

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Simon Morley
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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 six children and young people of either sex, aged between 11 and 17 years of age. The home accepts planned and emergency admissions of young people for short or long-term care.

The home has six single bedrooms though one may be used as a staff sleep-in room. Downstairs there are two lounges, a bathroom, kitchen/diner, two of the bedrooms and a staff office. There are laundry facilities and storage in the cellar. Upstairs are four bedrooms, another bathroom, class room and manager's office.

There are separate living facilities available for up to two young people, which provide an opportunity for semi-independent living in preparation for leaving care.

There is on-site parking and surrounding gardens. The home is close to local community and leisure facilities and there is access to public transport.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This was an unannounced inspection to check both the quality of the safeguarding arrangements and compliance with the recommendations made at the last inspection.

The home continues to be a safe place for young people to live and there is good social care practice to ensure their welfare is promoted and they are kept free from harm. The overall quality rating remains good.

There were some minor shortfalls in meeting the recommendations from the last inspection and improvements to the quality of the kitchen are still in the planning process.

As a result of this inspection the registered provider is required to improve the missing from care records and the kitchen; ensure staff appraisals are available for inspection; and make it clear in admissions decisions that the impact been fully considered in ensuring the welfare of all young people.

Improvements since the last inspection

Most of the recommendations made at the last inspection have been implemented but are not all well evidenced at the inspection.

There have been very few occurrences when young people have been missing from the home. One young person did see their social worker afterwards which is good practice but written records of such incidents do not meet minimum standards.

The quality of young people's placement plans has improved and, taken in conjunction with written risk assessments, are of adequate quality to meet the required standard. This helps ensure young people's needs will be met.

Decisions about admissions to the home still do not clearly record the impact of the admission on all young people involved. This shortfall has not affected the welfare of young people as there has only been one admission to the home and accommodation is provided in the separate independent unit.

The lounge has been tastefully decorated and is very homely. Some of the bedrooms have also been decorated and the hallway was being painted at the time of inspection. The quality of the kitchen and door handles throughout the home have not been improved but are planned for.

There were verbal reports that all staff now have had an annual appraisal with their training and development needs identified. Appraisal records were not available at the time of inspection.

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 is good practice with regards to safeguarding; staff are professional and caring to ensure young people's welfare is promoted well and they are free from harm. Any allegations or concerns about abuse or bullying are managed very well and there are good working relationships with other agencies providing an effective integrated approach to promoting young people's welfare. Generally there is good practice to ensure young people who go missing return to the home safe and sound. There are some minor shortfalls in record keeping of the circumstances when young people have been missing but this has not impacted on their safety.

There is a sensitive and person centred ethos to help young people develop and flourish. Care practice helps keep young people free from bullying and promotes a calm, relaxed and settled atmosphere in the home. Staff have developed individual strategies for supporting young people with their challenging behaviour which reflects their individual needs and backgrounds. There are firm but fair boundaries, expectations of acceptable behaviour are clear and institutional interventions are

avoided.

Young people comment 'it is safe in this home, we know how to complain and staff listen to what we have to say'. Young people get good responses to their complaints, benefit from having their privacy respected and can lock their bedrooms and bathrooms. Practice with regard to room searches acknowledges young people's privacy. Personal information about young people is kept safe and secure and young people are encouraged to look at the records kept about them and add their own comments if they want to.

The home is physically safe and well maintained and visitors are monitored to ensure the safety of young people. There are suitable procedures for the recruitment of new staff to make sure only suitable staff are employed. Risk management is effective and staff know what is required to promote young peoples' safety. Written risk assessments, care plans, one-to-one key working sessions are all effectively used to keep young people safe and give them advice and guidance. As one young person comment 'we get plenty of lectures about keeping ourselves safe'.

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?

Recommendations

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

- ensure written records of the circumstances of all incidents of absconding meet national minimum standards (NMS 19.6)
- ensure the needs of children being admitted to the home and the likely effects of their admission upon the existing group of residents are taken into account and recorded in decisions on admission to the home (NMS 5.7)
- ensure the home is decorated and furnished to a high standard, in particular ensure the plans for the kitchen refurbishment go ahead and improve the quality of door handles throughout the home (NMS 24)
- ensure staff appraisals and personal development plans are available for inspection. (NMS 28.7)