

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Lucy Ansell
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Date of last inspection	11 March 2009
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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 property set in countryside on the outskirts of the nearest town, where young people can access all public transport and mainline stations. It is set in its own grounds with a large grassed area for ball games and an area set to gardens. The home is currently registered for five children with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home has an activity and school block, a large lounge/dining area and sufficient space for five bedrooms and a large bathroom.

Summary

This unannounced inspection covered all the key standards but did not look at economic wellbeing. Whilst the quality of care provided for the young people has not deteriorated in any way, the overall paperwork and monitoring over the summer period has been very poor and this is reflected in the high levels of recommendations and actions made.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The recommendation made at the last inspection has been repeated as this concerns handwritten corrections on paperwork which remains un-amended.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

The young people are supported to access regular and specialist health care services, and to have their health care needs met. The placement plans records health information and targets, but are not kept under constant review. The home does record all appointments but this is not kept in an individual health record, and records of the information are not kept in one place. Staff use key working sessions with the young people to address any health or welfare needs. Written records are kept by the home of all medication given to the young people but this contained errors. Sufficient staff on duty were first aid trained, however not all staff are current in medication administration training or receive annual competency testing.

The menus offered a varied and balanced diet, with choices from culturally different foods. The young people are included in choosing and shopping for the meals. The young people take turns to cook a three course meal for the house, to practise their independent living skills. The home ensures a healthy diet and chances to undertake regular exercise.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Policies and procedures are in place to protect confidentiality and privacy. Staff are aware of the need for sensitivity when responding to gender issues and personal care arrangements. Confidential information is appropriately stored and shared.

The home responded to the last complaint in a comprehensive manner. Young people are encouraged to speak up if they have a problem and said they could speak to their key worker

or any member of staff if they had a problem. However, the complaints form is not kept in an accessible place so the young people have to come to the office, and the number of complaints received reflects this. The complaints procedure is not recorded in the children's guide.

The young people's safety and welfare is promoted. The home provides staff induction and child protection training. Further development to ensure all staff are clear on their roles and responsibilities has not been provided. The home does not hold a central record of all child protection incidents.

Young people are protected from bullying and confirmed staff look after them well. Information is available in the Children's Guide and key workers work closely with young people where there is the potential for bullying, and with the high staff supervision ratios this ensures this is fairly uncommon.

When young people are absent without consent staff know what to do and follow agreed procedures. The home ensures risk assessments and boundary agreements are in place to ensure the safety of the young people for who they know this is an issue.

Young people are supported and guided by staff in developing socially acceptable behaviour, however sometimes this lacks consistency and staff do not respond as quickly as required. Positive responses are made to good behaviour. Measures are in place to reduce the instances of negative behaviour, however incidents are still fairly high in the house. Staff are trained in the management of conflict and aggression. Individual incident reports are completed and cross referenced with hard bound entries, however there needs to be more robust monitoring of this.

The home is being maintained to a good standard and all service certificates are up to date. Fire safety systems are in good order and weekly and monthly checks are undertaken. Environmental risk assessments have been completed and are kept under regular review. This ensures young people live in a home that is physically safe.

Systems are in place for the safe recruitment of staff. Staff files show evidence of written references and proof of identity. A detailed record is kept of all Criminal Record Bureau checks. Visitors to the home are monitored to keep young people safe.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Staff provide appropriate individual support to the young people living at the home. Key workers provide additional individual support and guidance. Young people said that staff provide them with the assistance they need. Professional support is provided where necessary as the home employs a psychotherapist. The young people are encouraged to develop their individual identity with regard to their cultural background.

Education is actively promoted and all young people are making progress in the full-time educational provision provided on site. Staff support the young people to attend school and liaise with the teacher in promoting attainment and preparation for adulthood. School reports and contacts are held in young people's files.

Young people are encouraged to attend locals groups, clubs and leisure facilities. Young people said that staff help them to pursue their interests. Activities undertaken and enjoyed include

swimming, golf, ten pin bowling, skate boarding and the cinema. Involvement in the local community includes visits to local facilities and the young people have completed one week camping trip and one week activity holiday this break.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people's placement plans include details of how individual needs are to be met. Placement plans and action plans are not kept fully up to date. Placement plans detail young people's assessed needs, how these will be met and implemented, and the desired outcomes. However, the home is not specific in stating targets to be achieved by the young people. Young people are encouraged to be involved in the development of their plan of care. Formal reviews are undertaken and young people are enabled to contribute to and attend reviews, there is less evidence of recent reviews from the home. Support is provided by the key worker prior to and following a young person's review. Staff provide detailed monthly reports to the allocated social worker.

Young people are enabled to maintain constructive contact with families and friends. Agreements in place are detailed in young people's files. Staff support young people on home visits and where contact is restricted. The young people are encouraged to make friends from the local community outside of the home.

Young people said that staff listen to them and that they feel their opinions count. Staff take responsibility for ensuring young people are able to have their say and advocate on their behalf where necessary. Key worker sessions are not held on a regular basis and the reports are not typed up immediately. The house meetings are also not held on a regular basis and the minutes are lacking formal structure.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The Children's Guide does not contain all the required information. The home recently updated its Statement of Purpose and copies are provided to people wishing for information on how the home works.

The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. The home promotes anti-discriminatory practice. The staff have an awareness and can challenge issues of discrimination, racism and inequality. The home provides lots of opportunities for the young people.

The manager of the home whilst fully committed to providing excellent care for the young people and a strong support for his staff team, will acknowledge that paperwork and monitoring is not a strength. Now there is a full staff team and the holidays are finished the focus will be on raising the standard of the paperwork.

Staff are provided with access to a good range of training and sufficient staff have completed NVQ Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People. Staff receive support and training that provides them with the opportunity to develop the skills they need to meet the needs of young

people. Staff are supported through informal supervision, annual appraisal, and regular staff meetings. However, staff supervision particularly for the probationary staff has not been completed for some time, which is needed to help them assimilate all the training being provided.

Good staffing levels ensure that sufficient staff are on duty at key times of the day and night. Two staff are on duty at night and the team has a mix of male and female staff.

The regulation 33 reports had not been completed recently. Most of the records required by regulations are being maintained, however the home needs systems in place to ensure actions are taken on any identified shortfalls, and in identifying any patterns or trends that could improve the wellbeing of young people. Each young person has a record of their history that shows their development and progress.

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
12	ensure all staff are competent in medication administration (Regulation 20(1))	31 March 2010
16	ensure the complaints procedure is available in the children's guide (Regulation 24(6))	31 March 2010
17	ensure a central record is held of all child protection incidents (Regulation 16(2)(D))	31 March 2010
22	ensure robust monitoring of all behaviour management incidents and clear recording of all sanctions and their effectiveness (Regulation 17(4))	31 March 2010
2	ensure placement plans are kept under review and revised as necessary (Regulation 12(2))	31 March 2010
31	ensure all supervision is up to date, particularly for the probationary staff (regulation 27(4))	31 March 2010
34	ensure the regulation 33 monitoring visits are up to date (regulation 33(3))	31 March 2010
35	ensure the manager is completing robust monitoring to ensure the quality of care is improving and the service moving forward (regulation 34(1))	31 March 2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure individual health records are comprehensive and kept in one place (NMS 12)

- ensure file paperwork is clear and legible (NMS 2)
- ensure the complaints form is accessible to the young people (NMS 16)
- ensure the safeguarding profile is raised to ensure all staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities (NMS 17)
- ensure key working sessions are held regularly (NMS 7)
- ensure all targets are specific and measurable (NMS 2)