

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Lucy Ansell
Type of inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	26/01/2010
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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

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 main-line 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

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

This unannounced key inspection was conducted over two days by one inspector. A joint education inspection was also completed at the same time. All of the key standards were inspected and the three recommendations made from the previous visit were followed up. Two have been continued as ongoing recommendations and one has been fully met by the home.

This is a satisfactory service with some good features in being healthy, enjoying and achieving and economic well-being. A number of records and systems present shortfalls, and these are further exacerbated by monitoring systems which lack vigour. As a result four actions and five recommendations result from this inspection. The shortfalls resulting in actions and recommendations are explained within the main body of this report.

Improvements since the last inspection

Three recommendations were made at the last inspection; of these two have been carried forward as not completed. This was for senior staff to complete a comprehensive medication administration course and also for the monitoring and quality assurance on all paperwork to continue. The manager now completes a log book to record supervisions undertaken and to book the following month's supervision. This helps ensure that staff are properly supervised in a timely manner.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Staff promote healthy living through healthy eating, a range of physical activities, education and information giving. Young people are provided with a healthy, balanced diet. Fresh fruit is readily available and home-cooked meals are generally

provided. Young people receive clear support and guidance on generic health matters. Staff adopt an educative approach and cover topics which are commensurate with each young person's age, understanding and their current circumstances.

The health needs of the young people are well met. The home ensures specialist healthcare arrangements are in place and they encourage the young people to attend their appointments. The home works with a range of professionals; the mental health team, psychologists and counsellors to help promote the well-being and safety of their young people. The home does not have individual health plans, but the information is available throughout the paperwork. All young people's files hold written consent for treatment.

Systems are in place for the administration and storage of medication, however there is insufficient staff trained in this role, and this presents a potential risk for the young people. All staff are trained in first aid at work.

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. All information regarding young people is kept confidentially and their personal information is handled sensitively.

Young people say that they know their rights and will complain if they are unhappy with any aspect of their care. If young people wish to complain a system of complaint is available. This system is overseen by the manager and young people are kept informed of the progress of the complaint. However they do not sign to say the final resolution has been discussed with them and they are happy with the outcome. They also use house meetings and key-working sessions to raise concerns less formally.

Young people are protected by safeguarding systems. Clear and comprehensive safeguarding guidance is provided for all staff and training is mandatory for all new staff with refresher training compulsory. The home's manager ensures suitable action is taken when they have safeguarding concerns. All matters of safeguarding are recorded and detailed within the home's records and documents.

Policies and procedures are in place for reporting and returning young people who are absent without permission. Despite high incidents of absconding the home has acted appropriately and proportionally, and the home continues to work with the local authority and police to deal with this. Staff take action to deal with incidents of bullying, the home has high levels of staffing to ensure the young people are protected as this remains a constant issue.

Young people are supported and guided by staff to develop socially acceptable behaviour, however sometimes this lacks consistency and staff do not respond as quickly as required. The standard of behaviour seen in the home and outside of the

home, and the control of it by staff was only at best satisfactory. Positive responses are made to good behaviour. Measures are in place to reduce the instances of negative behaviour and incidents of physical restraint have reduced 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 restraints and sanctions logs are not fully recording how effective they were in reducing the behaviour.

Health and safety is maintained well in this home and staff carry out risk assessments for both the young people and the environment, ensuring reduced risks to young people's health and safety. Regular checks are completed to reduce any risks from fire hazards. All electrical and gas equipment is regularly serviced and checked.

The company uses robust vetting procedures to recruit suitable staff to work with young people. New staff are thoroughly vetted before their employment commences and this includes an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check. Personnel files are in good general order; however, one example showed a staff member starting before their CRB check had arrived, and there was no telephone follow up for references having been undertaken. All visitors to the home must sign in and no visitor is allowed unsupervised access to the home.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All young people receive individual support appropriate to their needs and care plans. Key and co-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, and young people are encouraged to develop their individual identity. The young people are encouraged to become involved in the home's social group as well as to develop friendships outside of the home.

Education is actively promoted. Staff support the young people in school and provide support with homework and the P.E. aspects of the curriculum. All the young people are schooled within the company's education facilities. School reports and required paperwork are held in young people's files. The school has achieved a satisfactory rating from the Ofsted education report completed during the same inspection.

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, football club, ten pin bowling, ice skating and the cinema. All weekly activities and trips out and any plans for holidays are discussed in the house meetings. The young people have enjoyed two adventure holidays this year which has helped them develop their skills and self-confidence.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people's placement plans lack comprehensive detail of how individual needs are to be met. Care plans detail young people's assessed needs and the desired outcomes, however, the home is not specific in stating how these outcomes or targets are to be achieved by the young people. Young people are not 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. 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. Individual contact arrangements are clearly recorded on the files, and good communications between staff and family ensure contact remains a positive experience. 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. For example, key worker sessions; weekly house meetings and informal chats with staff.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people are encouraged to set up building society accounts and are encouraged to save for special purchases. Records are kept of monies provided to young people, and funds are available for trips and outings. The young people have the opportunity to develop their social and independence skills in preparation for adulthood.

Children live in a pleasant environment which is suitable for purpose with sufficient space to meet their needs. The home has a range of communal spaces available for young people to use, and is well furnished and decorated. Young people's rooms are individual, suitably furnished, and reflect personal interests and tastes. There are sufficient toilet and bathroom facilities for young people to use and there are separate facilities for the staff. The kitchen is large and well equipped and provides a safe area in which young people can develop their independence skills.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Young people are treated, and respected, as unique individuals. Staff work hard to encourage individual self expression and the diversity of the staff team encourages the acceptance and value of differences. The Statement of Purpose and children's guide describes the level of service provided by the home and contains all the required information. The information remains current and is frequently updated.

New staff members complete a comprehensive induction under the direct supervision and support of a senior staff member. Good quality training is provided and levels of supervision are improving. The rolling programme of mandatory training should be providing staff with the guidance they need to be effective. Overall staffing levels are good with a mixed team of gender and experience. The staff team can be competent but they need to be more autonomous and really take on board their roles and responsibilities with out heavily relying on management to always direct them. The manager is suitably qualified and the majority of staff have completed the National Vocational Training (NVQ 3) in caring for young people. Effective deputising arrangements are in place and staff know who to contact in the event of an emergency and whilst 'out of hours'.

Monitoring and quality assurance mechanisms are recognised as now being in place, and paperwork is being completed and submitted in accordance with the regulations. However it is evident that emphasis is being placed upon just having the information as opposed to its quality. However there is evidence to demonstrate that the monitoring mechanisms being implemented by the manager and provider are being brought together, so as to effectively review current provision and make plans for the continued improvement and development of 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
13	ensure any medication administered and recorded is by competent designated staff (Regulation 21 (1))	31/03/2011
27	ensure full and satisfactory information is available in relation to all aspects of paragraphs 1-6 of Schedule 2 (Regulation 26 (3))	30/03/2011
2	ensure the placement plan sets out clearly the assessed needs	30/03/2011

	and the objectives of the placement and how these are to be met (Regulation 12 (1) (a) to (c))	
29	ensure children receive the care and services they need from competent staff. (Regulation 25 (1) (a) and (b))	30/03/2011

Recommendations

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

- consider all young people having individual health plans (NMS 13)
- ensure young people sign the complaints form that they have seen and agreed the outcome (NMS 16.3)
- ensure restraints and sanctions record how effective they were in reducing the behaviour (NMS 22.9)
- ensure young people know the content of their overall care plan and placement plan (NMS 2.6)
- ensure the monitoring and quality assurance on all paperwork continues (NMS 33.1)