

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC005553
Inspection date	21 October 2009
Inspector	Helen Walker
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	3 June 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

This home provides care for up to seven young people, of either gender, aged from seven to 17 years.

The house is detached and set in its own grounds in a residential area near to the town. Public transport links, as well as shops and leisure facilities, are easily accessible. There are six bedrooms for the young people, one of which is a double room. This would be used for siblings. The accommodation also includes a lounge, kitchen/dining room, games room, kitchen and two staff offices.

Four young people live in the home and were not present at the time of the inspection.

Summary

The purpose of this unannounced interim inspection was to follow up on an action and recommendation made at the last inspection and to assess key standards under the outcome area of Staying Safe.

The home continues to provide a good level of care to young people. The actions and recommendations made at the last inspection are commented on in the improvement section of this report.

Staff have a good understanding about keeping young people safe from harm and know how to respond in the event of an allegation or serious concern about a young person's safety.

The home environment is well-maintained and systems are in place to ensure appropriate health and safety checks are carried out

An action and recommendation have been made to promote the welfare of young people. These relate to monitoring of records and guidance on room searches in the home.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection an action and recommendation were made in relation to the monitoring of disciplinary measures and maintenance of the home.

Significant improvements have been made in respect of the maintenance of the building through replacement of windows and decoration in the home. However, monitoring of records remains outstanding.

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's privacy and confidentiality is maintained. For example, young people have individual bedrooms and access to a telephone that can be used without reference to staff. There are occasions when staff carry out searches of young people's bedrooms where failure to do this would put young people's welfare at risk. However, there is no guidance in place to inform young people of when it may be necessary to search a young person's possessions.

The home has a complaints system in place and young people are well informed of this. No complaints have been made by the young people but opportunities exist for them to discuss any matter they are unhappy with. This includes contact with persons outside of the home such as, children's rights organisations. Staff have a good understanding about countering bullying and work with the young people to raise their awareness about this issue.

Staff take all reasonable steps to keep young people safe from harm and know how to respond in the event of any allegation or serious concern about a young person's safety. Child protection training helps staff to safeguard and promote the welfare of young people. Procedures in the home support staff to take the appropriate action if a young person is missing from the home.

Young people receive care from staff who are trained and understand the need to encourage good behaviour. This includes techniques to manage challenging behaviour and the appropriate use of physical intervention. Although sanctions are in place for inappropriate behaviour and monitored by the manager, these are not consistently reviewed to demonstrate they are effective disciplinary measures.

The home environment is well-maintained and systems are in place to ensure appropriate health and safety checks are carried out.

Since the last inspection, no new staff have been employed at the home. Staff confirm the home's recruitment and employment policy is followed for all new staff, to ensure they are suitable to work with 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 good.

Young people enjoy homely accommodation that is decorated and furnished to a good standard. External improvements to the home, such as the painting of the front door and replacement of all the house windows, enhance the overall appearance of the home. Although carpets in the hallway, staircase and landing are worn in places, the manager confirms that arrangements are in hand for replacement of this.

The entrance hall and staircase area have recently been decorated and new pictures put on the walls. This freshens up the house and provides a pleasant home environment for the young people.

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
22	ensure records show the effectiveness and consequences of the use of any sanction or physical restraint. (Regulation 17.4)	3 November 2009

Recommendations

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

- provide guidance for staff and children on when it may be necessary to search a child's possessions. (NMS 9.8)