

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Roy Bega
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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 home is operated and managed by a national organisation and provides accommodation for an associated residential special school.

The home provides care and accommodation for up to five young people aged nine to seventeen years who have emotional, behavioural and educational difficulties. It is located in a rural area and 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 have single bedrooms with appropriate bathroom facilities and proportionate communal space which includes a kitchen and two reception areas. The garden is mainly laid to patio.

Summary

This is the home's initial unannounced full key inspection subsequent to registration in March 2010.

Four action points and one recommendation are raised resulting from this inspection visit. Management do not ensure that a written record is made of any complaint, or regularly monitor the restraint and sanction log books, there is insufficient information on how identified needs are to be met, the Statement of Purpose is not specific to the home and the key worker system is not reviewed to ensure that the requirements of each young person's care plan is implemented in their day to day care.

Subsequent to the home's registration in March 2010 the Registered Manager has been required to continue their role as case manager on the main campus. Therefore, they have only been able to dedicate minimum time to the running of the home. However, the deputy manager has more than adequately fulfilled this role and ensured the welfare of young people and staff team have not been adversely affected.

Young people are actively encouraged in taking an interest in their personal health and healthy ways of living. The home provides appropriate age related information regarding health, safety and social issues.

The welfare of young people is effectively promoted within the home. Procedures in place ensure they are safeguarded from harm. Staff have an excellent knowledge and understanding of safeguarding issues and know how to implement the home's procedures.

Management and staff are positive in their approach to education and its value for young people. They ensure education is an integral part of life at the home and not just limited to school or college. Education continues outside of the formal classroom in areas of interest to the young people.

Good systems for reviewing young people's placement plans are in place. Young people are actively encouraged to participate in reviews, are assisted to put forward their thoughts and receive full information on the outcome.

Young people are fully involved in the planning and spending of the budget allocated to their personal clothing and toiletries. The home is decorated and furnished to a standard which creates a pleasant domestic environment. Young people show pride in their bedrooms by personalising them with possessions and posters.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

This is the home's initial key inspection subsequent to registration in March 2010.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The home ensures young people's individual dietary needs are met. Staff place much importance on ensuring young people have a choice of nutritious meals to lead healthy lifestyles. Young people are actively involved in planning, preparing and shopping for food. Staff receive training in food hygiene and have a good understanding of the appropriate way to store, cook and handle food. Comments made in young people's surveys include, 'Good fruit bowl', 'I like the food and snacks', 'They give me new things to try' and 'I like cooking'.

Detailed health records are in place. Staff have sound knowledge in respect of young people's health needs. Staff provide good support and guidance for young people requiring medical treatments. Discussions and records show young people confirm they benefit from interventions and support provided by the organisation's and external specialist medical and therapeutic staff. Care staff confirm they are appropriately supported in continuing the therapeutic work on a daily basis.

Young people are actively encouraged in taking an interest in their personal health and healthy ways of living. The home provides appropriate age related information regarding health, safety and social issues. Discussions and documented evidence shows young people are fully consulted regarding health matters.

The home has an effective medication policy, procedure and practice guidance which includes the use of non-prescribed medication. Staff are given copies of this policy to read and sign. Discussions show staff are conversant with the procedures and receive annual training in the administration and care of medication.

An appropriate written record is kept by the home of all medication, treatment and first aid given to young people. Prior to admission, written permission for the administration of first aid and appropriate non-prescribed medication is obtained from the person with parental responsibility for each young person. All staff are provided with first aid training which is updated as required.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff have a high regard for the privacy of the young people and ensure information is handled confidentially. Young people confirm staff respect their space and only discuss personal matters in private.

Young people benefit from having access to a robust complaints procedure. The young person's handbook provides clear guidance about who they can complain to with contact details. Young people confirm they feel comfortable in voicing their opinions or issues and are able to voice these concerns at house meetings, or a more formal route of the complaints procedure. Staff receive training in complaints and whistle blowing. Parents, family and other adults are provided with procedures to use if they wish to make a complaint. However, a written record of complaints raised within the home by young people is not being maintained

Young people's welfare is effectively promoted within the home. There are procedures in place to promote the safety and welfare of the young people to ensure they are safeguarded from harm. Staff have excellent knowledge and understanding of safeguarding issues and know how to implement the home's policy. The young people confirm they get along with staff, feel safe are treated fairly and know what to do if they have any concerns.

Management and staff create an atmosphere where bullying is known to be unacceptable. The response and approach to bullying is made clear to young people on admission and during house meetings. Staff manage young people's interactions very well and work with the young people to raise their awareness of anti-bullying.

Staff are aware of the individual plans for each young person in the event of them becoming absent without authority. They detail the action to be taken, including timescales and specific people to notify. There have not been any incidents since the home's registration in March 2010.

Care plans outline young people's behaviour management programme and include specific methods of agreed intervention. The ethos of the home is to encourage positive behaviour through incentives, praise and rewards. Inappropriate behaviour is managed by the imposition of a relevant sanction. All staff are trained in Team Teach and use these methods to defuse situations. Twice weekly house meetings provide ongoing opportunities to discuss behaviour related issues as a group and individuals. There are also good working relationships with internal therapeutic specialists in respect of behaviour management. The restraint and sanction records are not being checked by the manager to monitor compliance with the home's policy, procedure and guidance and to identify any patterns in incidents leading to disciplinary or restraint becoming necessary.

A serious behavioural incident occurred during the visit which transiently affected the local community and provoked a concern being expressed by a neighbour. They contacted the police who visited the home. Observations show that the staff team managed the incident and discussions with police confidently and professionally. A telephone conversation with the manager the day after the visit shows appropriate support is being provided for the neighbour affected by the incident.

Risk assessments are in place for all aspects of safety of the premises and grounds including young people's activities. A similar process is followed for activities outside of the home, for example, holidays or trips out. There is a high awareness of fire safety among staff and young

people. All staff and young people are given fire safety instructions when they arrive. Fire drills are carried out within the required timescales and at different times of the day (and night). Fire safety equipment is checked regularly and a detailed record kept.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people's individual needs are well identified. However, there is insufficient information regarding how they are to be met.

The home has established professional links with specialist therapeutic staff based at the associated residential special school. Observations and minutes of fortnightly house meetings show staff are well motivated and proactive in providing encouragement for young people. Young people confirm staff are very approachable, listen to them, and are understanding and supportive. Currently one member of staff is responsible for key working all five young people.

Young people benefit from an integrated approach between the home and main education campus. Each young person is supported to follow their agreed education statement which is reviewed annually. In partnership with teaching and specialist therapeutic staff the home follows a holistic approach to education. Extra curricular activities promote social inclusion, relationships, building of self confidence and self esteem. There are good informal and formal communication systems between the home and main education campus. Staff have good knowledge and understanding of the care needs for the young people they support.

Staff actively encourage young people to participate in leisure activities both inside the home and within the community. They also promote the introduction of new activities aimed at learning new skills and self confidence. Comments made by young people in surveys include, 'Staff take me to play football a lot', 'We do things here that I don't do at home' and 'They take us to the sports hall to do different things'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

The organisation and home follow a holistic approach in meeting the needs of young people by working in partnership with placing authorities and parents. Young people have a placement plan that identifies their health, physical, social, educational cultural and leisure needs but there is insufficient information on how they are to be met.

Currently one member of staff is responsible for key working all five young people. Due to the workload they are not able to meet formally on a regular basis with young people in supporting them to discuss and plan developmental changes and needs. Also that health and educational needs are monitored by two other members of care staff. This current practice is not providing a cohesive approach in providing individual support for young people. Comments made in young people's surveys include, 'I'm sometimes involved in meetings about myself' and 'I'm involved with my reviews'.

Young people are enabled to contribute to their reviews. Staff help them prepare them for reviews which includes compiling a report and supporting them in attending part or all of the meeting.

Young people confirm they are encouraged by management and staff to maintain contact with family and significant others where appropriate. Management and staff also actively support young people to rebuild relationships where they have become estranged.

The admission and leaving home procedure is geared to the needs of the particular young person and can include visits to the home before moving in if this is appropriate. The manager undertakes an assessment to ensure the young person will fit in and their needs met. Young people can bring in personal possessions and chose how their room is decorated. When young people move on, this is undertaken in a planned way, with staff facilitating visits to the new placement.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Pathway planning is not appropriate for current young people. However, appropriate policies and procedures are in place to enable such planning to be undertaken. Young people are supported to learn life skills, such as budgeting, menu planning, cooking, domestic duties, and management of their personal allowances.

Young people are fully involved in the planning and spending of the budget allocated to their personal clothing and toiletries. They are enabled to exercise choice in the clothes and personal requisites that they buy through normal shopping arrangements.

The location of the home is convenient for leisure and other community facilities that are important for the full development of young people. The home also has its own vehicles to transport staff and young people to various activities.

The home is decorated and furnished to a standard which creates a pleasant domestic environment. Young people show pride in their bedrooms by personalising them with possessions and posters.

There is a good maintenance and repair programme for the building. The organisation employs its own maintenance staff to ensure faults are rectified as soon as possible.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The current Statement of Purpose is not service specific but highlights the aims and objectives of the associated residential special school and all areas of care provision.

Subsequent to the home's registration in March 2010 the Registered Manager has been required to continue their role as case manager on the main campus of the associated residential special school. Therefore, they have only been able to dedicate minimum time to the running of the home. The Registered Manager confirms that in September they will be complying with the organisation's specifications and criteria for Registered Managers and have a more active presence in the daily running of the home. In the interim the deputy manager who has the appropriate experience has fulfilled this role well and ensured the welfare of young people and staff team have not been adversely affected.

Staff confirm the leadership of the home is clear and open. Staff are well supported and receive fortnightly one-to-one supervision. An integral part of their supervision is an agreed personal development plan for which they receive guidance from management to achieve.

The organisation provides a thorough induction training programme for new staff. Staff confirm they are supported and encouraged in a continuum training programme. Also they are provided with training for the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People. The organisation's philosophy is to develop staff careers by encouraging them to complete the NVQ level 4 and other associated professional training.

The staffing ratio is in agreement with meeting the needs of young people accommodated. Young people benefit from a competent staff team who have a wide range of experience among its members. Skills within the team are well matched for the needs of young people and whenever possible there is a balance of gender on duty. Temporary minimum use of agency staff is being used in a way so as not to overly disrupt young people's continuity of care.

Monthly regulation 33 visits are undertaken by a designated person from within the organisation and reports completed. Copies of the reports submitted to Ofsted were made available during this visit.

There are clear policies on equality and diversity. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The individual needs of young people at the home are properly considered in relation to religion, cultural, health and dietary needs. Recruitment procedures ensure staff are recruited fairly and without discrimination.

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
16	ensure that a written record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of the investigation. (Regulation 24(5))	31 August 2010
22	ensure the registered person regularly checks the restraint and sanction log books to monitor compliance with the home's policy, procedure and guidance and to identify any patterns in incidents leading to disciplinary or restraint becoming necessary (Regulation 17)	31 August 2010
2	ensure actions to support identified areas of assessed needs of young people are fully recorded within placement and pathway plans. (Regulation 12(1)(a)(b)(c))	31 August 2010
1	ensure the Statement of Purpose is specific to the home and includes all matters listed in Schedule 1; in particular paragraph 5 of that Schedule. (Regulation 4(1) and 5(a))	31 August 2010

Recommendations

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

- review the key worker system to ensure that the requirements of each young person's care plan is implemented in their day to day care. Also to provide individual guidance and support to young people and regularly make time available to enable them to seek guidance advice and support on any matter. (National Minimum Standard 2.2)