

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Anne Bannister
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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 four bedded children's home is one of three run by the company. The home is very close to the city centre. It is a large Victorian terraced house with a yard which has decking that provides an attractive outdoor area. The home offers high quality accommodation in large single bedrooms. Communal areas are furnished and decorated to a high standard. The home provides easy access to a range of local facilities. It is registered for four females, aged from 10 years to 17 years of age with emotional and behavioural problems. Most young people have a statement of special educational needs. Young people living in the home may have had disrupted schooling and are typically attaining below the expected levels for their age on admission. Education is provided in a purpose built school on one of the company's other sites.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This inspection was unannounced and was the first inspection to the home following registration in August 2010. This report comments on all the outcome headings covering all of the key Children's Homes National Minimum Standards (NMS). There are three actions and one recommendation made as a result of this visit.

The home provides young people with good quality care. The accommodation is of a good standard and it meets young people's needs. Young people like the home and their views about living there are generally positive.

Young people's health needs and their welfare and safety are effectively promoted. Their needs as individuals are clearly assessed and their placement plans are informative and well recorded. Health and safety matters are generally managed efficiently and young people receive good support in accordance with their needs and wishes.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable. This is the first inspection since registration.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people enjoy a range of healthy and nutritious meals. Staff involve them in the planning of the menu to ensure that these are developed in line with their specific needs and wishes. This ensures that meal times are enjoyed and young people's preferences and any special dietary needs are appropriately considered. In order to discourage young people from snacking inappropriately staff on occasions lock the kitchen door. This practice does not allow young people to take control of their own eating habits.

Each young person has their own individual health plan, which contains details of their health appointments, registration with local health services, immunisation history, in addition to the inclusion of other relevant health information. These records enable staff to monitor young people's health needs effectively. The health plan is used in conjunction with young people's placement plans to promote their good health and well-being.

The procedures for the administration, storage and recording of medication are stringently followed. Staff are trained in the use of first aid and most have completed training in the safe administration of medication. Medical consent, including consent for the administration of first aid, as well as non-prescribed medication, has been obtained to enable staff to attend to young people's health needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The staff team are highly committed to ensuring that young people in their care are protected from harm. All staff have received extensive training as part of their induction.

The home has suitable policies on privacy and confidentiality. Staff show a respect for young people's privacy and the importance of maintaining confidentiality is key to the good practice displayed by staff.

The home has a written procedure for how staff must respond when young people are absent without authority. Any incidents are monitored by the Registered Manager. Five incidents, some of which include two young people, have occurred since the home was registered. The home have a protocol for handling such incidents with the local community police officer. During the course of the inspection it became apparent that young people's outdoor shoes are taken from them when they return to the home to discourage them from leaving without permission, this is an inappropriate sanction. Senior Managers within the organisation were unaware that this practice had been implemented.

Relationships observed between staff and young people are good, and create a

supportive and nurturing atmosphere in which young people feel comfortable. Arrangements for complaints and dealing with bullying are in place, to ensure that young people feel listened to and protected.

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. 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. Socially acceptable behaviour is encouraged through the use of incentives and attainable rewards.

The home has risk assessments for all aspects of safety in the premises and grounds, including fire, individual young people's behaviours and activities. Positive steps are taken to keep young people, staff and visitors safe from risk of fire and other hazards. However, a recent practice of locking of the kitchen door restricts one of the identified fire evacuation routes.

Staff, prior to their employment within the home, are required to undergo pre-employment checks, to assess their suitability. This ensures that those employed are vetted and suitable.

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. The home ensures that young people identified as having particular needs are given support from appropriately qualified professionals. All young people are participating in individual learning programs.

Education plans are arranged to suit the young person's individual needs and this was confirmed through documentation. 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. This is not always well documented in the young people's placement plans.

Staff support young people to take part in leisure activities both inside the home and in the local community. Young people's individual interests are supported. Staff share their own interests with young people and encourage them to try out new activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Detailed placement plan addressing educational and care needs are in place for all young people. The plans viewed did not fully reflect all the contributions the care staff team are making to address young people's identified needs. They do not fully

evidence the high quality of support young people receive to meet their identified needs. This has been recognised by senior managers within the organisation who are in the process of rolling out new placement plans which address this deficit.

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.

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.

Young people are able to contribute their views about how the home is run through informal daily discussion and through regular meetings with their key worker. The systems for consulting young people are developing as more residents are admitted to the home.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The home is not distinguishable as a children's home as it blends in well with the local surrounding properties. Its location ensures that young people can access local places of interest, with good access to shops and recreational facilities.

The home is clean, warm and welcoming and it provides a very comfortable living environment, which is decorated and furnished to good quality standards. Young people have a say in how their bedrooms are decorated and personalised. The home is very tastefully decorated, creating a homely environment.

Young people are not of an age whereby preparation for independent living is appropriate. They are encouraged to develop their life skills and this includes them completing basic household chores, such as tidying bedrooms, cooking, cleaning and doing their personal laundry.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home is being managed well and run efficiently, providing a safe and stable environment for the young people living there. The Statement of Purpose is clear in setting out what care the home will provide and how it will be provided.

Staff are not receiving formal supervision within the frequency required. They receive daily informal support and supervision at the end of each shift. All indicated that they feel well supported by the Manager who attends handover meetings each day and provides updates and support to the oncoming team about issues which are

impacting on young people's behaviours. Staff indicate that they feel supported 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 at all times, and that the staffing levels set out in the home's Statement of Purpose are met. The home's staffing levels are such that the staff team are able to cover at time of staff sickness or holidays so that the young people receive consistent care. The home employs waking night staff. One member of care staff sleeps in each night to provide additional support if young people require it.

The home has an National Vocational Qualification in Care (NVQ) training programme in place. Presently only 50% of the staff team hold appropriate NVQ qualifications. Other staff either are registered to undertake training or are completing their induction. prior to commencing further training. These actions show the home has systems in place for staff to obtain relevant training and qualifications.

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. However, neither sign the home's records to confirm which documentation has been viewed. The home is developing its quality monitoring systems and will seek feedback from placing authorities, parents or carers and young people as part of this.

The management and storage of all records is carefully undertaken to ensure confidentiality, security and protection of the children within the 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/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
22	ensure no measure of control, restraint or discipline which is excessive, unreasonable or contrary to paragraph 5 shall be used at any time on young people accommodated in a children's home. In particular this relates to the removal of young people's shoes following a period of absence without authority (Regulation 17.1)	31/03/2011
26	take adequate precautions against the risk of fire. In particular this relates to the need to ensure fire doors are not locked in a manner which would restrict evacuation of the building (Regulation 32.1a)	31/03/2011
28	ensure all staff employed receive appropriate training,	31/03/2011

	supervision and appraisal (Regulation 27.4 (a))	
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Recommendations

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

- monitor and sign the home's records at least once per month, to identify any patterns and issues requiring action. In particular this relates to the need to sign documentation which is viewed during monthly monitoring visits. (NMS 33.1)