

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Fiona Parker
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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 registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five boys aged between 11 and 17 years. If young people cannot be restored to their family environment or placed with foster carers they will be supported at the home until they are ready to move into independent accommodation.

The ground floor has two lounges for the young people to use, one of the lounges may also be used by staff to complete paperwork. There is also a separate office, kitchen diner, utility room and a newly refurbished games room. Upstairs there are five single bedrooms, a bathroom and a shower room. There are two staff sleep-in rooms, both upstairs. The home is surrounded by gardens and a driveway which provides parking space. The home is close to a main thoroughfare into the city centre and local amenities are nearby.

There are currently five young people living in the home and all the young people contributed to this inspection.

Summary

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

This visit is an unannounced interim inspection. The purpose of this visit is to assess the progress on the five actions and six recommendations from the key inspection on 5 October 2010. In addition the key standards in the staying safe outcome were also assessed.

Young people enjoy living in the home and clearly report they are happy and feel safe. The manager and staff team have worked hard to address the areas requiring improvement from the last inspection. As a result plans, records and monitoring systems have improved and practice is accountable in line with the standards. The judgement for staying safe is now good, the overall judgement remains satisfactory and this will be reviewed when all key areas are assessed at the next inspection.

As a result of this visit there is one action and two recommendations, none of which directly impacts upon young people's care and experiences.

Improvements since the last inspection

The key inspection identified several areas for improvement. Five actions relating to; accurately recording any complaints from neighbours; fully recording physical interventions; clarifying the circumstances for using police assistance; ensuring placement plans are comprehensive and regularly reviewing and ensuring matters in

the home are monitored by the manager.

Good progress has been made in all these areas and the previous actions have been met. Complaints from neighbours are now clearly recorded and show appropriate action is taken. A new system for recording physical interventions covers all the required details. The circumstances for using police assistance is clarified in the policy for managing behaviour and the Statement of Purpose. The manager is now monitoring the home's performance, producing a brief report and taking action, where necessary, to improve practice. In addition, placement plans are now more detailed. Plans cover all aspects of young people's needs including individual risk assessments and behaviour plans. Overall young people's plans and information is now organised and structured. This enables the manager and staff to monitor young people's needs, progress and development more effectively.

Six recommendations were made relating to; clarifying any staff use of household medicines and obtaining agreements for non prescribed medicines for young people; encouraging young people to write or have their views recorded; ensuring risk assessments guide staff on the agreed strategies; ensuring the age range is clear in the home's information; making sure all information is confidentially kept and Regulation 33 reports evidence young people have the opportunity to speak with the visitor.

Four recommendations are fully met. Staff no longer use the homely remedies in the home; the protocol and agreements for non prescription medicines are now clear and signed for each young person. Young people now routinely sign records and record their comments. Changes to storage arrangements ensure personal and individual information is securely kept. Young people confirm they have opportunity to speak with the Regulation 33 visitor and reports note their views.

Young people's plans are improved and contain more detail, however the manager notes there is room for further improvement. This is found to be the case resulting in a further recommendation. This is to make sure there is an effective strategy for each identified behaviour and the wording is both clear and appropriate. Although changes to the Statement of Purpose and children's guide have been made, correcting the age range has been overlooked. Therefore this is a further recommendation.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people live in a safe home and benefit from the good care and attention of a committed staff team. Young people report they feel safe, they have no complaints and they are not concerned about bullying. Young people demonstrate a good understanding of each others' needs and as a result show tolerance for other's difficulties. There are some grumbles and fall outs, which young people agree staff will act upon, 'yes they do something about it, they get told off and get things taken off them and that'. Positive comments from young people include 'I want to stay here after I am 18' and 'I like it here, it is safe'. Young people say their privacy is respected, they can speak with staff privately, the need for room searches is very rare and they have keys to lock their bedrooms.

Complaints are treated seriously although very few are received. Complaints from neighbours are very promptly responded to and the action taken is clearly recorded. Absences from the home are very rare and this is consistent with how positively young people view their care and experiences. Staff are very vigilant and formal procedures are clearly understood and followed, if they are required. Safeguarding matters are treated seriously and prompt action is taken to discuss potential concerns with the local authority. This ensures young people's welfare is closely monitored in light of new information. Whistle-blowing procedures are followed and decisions are clearly recorded. On one occasion, although all other parties were promptly notified, Ofsted were only notified on conclusion of enquiries not at the point of initiating enquiries. This did not impact upon young people on this occasion and all appropriate action had been taken. This results in an action.

The ethos of the home is to use minimal interventions and encourage young people to use strategies such as taking time to calm in their bedrooms. Physical intervention is rarely used, as a very last resort police support is called upon if dangers to young people or staff require this response. Incidences of this nature are infrequent and there is a significant reduction from the previous inspection. Sanctions are not frequently used, young people report sanctions are fair and they are treated equally. Young people can negotiate some choices with sanctions, for example completing chores instead of paying their pocket money. Individual strategies for supporting young people are outlined in plans, however, the strategies for supporting some assessed behaviours are not fully clear and although minor, some wording in plans is not appropriate. This is a recording shortfall and does not impact upon young people.

Young people routinely take part in evacuations and know the procedures well. Frequent checks of equipment, including fire equipment, coupled with daily hygiene checks ensures a safe and clean home. Visitors are appropriately checked to protect young people. Recruitment files are not assessed this visit.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is not judged.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is not judged.

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
20	ensure if any of the events listed in column 1 of schedule 5 takes place, the registered person notifies Ofsted. (Regulation 30 (1))	17/03/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure placement plans set out clearly the assessed needs of the child. In particular make sure all the strategies for managing young people's assessed

- needs or behaviours are clear, this includes using appropriate wording (2.1)
- ensure the Statement of Purpose and children's guide accurately describes what the home sets out to do. In particular, the age range of young people is consistent with the registration certificate. (NMS 1.1)