

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC001531
Inspection date	26 June 2009
Inspector	Simon Morley
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	26 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 owned by a charitable organisation and is registered to provide accommodation and care for up to five boys aged between 11 and 17. If young people can not be restored to their family environment they will be supported at the home until they are ready to move into more independent accommodation.

The ground floor has two lounges for the young people to use, although one doubles as a staff room and office. There is also a games room, kitchen diner, utility room and toilets. Upstairs there are five single bedrooms, bathroom, shower room and separate toilet. There are two staff sleep-in rooms one up and one down stairs. The home is surrounded by gardens and driveway which provides ample parking space.

The home is close to a main thoroughfare into the city centre and local amenities are nearby.

Summary

This was an unannounced inspection focussing on safeguarding arrangements and how young people's welfare is promoted and protected. Compliance with actions raised at the last inspection and good practice recommendations was also checked. Other outcome areas have not been judged at this inspection.

Young people have positive views about the home and how they are looked after. There are good arrangements to protect their safety. Young people's privacy is respected, they feel listened too, have access to advocacy, there are good child protection procedures and very little in the way of bullying. Young people's behaviour is generally good though staff practice in managing challenging behaviour needs to be better defined in procedures and care planning.

Most of the actions and good practice recommendations from the last inspection have been complied with. There are no changes to outcome judgements, 'Staying Safe' is still judged to be good and the overall quality rating remains good.

As a result of this inspection a number of minor shortfalls have been identified but these do not significantly affect young people's welfare and safety.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Staff have had training in the use of break away techniques and physical restraint so if they need to use this as part of their practice in managing challenging behaviour they will be able to do so safely. The policy regarding the use of physical intervention has not been updated since the last inspection and does not reflect practice in the home.

There has been a night time fire drill so that staff and young people have better experience and practice in safety procedures.

The manager has started to undertake the recommended qualification for managing a children's home.

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.

There are good arrangements for supporting young people living at the home to be safe.

Staff are trained in child protection issues and are good at keeping young people free from harm. Staff are quick to try and resolve any disputes between young people and ensure no one is bullied. There are good procedures to follow for when young people are missing to ensure they return safely though the frequency of this is very low.

Staff actively encourage good social behaviour and young people are clear about the accepted standards of behaviour. Occasionally, appropriate sanctions are used when young people have behaved poorly. Young people are happy with this and agree the rules are fair. Record keeping of sanctions does not meet requirements though the impact of this on young people is minimal as sanctions are hardly used. If young people's behaviour is too aggressive and people's safety is at risk staff will call the police for support as staff will not physically restrain young people. Again this is rare though it is not clear in the home's policies and procedures that this approach is used to manage behaviour, neither is it clear in young people's placement plans. Young people are verbally informed of police involvement when they move in and their placing authority is aware too. Incidents of police involvement have not been notified to all authorities as required.

Young people's privacy and dignity is respected and written records about them are kept confidential though not always secure. Young people have regular opportunities to see their own records and add their own comments, they respect the homely environment and do not attempt to see other people's records. Young people know how to complain but are more than happy with their care.

The home is a safe place to live in and well maintained with a good approach to risk management. Individual risk assessments of young people have not all been completed to form part of their care plans. Given staff knowledge of young people's needs and the good relationships between staff and young people the absence of these risk assessments is not affecting their welfare and safety.

There are good procedures for the recruitment of new staff to make sure only suitable staff are employed. Visitors are monitored to ensure the safety of young people.

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 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
9	ensure that records are kept securely in the home (Regulation 28 (3) (a))	30 September 2009
20	ensure that notifications are made in accordance with Schedule 5 of this regulation (Regulation 30 (1))	30 September 2009
22	ensure that written records made regarding the use on any sanction have all the details required by this regulation (Regulation 17 (4))	30 September 2009

Recommendations

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

- ensure that methods of behaviour management including police involvement are made clear in the home's Statement of Purpose, policies and individual placement plans of young people (NMS 22)
- ensure there are risk assessments in place regarding children's known and likely activities (permitted and illicit), the potential for bullying and abuse within or outside the home (NMS 26.2)