

Inspection report for Children's Home

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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 children's home provides care for up to four children. The home provides crisis intervention placements for up to 28 days and also medium and longer stays. The home's location, design and size are in keeping with its purpose and function.

The home is close to the coast and is set in its own grounds. The ground floor has a fitted kitchen, dining room, lounge and one bedroom with en-suite facilities. Upstairs there are two further bedrooms and a bathroom. Outside there is a lawn area and a large garden. There is an additional two bedroom bungalow on site, which accommodates one young person, who is supported in living more independently.

Summary

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

At this full unannounced inspection all the key national minimum standards were inspected. The inspection also looked at the progress the service has made with the requirements and recommendations made at the last inspection. These related to: the home's records; the precautions against the risk of fire; and staff meetings. The four young people currently living at the home were present during the inspection

There is evidence of positive relationships between the staff and young people. There are good arrangements for protecting and promoting the health of the young people. However, young people's health care plans and placement plans do not always clearly identify their individual needs. There are satisfactory arrangements to make sure the home provides a safe setting for the young people. For example, staff and young people take part in regular fire drills. However, there are shortfalls in some of the home's records and the arrangements for ensuring only suitable people work at the home are not fully satisfactory.

Staff are good at consulting the young people and involving them in decisions about their stay at the home. Staff are also good at supporting and facilitating the education and achievement of the young people. Staffing levels provide very good opportunities for staff to carry out one-to-one work with the young people to help meet their assessed needs. Staff are knowledgeable about the individual needs of young people and work hard to address them. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Staff said they feel well supported and have appropriate access to training. However, the arrangements for the professional supervision of the manager, and for maintaining records of staff training, are not satisfactory. Also, the arrangements for the internal monitoring of the care and welfare of the young people are not sufficiently robust. The accommodation is homely and the standard of decoration, furnishing and maintenance is good.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last inspection the registered person was asked to ensure that: appropriate records are kept of any allegations of abuse; adequate precautions are taken against the risk of fire; records of when young people are missing include the reasons they have given, and any action taken in light of those reasons; and staff meetings address any issues of control within the home. These requirements and recommendations have been addressed and this should help make sure young people's welfare is promoted.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Staff promote young people's health and well-being. They monitor the health of the young people and each young person has a health care plan. However, these plans do not clearly identify all the health needs of each young person. Because of this staff may not take appropriate action to meet their needs. Staff do have a good understanding of a range of health care needs and some have received more specialised training. Young people have good access to sources of advice and support on health and personal care issues.

Staff encourage the young people to eat healthy meals and they are aware of the different dietary preferences of the young people. Staff encourage and support young people to help with food shopping and the planning and preparing of meals. For example, staff support each young person to plan, prepare and cook two meals a week. A young person said: 'We help plan our menus so they have a healthy balance.'

There are suitable arrangements for storing, administering and monitoring the young people's medication. Staff keep clear and accurate records of young people's medicines and this helps protect their health and meet their health care needs. However, the format for recording non-prescription medication does not include a section for recording the reasons for administering such medicines to a young person. The manager said he would amend the record format so that it will include this information. There is always a member of staff on duty who is trained in first aid should any young person have an accident.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff promote young people's privacy and the young people all have their own bedrooms to which they have appropriate access. Two bedrooms have en-suite facilities. Doors to the bathrooms and toilets have appropriate locks. Staff ensure information about young people is handled confidentially and stored securely. There is guidance for staff regarding when it may be necessary to search young people's

possessions. Staff make sure they follow the guidance and that there are clear and appropriate grounds for taking such action.

There are clear procedures for managing complaints and ensuring young people are listened to. Staff make sure the young people are aware of who they can go to if they have any complaints. The manager makes sure any complaints are dealt with promptly and appropriately.

The home has clear procedures for safeguarding young people from abuse. There are suitable arrangements for making sure that staff receive child protection training. This helps staff protect young people from abuse and ensures they respond appropriately to any allegation or suspicion of abuse.

The young people benefit from being looked after by a team of staff who create an atmosphere where bullying is known to be unacceptable. The home has an anti-bullying policy and staff try to help the young people to develop an understanding and tolerance of each other's diverse needs. None of the young people said they had been bullied, or had seen any other young person being bullied in the home.

Staff take appropriate action when young people go missing or are absent from the home without permission. There are suitable policies and procedures to help make sure this happens. The manager actively monitors all such incidents. However, sometimes staff do not keep satisfactory records of the action taken when young people go missing. For example, they do not always record that they have notified the young person's placing authority, and it is not always possible to ascertain whether an appropriate person has seen a young person, to consider the reasons for their absence.

Staff encourage and support the young people to develop and maintain socially acceptable behaviour. They have all had training in positive behaviour management. Staff keep detailed records of incidents when they use physical restraint on young people. However, on one occasion they did not keep a satisfactory record of the incident. It does not demonstrate clearly that staff followed the home's policy regarding the circumstances in which they may use physical intervention. Discussion with the manager confirmed that staff had followed this policy. When staff use sanctions these are relevant and reasonable. Staff also make sure they respond positively to acceptable behaviour by providing appropriate incentives and rewards.

The systems in place to keep the young people and adults safe from the risk of fire and other potential hazards are satisfactory. For example, they carry out regular fire drills and checks of equipment such as smoke alarms. Staff also carry out a range of risk assessments, including individual risk assessments for each young person. However, none of the staff have received training in undertaking risk assessments.

The arrangements for making sure the home only employs suitable people are not fully satisfactory. For example, a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) disclosure check has been carried out for each newly appointed member of staff before they commenced work. However, the CRB disclosure for one person did not include all the necessary

checks. The manager is responsible for ensuring that appropriate checks are carried out on new staff but he has not received any training in staff recruitment and selection. There are suitable arrangements for monitoring and managing visitors to the home. These help ensure they do not have inappropriate access to young people.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Staffing levels provide excellent opportunities for staff to give the young people support and assistance to meet their individual needs and wishes. For example, each young person has regular one-to-one time with their key workers and they have risk assessments based on their individually assessed needs. All of the young people said there were people in the home they could talk to if they were unhappy. One young person said: 'Staff try to help us solve our problems and have lots of fun.' Staff are knowledgeable about the individual needs of the young people and the implications this has for their care. There was evidence of positive interactions between staff and the young people.

Staff are good at supporting and encouraging young people's education and achievement. Staff have developed links with a range of educational and training services and they support young people to access opportunities which meet their needs, wishes and abilities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

There are good arrangements for reviewing the care and progress made by the young people. These include holding regular statutory reviews. Staff support the young people to contribute to these reviews and where appropriate they have regular contact with the young people's parents or carers. They also regularly provide feedback to young people's social workers informing them of their progress. All the young people confirmed that they are involved in meetings about their progress and plans for their future. However, not all of the young people benefit from having placement plans that clearly set out their individual needs or how the overall effectiveness of the placement will be assessed. Staff do encourage the young people to read and sign these plans and they update them regularly.

Staff are good at supporting young people to maintain appropriate and constructive contact with their families and friends. Staff facilitate contact where appropriate. However, staff have not updated the placement plan for one young person to include the current arrangements for contact.

There are clear procedures covering how staff should support young people when they move into, and out of, the home. Where possible and appropriate, staff encourage young people to have introductory visits, including an overnight stay and

they provide them with written information about the home. Staff encourage young people to bring appropriate personal possessions with them so that they can personalise their rooms.

Staff are good at talking to young people about how the home is run and helping them to make decisions on matters that affect them. It is evident that staff take the views and opinions of the young people seriously and, where appropriate, act upon them. Young people confirmed that they are able to have a say about what happens in the home. Where appropriate, staff also actively consult parents about the care of their children and the running of the home.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Staff are good at assisting young people to prepare for adulthood. They try to make sure young people receive the care and support they need to prepare them for moving on from the home. The daily life of the home provides young people with appropriate opportunities to develop knowledge and skills they will need in later life.

The young people benefit from living in comfortable and homely accommodation. The standard of repair, décor and furnishing is generally good. Each young person has their own bedroom and they have chosen the décor and made sure it reflects their individual tastes and preferences. Staff and young people ensure the home is kept clean and tidy.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The home has a Statement of Purpose that provides clear information about how it operates. There is also a young people's guide that provides a useful introduction to the home as well as important information such as how to complain or contact an independent advocate. The home operates in line with its Statement of Purpose.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Young people receive an individual service designed to meet their personal needs and preferences. Staff have a good knowledge of the young people and try to make sure their needs are being met at all times.

Staffing levels are very good and they are flexible in order to meet the individual needs of the young people. Regular staff meetings and the handover arrangements between shifts help ensure there is good communication between staff.

Staff said they feel well supported by the management team in the home. However, suitable arrangements are not in place for the professional supervision of the manager. Other staff at the home do receive regular one-to-one supervision, from a senior member of staff.

Staff said they have good opportunities to attend training leading to a relevant qualification and they have access to a rolling programme of core training such as emergency first aid. The majority of the care staff have a suitable qualification confirming they have the competencies needed to care for young people. Those staff who do not, have enrolled on a course leading to a suitable qualification. However, comprehensive and up-to-date records of staff training were not available in the home.

The arrangements in place for monitoring the quality of care provided in the home are not fully satisfactory. The manager has been monitoring the home's records once a month to identify any issues requiring action. However, he does not sign all the records they monitor and the monitoring is not sufficiently robust. For example, the manager has not identified and addressed the shortfalls in the home's staff personnel records.

Staff make sure that they keep appropriate records of each young person's needs, 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/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
27	obtain for all staff, before they start work at the home, all the information set out in Regulation 26 (Regulation 26)	21/03/2011
28	ensure that all staff receive appropriate supervision, in particular the manager of the home (Regulation 27(4)(a))	21/03/2011
33	ensure that the arrangements for monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 and improving the quality of care provided in the home are effective. (Regulation 34)	21/03/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure that written records of incidents when young people are missing or absent without authority include details of all action taken by staff (NMS 19.6)
- ensure that a young person is seen if possible by their social worker or a person

independent of the home to consider the reasons for their absence. Where this is not possible ensure the reasons are recorded and agreed with the placing authority (NMS 19.4)

- ensure records of the use of restraint on young people are sufficient to demonstrate that staff follow in practice the registered person's policy on the circumstances in which it may be used (NMS 22.8)
- ensure placement plans clearly set out the assessed needs, including health care needs, of each young person, how these are to be met by the registered person on a day-to-day basis, the contribution to be made by staff and how the effectiveness of the placement is to be assessed in relation to each major element of the plan. Ensure each placement plan is kept up to date (NMS 2.1)
- ensure that a written record of all training for all staff is maintained in the home (NMS 31.4)
- provide staff, where appropriate, with training in undertaking risk assessments, interview techniques and the requirements of the national minimum standards in relation to the recruitment and selection of staff. (NMS 31.5)