

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Alicea Churchward
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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 a large detached house in gated grounds. It belongs to a private provider who has two other children's homes. The home is decorated and maintained to a very high standard and offers very good facilities to the children and young people resident. This home is in a residential area and is close to community facilities and leisure pursuits. It is indistinguishable from surrounding properties and looks like a family home. There are four young people resident at the moment, three were present for this inspection and all four submitted their views in questionnaires to Ofsted for this inspection.

Summary

This was an unannounced full inspection. All key standards were inspected. This is the first inspection of this service. The home is providing satisfactory outcomes for young people with some good features. Young people report favourably about the home and their relationships with staff, overall they are satisfied with the quality of care they receive.

There are several areas of development identified in this service. The home is unable to provide evidence in several areas. Getting all of the recruitment information for agency staff, making sure all young people have placement plans and arrangements for access to a telephone for all young people are the most urgent matters that will ensure that young people are safe and make a positive contribution to their plans.

There is no clear rationale for making placements in the home and the matching process is not clear. As a result of staff training needs and other assessments the home is not in a position to meet all of the identified needs of young people placed. A number of recommendations have been made in relation to staff training. Other issues such as updating the Statement of Purpose have little impact upon the young people.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

This is the first inspection since the registration of this new service.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

The young people say that they enjoy the meals provided to them and that staff encourage healthy eating. The staff cater for young people who have other preferences and there is an alternative on offer. Fresh fruit is available and young people can prepare light snacks. Older young people are in the process of learning to prepare and cook some meals. The home maintains records of menus, the menus do not include which vegetables or salad is offered at mealtimes and lack clarity of what the actual meals are for example 'traditional Sunday roast'. Not all of the staff have up to date training in food hygiene.

The home maintains health plans and has a variety of information included in the health section of the placement plans and in a health file. All young people have access to routing medical appointments and regular medical checks. Young people that require specialist health services

have access to them for review and treatment. Consent to medical treatment is also on young people's files. Young people in the home enjoy good physical health.

Medication is held in a safe in the staff office. All medication is accurately accounted for and regularly monitored by a senior member of staff. Records of administration are good and demonstrate that medication is given appropriately and at the prescribed intervals. Young people's health needs are met and their welfare is safeguarded by the home's policies and procedures for administering medicines and providing treatment. However all of the staff have not received up to date training in administration of first aid.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people's privacy is maintained; information is stored and handled in a confidential manner. Staff know how to deal with and share information which they are given in confidence for child protection purposes. Some young people have their own mobile telephones upon which they can make and receive calls in private, some do not. There is a telephone in the staff office which can be used and is used to supervise telephone contact. The home does not ensure that any restriction on communication by any young person has been agreed by the child's placing authority.

There is a clear procedure for making complaints; there is a variety of information included in the children's guide to access independent contacts outside of the home. The home maintains a record of any complaints, there have been no complaints since registration. Staff have not received training in the complaints procedures.

Staff are familiar with recognising, responding and reporting any matters of concern. All staff receive information in relation to safeguarding children and young people during their induction to the home. Senior workers and the manager have received a high level of training in safeguarding and the home has links with the local safeguarding board.

Young people report no bullying in the home. Staff are not aware of any matters requiring attention, they are alert to the possibility of such behaviours and closely supervise the young people. Guidance is given to the young people in the children's guide about bullying. The home has a policy in place to address any issues.

Absence is not problematic in this home. Young people do not leave without staff permission and staff ensure that they know the whereabouts of young people when they are out of the home.

Staff are trained in positive behaviour management techniques and the need to physically restrain young people if required to do so. Relationships between staff and young people are observed to be good; staff are enthusiastic and committed to their work. The home maintains records of sanctions and restraint which comply with regulatory requirements. Senior members of the team facilitate training to other staff. The policy clearly outlines expectations of behaviour which are regularly re-enforced by staff and known by young people. To their credit, the home has dramatically reduced the number and frequency of restraints experienced by young people in previous placements.

The home provides young people with a safe environment. There is regular certificated maintenance of equipment. There is regular risk assessment of the environment, activities and young people have individual risk assessments in place. The home has an up to date fire risk assessment and regular evacuations take place including evacuations a night time.

Staff recruitment information is held within the home all information is present in respect of permanent staff employed by the home, however there are deficiencies in the information provided in respect of agency workers. The home does not have a complete employment history and one reference in respect of these workers. The home has a clear visitors policy, which staff follow in practice and has installed a fingerprint scanner on front door to ensure that no one can obtain unauthorised access to the home.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people have placing social workers, contact with their families and access to children's rights. Some young people are part of the children's rights council. Young people receive individual support when they need it.

This inspection has taken place during the school holidays. The majority of the young people have school or college placements at the start of next term. The organisation have a good history of providing suitable advocacy for those young people finding difficulty obtaining a school placement and plans are underway to address this matter through an alternative education provision. There is a good education policy and staff are clear about their responsibilities in delivering the policy in practice.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

The home has clear placement plans which meet with regulatory requirements. However these are not in place for all young people. The home is in the process of developing a key worker system and key workers will be responsible for monitoring the placement plans. Young people are involved in choosing their key worker.

Arrangements for contact are good; staff are familiar with contact arrangements for individual young people. Young people are able to maintain constructive contact with their families, friends and other people who play a significant role in their lives.

There are shortfalls in relation to admissions to the home. The reasons for admissions and matching are not clear, the home has admitted young people in an emergency and this is not included in the Statement of Purpose for the home. The home has taken admissions where it is clear that identified needs are not being met, this means that young people are not always appropriately placed. Planned admissions are managed well and there is a gradual admissions procedure which includes visits for tea and overnight stays wherever possible. The home has a good admissions policy and a policy in relation to young people leaving the home in an emergency.

The home regularly consults with young people about routine matters and aims to have a young people's meeting on a monthly basis. A sample of the records demonstrates that a variety of matters are discussed including activities, school holidays, living in the home, any concerns,

bed times, respecting each other and the home, bedrooms clean and tidy, bad language, threatening behaviour, going into each others bedrooms, the rules. The home does consult in other meetings with parents and placing social workers but evidence is not in place to demonstrate what feedback has been obtained as a result.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people are not of an age whereby pathway planning is in place. The home does provide young people with opportunities to develop a life skills programme and promotes independence in relation to laundry, keeping bedrooms tidy, helping at mealtimes, clothes shopping, and encouraging good personal hygiene.

The home is well located situated in its own grounds and provides a welcoming, homely environment. The interior and exterior of the home are maintained in a good state of structural and decorative repair. There is a good maintenance and repair programme for the building, grounds and furniture. Young people have their own rooms which are well furnished, decorated to a good standard and highly personalised.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

There is good information for prospective young people, their parents and social workers about the home and what it provides. However the Statement of Purpose staffing section is not up to date and the age categories do not reflect those outlined in the certificate of registration. The manager has effective systems for running the home, avoiding institutional practice. This helps ensure that young people have good positive life experiences.

The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Young people are looked after on an individual basis regardless of need. Staff have not yet undertaken equality and diversity training and are therefore limited to developing understanding of difference. This training had been booked by the second day of this inspection.

The manager and staff have a good range of experience and there are clear deputising arrangements in the manager's absence. Staffing levels are good and ensure plenty of support to young people with their care, activities, visits and appointments.

Staff say they are well supported in their work by each other and the management team. Staff receive a good induction to the home. Training has lapsed in several areas, which have been identified in this report. On the second day of the inspection the manager was taking remedial action to address this matter and some courses have been booked. All staff have attained National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in caring for children and young people, new staff have enrolled upon the course. Senior workers in the home are undertaking the leadership in management course.

Record keeping is generally good and regularly checked through the home's quality assurance processes. The registered person does not have a development plan in place for this home.

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
24	provide a telephone phone which young people may use without reference to persons working in the home and if restrictions are imposed, ensure that the placing authority consents to the imposition that there is evidence of their agreement (Regulation 15 (4) (7) (a))	30 September 2010
27	ensure all staff have a complete employment history and two references (Regulation 26 and Schedule 2)	30 September 2010
2	ensure that placement plans are in place for all young people. (Regulation 12 (1))	30 September 2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure that staff receive appropriate training in the promotion of diversity to develop young people's understanding (NMS 31.1)
- update staffing details in the statement of purpose (NMS 1.2)
- provide evidence that the needs of any young person being admitted, and the likely effects of their admission upon the existing group of residents, are taken into account, and recorded, in decisions on admission to the home (NMS 5.7)
- do not admit children in an emergency unless this is explicitly included as a function of the home in its Statement of Purpose (NMS 5.6)
- ensure that staff and children involved in preparing food for others have received appropriate training and/or are appropriately supervised in safe food handling and hygiene (NMS 10.9)
- ensure that the record of menus demonstrates provision of a suitable and varied diet (NMS 10.4)
- ensure that all staff receive training in the complaints procedures (NMS 16.6)
- ensure that all staff are trained in the use of first aid (NMS 13.5)
- ensure that the views of parents and placing authorities are obtained (NMS 8.11)
- ensure that the home has a written development plan. (NMS 33.5)