people are given individualised support in line with their needs and wishes. Individual support is always available to young people when they require it. Young people spoken to indicated there is always someone on duty they can approach to discuss issues with. Files viewed also showed the home ensures young people receive identified specialist advice and support when required.

Education plans are arranged to suit the young person's individual needs and this was confirmed through documentation. The participation in outdoor activities is also a key part of young people's educational programme. Care staff support young people's learning needs through close liaison with teaching staff, which ensures young people's individual educational needs are well met. The manner in which care staff achieve this is not well documented in the young people's placement plans.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

The home are in the process of developing their first placement plans. A placement plan addressing educational and care needs is completed for all young people. This is broken down into a more simplified format so that young people have understandable targets, identifying how these will be addressed and setting them targets. The plan viewed did not fully reflect all the contributions the care staff team are making to address young people's identified needs. The plans do not therefore accurately address how support to individual young people's needs is being provided.

The young people are assisted and encouraged to maintain contact with family and friends. The frequency of this contact is negotiated with the placing authority, young person and the family. Although this information is documented within the main file this is not clearly indicated on young people's individual plans.

There is a detailed admission process, which enables the registered manager to assess whether the home is able to address young people's needs and to put in place an initial placement plan. This process aims to ensure that no young person is inappropriately placed in the home. However, the home does not have transition plans in place for young people moving from the other home belonging to the organisation. The absence of these detailed plans contributed to one young person being returned to the main site.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff at the home are skilled at supporting young people to develop their social skills, self esteem and self confidence. One of the aims of the home is to prepare young people for

independence. Care staff are keen to assist young people develop the skills to live independently. Programmes of independence are being formally developed and will link in with Local Authority Pathway planning.

The home is in a small village. It is a detached house with its own grounds. The home has access to a range of local facilities in a nearby city and villages. Young people are accommodated in single en suite bedrooms. They have access to a games lounge, dining room, lounge, kitchen as well as extensive gardens. The quality of the accommodation provided is of a high standard. Young people enjoy homely accommodation which is well furnished and decorated. There is suitable space for young people to engage in leisure activities as well meet with visitors in private. Recent inclement weather has resulted in damp appearing in three bedrooms. Contractors have been employed to rectify this problem before any young people are admitted to those rooms.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Overall outcomes for the management of the home are satisfactory with some of the outcomes being assessed as good. Actions arising under safeguarding influence the overall judgement given. The home is efficiently managed, providing a safe environment for the young people who live there. The Statement of Purpose is clear in setting out what care the home will provide and how it will be provided.

The home's promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. The home has assessed and determined the individual needs of young people in areas such as culture, religion, risk assessments and equality. However, the manner in which these are documented does not adequately demonstrate the home's practice. Matters that promote fairness, such as access to the complaints system and reviewing of sanctions used with the young people are good. Staff working in the home have not yet received training in the promotion of equality and diversity.

Not all staff receive formal supervision within the required timescales. This includes the frequency of formal supervision given to the registered manager. All staff do receive daily informal support at the end of each shift. This registered manager is taking steps to address these deficits within the home. These actions will ensure that young people are cared for by a staff team that are supported, both formally and informally, in their roles to meet young people's needs.

Viewing of staff duty rota's, and observation of working practices, show the home is adequately staffed. The home employ waking night staff. One member of care staff sleeps in each night to provide additional support if young people require it. The home's staffing levels are such that to date the staff team have been able to cover at time of staff sickness or holidays so that the young people receive consistent care. However, the organisation is also in the process of recruiting bank staff to support the rota.

Staff training programmes include a thorough induction programme. The staff team appear competent in their roles, having been together for a period of induction prior to the home opening. The home has a National Vocational Qualification training programme in place and are working towards the 80% qualified staff team. These actions show the home has systems in place for staff to obtain relevant training and qualifications.

The organisation has a performance appraisal scheme which will be implemented with the staff team and ensure all staff have personal development plans in place.

Monthly monitoring visits by the Responsible Individual and the Registered Manager are carried out and form part of the quality assurance system of the home. The home is developing its quality monitoring systems and will be seeking to obtain feedback from placing authorities, parents or carers and young people as part of this process.

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
16	ensure that outcome of a complaint investigation is clearly indicated, along with a comment as to whether the complainant is happy with the outcome (Regulation 24)	21 December 2009
26	ensure action is taken to regulate water temperatures in the young people's bedrooms so that it does not exceed recommended temperature levels (Regulation 23)	21 December 2009
26	ensure action is taken to address the risks presented by the closing mechanism on the door of bedroom two (Regulation 23)	21 December 2009
28	ensure that all staff receive supervision within the required timescales (Regulation 27).	21 December 2009

Recommendations

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

- further develop the health section of care plans to reflect who is responsible for working with the young person to address identified health care needs (NMS 13)
- ensure that there is documented evidence that staff are de-briefed following any incident of physical intervention (NMS 22)
- ensure that education staff are clear that incidents of bullying during school hours should be dealt with by teaching staff and not routinely handed back to care staff to address (NMS 18)
- ensure that the education part of care plans clearly reflect how the care team are supporting young people in their role as 'good parent' (NMS 14)
- ensure that the home's care plans clearly reflects how young people's individually identified needs are to be met (NMS 2)
- ensure that transition plans are put in place to assist to assist young people who are moving from another home within the organisation (NMS 6)

- provide staff with training in the promotion of equality and diversity (NMS 31).