

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Merryl Wahogo
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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 home is one of two homes run by the organisation. The home offers residential placements for up to six children, male or female, who are between the ages of eight and 16 years. The home specialises in providing therapeutic care for children who have suffered trauma in their lives, such as physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or neglect, and display a variety of behavioural problems.

The home is a large two storey detached building in a residential area which is close to local shops and other amenities.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

This was the unannounced interim inspection covering the staying safe outcome area, and also reviewing the one action and two recommendations from the previous inspection. All have been met to a high standard and along with their own initiatives since the last inspection, this has led to markedly better outcomes for the young people. The last inspection found that the particular strength of this home lies in the therapeutic support provided for the young people. This area has continued to develop with a strong focus on achieving targets. All these improvements and continued high standards, justify an outstanding judgement.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the manager was asked to ensure improved policy and practice about bullying. The senior management team took this up enthusiastically and have trained staff in relation to much improved policies and procedures. In particular, staff are better at identifying verbal bullying as such, regardless of the underlying personality of the young person. Also management addressed making the young people's involvement in agreeing to behaviour rules more meaningful. Staff report very little bullying now and as a result young people are mostly flourishing.

The manager was also asked to keep the home free of signs of damage. Management introduced sanctions that are much more meaningful to the young people and as a result, they now rarely damage their environment. This means they live in a far more attractive and calm 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 outstanding.

Young people confirm that staff maintain their privacy, both in terms of private space and confidential documents. This helps them develop their ability to trust adults.

The home has received one minor complaint, not concerning young people, which they dealt with entirely appropriately. The lack of complaints indicate how well staff deal with concerns so that they do not escalate to complaints. It means young people feel sure that their concerns are taken seriously.

Staff are exceptionally thorough in all aspects of safeguarding of young people, especially in terms of recording and also cooperating with all necessary parties. As a result, young people feel secure enough to explore new hobbies and activities.

Management have introduced much improved policies and procedures in relation to all aspects of bullying. They also ensure that all staff develop a better understanding of bullying via new training. Part of the policy is that a young person's key worker has a one-to-one session with them after a bullying incident. As a result, young people now have a better opportunity to develop their insight into bullying, whether as the bully or the victim. Additionally, staff now record bullying well and deal with it appropriately.

It is not unusual for the young people to leave the home without permission for short periods. Very thorough risk assessments and associated procedures, however, support staff to address this especially well. In particular, they keep excellent records. This means that in the event that a young person goes missing for any length of time, there is the best possible chance of them being located.

The home's therapist has created individual progress plans for each young person. These constitute an excellent initiative and allow staff to have a highly focused approach to helping young people improve their behaviour. In turn, this encourages young people to be much more engaged with their own social and emotional development. The progress plans are one part of highly developed therapeutic behaviour management plans. These are supportive of staff because of the clarity about how they are expected to respond to behaviours. They also help the young people because of the consistency this produces. Perhaps as a result, there have been very few physical interventions since the last inspection.

Again, sanctions are entirely appropriate and staff do particularly well in getting young people to sign the records agreeing that sanctions are fair. Young people now

understand that damaging their environment has significant consequences, as a result of a new and well thought out sanctions regime. This destructive behaviour has therefore reduced dramatically. Also, as a result, the atmosphere in the home is very calm now and relationships between the girls are particularly positive at times.

Staff have been especially persistent in tracking down the cause of slightly high temperatures in the fridge. It is now functioning properly so that young people are not exposed to any risk of associated food poisoning. One member of staff is now responsible for all health and safety checks, reducing the chance that checks will be overlooked. This includes vehicle checks being carried out even more regularly than required. Staff now ensure that absolutely every aspect of health and safety is addressed promptly and thoroughly. In addition, management have paid good attention to ensuring that all necessary risk assessments are in place for the home as a whole. This means that young people are living in a particularly safe environment.

Recruitment is thorough, including when the home takes on volunteers.

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.

The home is now markedly more attractive, with no evidence of damage. Every room has been repainted and young people have been choosing some new soft furnishings. Consequently, young people can take pride in their surroundings and relax more easily than they used to.

Other standards in this outcome area remain good.

Organisation

The organisation is not judged.