

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Andrew Hewston
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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 is a small children's home offering care and accommodation to 3 young people.

The purpose of the home is to offer placements to young people with a range of presenting difficulties and in need of specialist residential services. The home is situated in a rural area with nearby woods.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

At this unannounced full inspection, all key standards in all outcome areas were assessed. Good practice recommendations from the previous inspection were also considered. All of the resident young people had an involvement with the inspection either through completing questionnaires or discussion with the inspector

The home provides a good standard of care. Young people enjoy positive relationships with staff which helps them to feel settled and to make good progress. Staff ensure young people's health needs are met and that they access differing professionals. There are some recordings of medication that need development. Young people's safety is paramount within the home and a variety of systems support this. Staff are trained in different areas that promote safety and developing positive behaviour.

Staff encourage young people to pursue their education and achieve to their individual potential. Staff also support young people to maintain positive relationships with their families and significant others. A complete placement plan is in development but separate plans show staff have a thorough awareness of differing young people's needs and how to respond to these. The house is homely and young people help to personalise their own spaces.

Young people are cared for by a competent team of staff, who work well together and who are supported by clear policies and procedures, supervision and relevant training.

Improvements since the last inspection

The previous action relating to safeguarding investigations is now met. This has been completed following written agreement from the placing social worker and clear recordings of when allegations have been made within the home.

Four recommendations of good practice were made at the last inspection. All but one

of these have been met following improvements in the home's access road; improvements in safeguarding recording systems and written permission from the local General Practitioner relating to medication administration. However, health plans still do not contain sufficient information and this area has been highlighted as an action for development from this inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people's health needs are responded to appropriately by the staff team. All young people are registered with local health professionals and regular appointments are completed. All young people have health plans that support their time at the home and ensure that they are accessing differing services. Health plans are updated on a regular basis although information relating to specific medication is not recorded clearly within one of these. The organisation's psychologist supports the staff team as well as working with young people on an individual basis where appropriate. They also have an involvement with the review process through an initial assessment and ongoing reports when necessary.

Staff are appropriately trained in the administration of medication and first aid to ensure the safety of the young people. The vast majority of recordings of medication are fully completed when administered with only one misreporting of medication being noted. Medication is regularly audited to ensure the safety of the young people. The home's staff have consulted the prescribing doctor with relation to putting medication into weekly medication dispensers and they have received consent for this in developing safe practice for the young people. Recordings relating to accidents are fully completed by the staff team.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Young people state that they feel safe within the home. Young people are kept safe within the home through robust systems and a caring staff team.

Privacy arrangements for young people are appropriate. Young people have private access to the home's telephone, although some young people's calls are monitored to support their safety. This is only done following written agreement from the placing social worker. Staff respect young people's privacy within their own rooms and where room searches are completed these are fully recorded.

Young people are aware of how to make a complaint to the staff team if they are unhappy. Information regarding complaints is clear within the young people's handbook and discussed in key working meetings. When complaints are made they are fully responded to and recorded, these are seen within young people's files. One complaint has been made at the home since the last inspection. Staff safeguarding responsibilities are supported by a good policy and robust procedures which are

clear. The manager has developed a constructive relationship with the local safeguarding board and placing social workers with relation to allegations that may be made by individuals. Written permissions are in place with regard to the self evaluation of safeguarding allegations by the Registered Manager following the action made at the previous inspection. All allegations made are thoroughly recorded and the placing social worker is notified to ensure the safety of young people and staff.

The home has information available for young people and staff with regard to bullying behaviour and how this is responded to. Young people state that bullying does occasionally occur but staff respond to problems through key working meetings and general young people's meetings. Systems are in place to respond if young people are absent without permission although instances of this behaviour are limited.

Behaviour systems within the home are good and encourage the development of positive behaviour through rewards as well as sanctions. Good behaviour management programmes examine the differing de-escalation techniques that are used with individuals, showing an effective way of responding to differing young people. All recordings of behaviour management are fully completed and referenced within the home's records as well as individual files. All staff are trained in the use of differing restraint techniques and this is updated on a regular basis.

Young people are kept safe through thorough risk assessments of areas that they are involved in, including activities and areas around the home. Health and safety checks are completed on a regular basis and fire safety checks are in line with expected timescales. Certification regarding necessary health and safety checks are in place to support the safety of staff and young people.

The organisation's staff recruitment checks were inspected in May 2010 and show that there are robust procedures in place that ensure the safety of the young people. All checks as required under the regulations are appropriately carried out. Where issues have arisen these are discussed within the recruitment process, responded to and recorded. Checks against the disqualification for caring for children regulations are also completed as part of recruitment procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people's individual needs are supported through a good range of plans that show staff have a very good awareness of the young people within the home and how to work with them. Different professionals, both internal to the organisation and external, work to support the young people on an individualised basis. Young people have access to an independent visitor and young people receive support within reviews from advocates where appropriate.

All young people attend full time education and this is fully supported by the staff

team. Staff also support young people within the classroom environment when required. Education and behaviour plans are shared between the school and home environments to ensure consistency across these two areas. Young people have educational statements and personal education plans and these are reviewed on a regular basis including input from the care staff team.

Young people enjoy a wide range of activities both within the home and externally. Young people are able to discuss differing activities that they enjoy and how staff have supported them with individual interests. Activity planners are not fully completed however and information relating to activities completed is sometimes basic. Staff take young people away on holidays both within the United Kingdom and abroad on a well-organised basis.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Plans are in place to support young people. Specific placement plans are generic and do not state the individual needs of the young people and how these are being met within the home. However, additional care plans and monthly reports show this information clearly, in line with the expectations of the standard. Staff are also able to competently discuss differing young people and how they are being supported within the home. Young people's plans are reviewed on a regular basis and they are fully involved in the meetings and decision-making processes relating to their care, where appropriate. Minutes of reviews show that the staff from the home and others within the organisation have a professional approach to the care being provided. Young people are supported with attending their reviews and the reports written by the home also support decisions being made within the review format.

Staff support a range of differing contact arrangements these are clear within placement plans. All contact arrangements are clear within plans for young people and visits are fully recorded.

All young people are supported with making decisions about their lives and the running of the home through regular house meetings and good key worker meetings. Minutes of young people's meetings are very basic but show that young people are able to discuss aspects of living at the home. Key worker meeting records show that young people are able to discuss differing areas of their life on a one-to-one basis regularly. There is a good programme for key working meetings.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people live in a comfortably furnished home that provides sufficient space and facilities to meet the needs of three residents. The house is situated within a rural location although staff state that this is not fully utilised by the young people. Some areas of the house require upgrading and there is a service team within the

organisation that is in the process of completing this. The upgrading does not affect the care provided to the young people. There are enough downstairs rooms for young people to spend time alone, or in company and the dining room allows staff and young people to sit down together. Young people have a say, and like the way their own rooms are decorated and they take care of their areas and possessions with staff help.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home's Statement of Purpose and young people's guide are reviewed on a regular basis and give a good awareness of the purpose of the home and how young people are supported while living there. The Statement of Purpose includes a staffing policy in line with the expectations of the standards. The home is well staffed to meet the needs of the young people and additional support is given and received from staff at another of the organisation's homes. The young people's guide is available through individualised memory sticks to support different ways to access the information about the home.

Competent and confident staff provide good care for young people and current staffing levels ensure an appropriate level of support to the young people. Sufficient staff are trained to National Vocational Qualification at Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People. There are deputising arrangements within the home and staff in charge of shifts have sufficient experience. Young people have continuity from the stable staff team that provides a mix of male and female staff from a diverse range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Good training and development opportunities are linked to the needs of the children and the purpose of the home. Staff are supported through frequent professional supervision although not all staff are up to date with annual appraisals.

The home is well managed and the manager has a high awareness of ongoing issues relating to all aspects of the care provision. Necessary management monitoring of the home's systems are up to date and regulation 33 visits are also completed monthly with copies of reports forwarded to Ofsted.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Staff attempt to give a full range of information to young people with regard to different cultures in a variety of ways. Staff respond to young people's needs on a highly individualised basis and challenge young people who do not accept others differences.

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/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Std.	Action	Due date
12	ensure young people's health needs are clearly stated within health plans (Regulation 28, Schedule 3.14)	01/10/2010
13	ensure all medication is fully recorded when administered (Regulation 21(1))	01/10/2010
2	ensure young people have placement plans setting out how care will be provided on a day to day basis. (Regulation 12(1))	14/10/2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure all staff have annual appraisals. (NMS 28.7)