

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 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

A private company operates this children's home as boarding provision for a residential special school. The company also operates other children's homes in the area. The school provides residential care and education for up to 51 boys aged nine to 17 years who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. Placements are offered that extend beyond term time and therefore boarding provision is registered and inspected under the regulations and national minimum standards applicable to Children's Homes. The home is located in an urban area close to local amenities. Each young person has their own bedroom which is enhanced by substantial communal space.

Summary

This was an unannounced key inspection. The purpose of this inspection was to assess if the home is meeting the national minimum standards and regulations for children's homes and protecting and promoting the welfare of the young people accommodated. This is the home's first inspection since being registered separately in March 2010. The home was previously inspected as a satellite unit accommodating young people from a residential special school registered as a children's home. The home offers a good standard of care for young people. Health is promoted well, although effective auditing of medication and the administration of medication does not take place. Staff are very effective in supporting young people to manage their behaviour. It was unclear due to the majority of information relating to young people not being maintained within the home, if young people's needs are assessed appropriately. Observations were of young people being able to accept support and guidance from the staff team. The staff team ensure all young people are suitably protected and their welfare is promoted through good staff support. However some staff reported being unclear about the procedure for reporting child protection concerns. Also child protection information within the home is lacking and does not inform good practice. Staff are effective in responding swiftly to young people's individual needs and provide a consistent approach to managing behaviour. Staff work well with other agencies to ensure young people have access to a range of professionals to support them. It was unclear on inspection as to the level of monitoring that is undertaken by the Registered Manager. A cohesive and stable staff team ensure young people's educational attendance is good. Regular monitoring is undertaken by the Regulation 33 visitor and details the promotion of care and welfare to young people. Regular fire evacuation practice has not taken place since the home has been registered. The home internal environment is generally well maintained although staff reported maintenance work sometimes takes a while to be resolved. The outside garden areas are untidy and unkempt. A number of regulatory actions and recommendations have been made as a result of this inspection. These mainly relate to required information and records not being maintained within the home. Also issues relating to health and safety and ineffective monitoring could potentially compromise the welfare of young people. Young people's files did not contain all the information relating to assessed needs and information for staff to ensure their needs are being appropriately met.

The overall quality rating is inadequate.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

This is the first inspection since the home has been registered separately from the main school site.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people's health and emotional needs are well met. All young people have access to a range of health professionals to meet their individual needs. Staff demonstrate a good awareness of young people's health and emotional well-being. However full information relating to specific health needs and assessments could not be located within the home due to a lack of case file information relating to young people.

Staff work hard to promote healthy eating by young people. However young people resist change and meal times can be a cause of friction. Young people are able to make choices about meals in the weekly meetings and are positively encouraged to try new foods. Young people are actively encouraged to plan and prepare meals with an emphasis on healthy eating. The home has not had an environmental health check since being registered.

Staff are consistent in their approach to educate young people on a range of health issues. Prescribed medication administration records for each young person are generally well maintained. Controlled drugs are appropriately stored. Medication records were incorrect for one young person, detailing more medication than was actually being stored. There was no written explanation for missing medication. A member of staff audits medication held within the home. However this procedure currently fails to ensure medication records correspond with medication being stored. A clear audit trail could not be seen as to whom signs the administration of medication. Signatures were unclear and there was no audit trail that clarified staff signatures. This makes the monitoring and audit trail difficult to track effectively.

All staff are suitably trained and hold a first aid qualification. Health information is generally well maintained for all young people and detailed within their person centred plans, however files sampled were not fully completed stating why the young person needed certain medication. Staff are proactive in ensuring regular health appointments are made and attended by young people to promote their health and well-being.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

Young people are protected from the risk of harm or abuse and live in a generally safe home environment. Staff generally have a good understanding of key child protection matters and are supported by regular e-learning training. However staff reported that they felt they would benefit from face-to-face training on child protection to explore issues in more depth. Some staff spoken to report they were unaware of whom the Child Protection Liaison Officer was. This potentially impacts on staff reporting concerns in a timely manner. The child protection policy does not clearly outline the procedure should staff have a child protection concern. However staff spoken to demonstrated 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. CCTV is used within the home and does not compromise young people's privacy.

However it was unclear on inspection whether consent had been gained from young people's placing authorities of the use, prior to young people moving into the home. Young people and placing authorities must be informed in advance to ensure they are clear about the reason for the use of CCTV.

The complaints system is clear and understood by staff and young people. Records are kept of any concerns raised by young people, but this is maintained at the school. The complaints officer at the school appropriately responds to young people should they make a complaint, working to resolve issues in a positive manner. Currently there is no complaints log within the home, although the Registered Manager is working with the complaints officer to put this in place, in order to suitably monitor concerns actions and outcomes.

Staff are proactive in dealing with any bullying issues within the home and continue to educate young people about relationships and the impact of group living. Staff are vigilant about the dynamics of the group of young people living at the home, and work well to ensure they minimise opportunities for bullying behaviour that may take place.

The staff work very 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 generally respond well to staff intervention. Additional support is gained from services to meet individual needs to promote positive outcomes for young people. The record of physical intervention is well maintained to meet the regulation. However all incident forms are sent to the school and therefore it was unclear if effective monitoring by the Registered Manager was taking place. There are low levels of physical intervention within the home, which demonstrates that staff work consistently and effectively to promote positive behaviour. Young people reported that staff are good at helping them to behave appropriately.

There are clear systems for reporting and recording any event where a young person has been absent without authority. There have been no incidents where young people have been absent without authority since the home was registered. Staff demonstrated a good knowledge of the organisation's policies and procedures should a young person leave the home without authorisation.

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. General risk assessments and records detail actions to safeguard young people on outings and activities. However individual young people's risk assessments could not be located on inspection. It was unclear whether these are in place. This does not assist appropriate staff management of young people's behaviour where risks have been identified

The health and safety policies and procedures are generally sound with a recent health and safety audit taking place. The Registered Manager confirmed an action plan has been produced as a result of the audit. Records maintained showed regular fire safety checks are undertaken; however, there has been no practice fire evacuation since the home was registered. Therefore the safety of young people who have not practiced the procedure and are not aware of what to do in case of fire, is not ensured. The fire risk assessment held within the home is out of date and requires a review. Staff training includes health and safety and fire safety ensuring staff prioritises the health welfare and safety of the young people living at the home. At the time of inspection two fire doors were propped open with unsuitable means. The Registered

Manager confirmed that this was highlighted in the health and safety audit and is awaiting agreement to fit appropriate mechanisms to safeguard young people. The Public and Employee Liability Insurance Certificate seen on inspection was out of date and did not specify the name and address of the home. It was unclear whether the home is currently insured to protect staff and young people. Staff voiced concerns that the rear garden wall was unsafe as it is leaning with bricks becoming loose. The Registered Manager confirmed this has been looked at within the health and safety audit, although it is unclear what action is to be taken to make it safe and protect young people's safety.

There are stringent staff recruitment and vetting procedures in place which include criminal records bureau checks, checks against the Protection of Children Act list and references. The home very rarely uses agency staff; full checks are sought on any agency staff used.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Good staff ratios and a cohesive staff team contribute to the success of young people developing and achieving whilst living at the home. All staff are available to respond to the individual needs of each young person as and when required. Young people spoken to were positive about the staff team and confirmed that they can talk to staff and that staff support them to manage their behaviour, access the local community and develop their independent living skills. Observations made were of good relationships between staff and young people, and consistency within the staff team has helped this to flourish. Person centred plans highlight areas for development and behaviours and actions needed to manage these. Plans seen on inspection were not fully completed; however staff demonstrated a good awareness of the needs of young people and how to meet these. Young people have access to a range of professionals appropriate to their individual needs to ensure they receive individual support. The school has a qualified skilled therapy team that provides a range of therapies to promote positive outcomes for young people.

Young people are encouraged and supported to attain their educational potential. Educational plans could not be seen on inspection as currently the majority of information and records attaining to each young person is maintained at the main school site. The home does not meet the regulations in respect of records that must be maintained within the home. Young people are assisted to maintain their educational placement through good attendance and support from staff. There is good communication between the school and home to ensure staff are aware of any issues that may impact on young people's behaviour in the evenings. Young people spoken to commented that they felt they needed access to a computer and internet within the home. Staff agreed that this would help support young people with their education.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff are able to review the care provided to young people through regular team meetings and supervision. Comprehensive person centred plans are compiled for each young person and entries focus on the five 'Every Child Matters' outcomes. Person centred plans viewed on inspection showed that some areas had not been completed fully although it was clear that they are regularly reviewed. This has the potential impact on staff not being fully aware of the needs of individual young people and how to meet their needs. Young people's case files maintained at the home do not contain full information to inform staff of young people's

individual needs. The home does not meet the regulations in respect of records that must be maintained within the home. Staff and young people confirmed that regular review meetings take place and that young people are consulted and can attend review meetings. Copies of review meetings are not held within the home.

Young people are supported to maintain contact with family members where appropriate. Young people have access to a cordless phone which allows privacy when making calls. Young people confirmed that they have good contact with family members.

It was reported that initial referral information is suitably gained, however this was not available on inspection. Staff meet with appropriate school and care staff prior to any young person moving into the home to ensure 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.

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. 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 satisfactory.

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. Life skills programmes and careful planning and thought are put in place to ensure young people move onto future placements in a positive manner.

Young people enjoy a large spacious home with good facilities and leisure areas provided. At the time of the inspection redecoration was taking place. Generally the home is decorated to a good standard. Some areas are in need of maintenance such as bathrooms towel rails needing replacing and a hole in the toilet wall being repaired. Staff reported that maintenance issues can sometimes take a while to be resolved. Young people are positively encouraged to personalise their rooms. Bathrooms and toilets are adjacent to living and sleeping accommodation, however hand basins are not present in either toilet area used by young people. This is a potential health and hygiene concern. The inside of the home provides comfortable and homely facilities for the young people accommodated. However the garden area does not provide young people with a pleasant environment as it is overgrown and unkempt at the front and untidy at the back.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

The management of the home is currently ineffective. The Registered Manager demonstrates a good understanding of the home and the needs of both staff and young people. However systems and procedures including comprehensive case files and information on young people are not available within the home. 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 home has a generic young people's guide that details all the registered children's homes run by the organisation. However, this is not appropriate to their level of understanding and at present, no alternative is available. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Staff work well to support young people's individual needs.

Staff duty rotas indicated that there are 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. Staff are either qualified to National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in care or they are enrolled on future courses. The staff team are proficient in delivering a good standard of care to young people.

The welfare of young people is protected and promoted by a stable and cohesive 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 range of e-learning training opportunities. Staff spoken to reported that they would benefit from further face-to-face training sessions on child protection and areas to help them understand the needs of the young people. 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 kept safe. The staff team consists of both male and female members, offering a good mix of skills to the young people in their care.

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. It was unclear on inspection of the level of monitoring that is undertaken by the Registered Manager. Medication records were seen to be incorrect and effective monitoring is not undertaken in this area. It was unclear whether all areas detailed in Schedule 6 are being effectively monitored as records could not be located on inspection.

Young people's case files maintained within the home do not meet the regulation. Limited information was available on inspection. Staff reported having not read information held within the school relating to young people. This has the potential to compromise the safety and welfare of any young people about whose needs staff are not fully informed. The limited information held is stored securely and confidentially in the staff office.

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 Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
13	keep an accurate record of all medication, prescribed and non-prescribed especially in relation to controlled drugs (Regulation 21 (1))	2 August 2010
33	ensure all areas outlined in Schedule 6 regulation 34 (1) are closely monitored and a written record of action and outcome is implemented (Regulation 34 (1))	2 August 2010

26	explore appropriate and suitable means to keep fire doors open to ensure young people's safety is not compromised (Regulation 32)	2 August 2010
17	maintain an up to date copy of the Safeguarding procedures of the local authority in which the home is situated, which must include the up to date contact details for significant people in that procedure (Regulation 16)	2 August 2010
17	ensure the child protection policy and procedures are reviewed and updated, and are known by staff (Regulation 16)	2 August 2010
35	ensure a register and all areas outlined in Schedule 4 reg 29(1) is maintained within the home (Schedule 4 Regulation 29 (1))	2 August 2010
35	obtain and maintain within the home the information specified in Schedule 3 in respect of each child and staff are aware of information on a need to know basis (Schedule 3 Regulation 28 (1))	2 August 2010
16	maintain a record of all complaints made by young people in the home, as well as any complaints from other persons, and actions taken as a result. (Regulation 24)	2 August 2010

Recommendations

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

- produce a signature chart to ensure it is clear who administered medication and a clear audit trail is in place (NMS 12))
- ensure prior consent is obtained and retained on file within the home for permission of the administration of first aid and administration of medication (NMS 13.4)
- ensure all staff are up to date and aware of child protection procedures including knowledge of the home's child protection liaison officer (NMS 17)
- assess the safety of the wall in the garden with a record of action taken and outcome and take necessary measures to ensure it is safe (NMS 26)
- ensure at least four fire drills, including evacuation and fire drills held at night take place in a 12 month period and are recorded accordingly (NMS 26.8)
- review and update the fire risk assessment (NMS 26.2)
- ensure an appropriate public and employee liability insurance certificate is displayed within the home (NMS 26.9)
- consider producing a children's guide relevant to the home and understanding of the young people accommodated (NMS 1.3)
- consider providing computer and internet access for young people within the home to support their education (NMS 14.5)
- ensure the garden is maintained to a good standard in order to provide a pleasant environment for young people (NMS 24.3)

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- implement and maintain within the home individual risk assessments relating to each young person (26.2)
 - assess the young people's toilet areas and whether a hand basin could be fitted in both to promote health and hygiene. (NMS 25.2)