

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspection date	01/02/2011
Inspector	Gaynor Moorey
Type of inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	29/06/2010
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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 registered to provide care for up to six young women aged from 12 to 17 years. The home is a large detached house. It is part of a private company which has an independent fostering agency, a total of three residential homes and an independent school.

Summary

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

This unannounced random inspection took place on a weekday. The purpose of the inspection was to undertake a review of the outcome of 'staying safe' and any recommendation or actions made at the last inspection.

The manager and the experienced staff team provide a satisfactory standard of care. The home tries to ensure the safety of the young people through comprehensive and clear guidance, policies and procedures. The staff are supported by an experienced acting manager and comprehensive systems that include supervision and training.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the home received one action and two recommendations. The action related to ensuring that all staff are receiving the required amount of supervision as outlined in the national minimum standards. This is now happening and all staff are offered monthly sessions. However, some recording in the supervision log was not clear as to why some sessions had been missed.

One of the recommendations related to ensuring there was a monthly staff meeting and this is now taking place. The other recommendation related to the manager monitoring and signing off documents and records. The manager's signature is not found on some crucial documentation.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff ensure that young people's confidentiality and privacy are respected and safeguarded by knocking on bedroom doors and making and receiving telephone calls in private. Confidential information relating to each young person is kept in an appropriate locked facility. All information is contained in the office/sleeping-in room. Staff receive guidance on the confidentiality of information. The home has a room search policy which is used when necessary. Young people are aware of this practice and information can be seen in the young people's guide. The young people said that staff did respect their space and made sure their rooms are private.

Policies and procedures are in place to safeguard and promote the children's welfare. Complaints are dealt with effectively and appropriately and staff enable young people to make complaints. There has been three complaints since the last inspection which are diverse in nature have been dealt with appropriately and to the satisfaction of the young people. The home has a system in place to deal with any neighbourhood complaints or issues. Staff use one-to-one sessions and group meetings to seek the young people's views and concerns. Young people are clearly able to express any opinions or views to the staff.

Staff receive child protection training in their induction programme and also in subsequent refresher courses during their employment. The home has a clear policy when dealing with child protection which includes up-to-date safeguarding guidance. The child protection log is up to date; there have been three child protection issues since the last inspection. These incidents have been investigated appropriately and all those agencies needing to be notified have been contacted, including the police. Young people said they could talk to the staff about anything and felt safe to do so.

The home operates a policy of zero tolerance towards bullying and the young people are made aware of the guidance on admission. Young people's behaviour is identified and risk assessed. Issues at the home are dealt with fairly for those concerned. Young people can discuss any issues or problems with the staff. Issues of bullying are dealt with so that all concerned are able to express themselves and reach a resolution.

There is a policy and procedure for reporting young people who are absent without authority. There has been heightened activity around the issue of 'young people going missing' since the last inspection. Any outcomes on 'missing young people' documents are followed up and action taken. Young people understand that return times from free time are agreed with staff, and they are aware that they could be reported to the police if they do not return or make contact with staff. The home continues to work with the police and young people to look at reducing the issue of leaving the home without permission. Staff are provided with clear guidance to address such situations, with robust risk assessments in place to highlight any concerns the young people may pose to themselves or others.

Serious incidents are reported as required by regulation. The manager confirmed that serious incidents are investigated and they also involve other agencies. There have been 11 significant incidents reported since the last inspection.

Staff try to work on positives rather than negatives to encourage the young people to improve their behaviour. The young people share very good supportive relationships with staff and are given opportunities to discuss issues and life within the home in one-to-one sessions with key workers and in the group meetings. All sanctions are recorded in the safeguarding file. The sanctions given are permissible and include missing activities, reparation and loss of free time.

All staff receive training in the use of physical restraint which has been developed by the organisation. The home has a policy which offers guidance to staff in behaviour management and restraint. The young people have detailed risk assessments in place; these are contained within their behaviour management plans. Staff encourage appropriate and acceptable behaviour. There has been two restraints used in the home since the last inspection. One restraint form had not been completed so details of the restraint were unclear. Staff support the young people with their behaviour through appropriate professional relationships. The young people consulted after a restraint understood why it had happened and are able to reflect on the experience.

Areas of potential risk for the young people are assessed and the young people are safeguarded, where possible, from harm. The home has documentation relating to risk assessing activities, holidays, fire risk and the environment. Risk assessments are in place which include health and safety and a fire risk assessment, although this has not been signed by the manager. The home's fire alarm system is tested regularly and evacuations take place on a regular basis. However, records are unclear in relation to fire equipment, and the records are recorded incorrectly. There are clear and effective systems and checks from outside agencies and from the home's monitoring systems. The home operates a system to monitor visitors.

Records of new staff employed since the last inspection indicate that staff are subject to a comprehensive recruitment process. Agency staff are vetted by their agency and details forwarded to the home.

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
22	maintain an accurate and up to date record of measures of control used (Regulation 17 (4))	23/02/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure all records contain the signature of a person authorised by the registered person to make the record (NMS 22.9)
- ensure testing of fire equipment and emergency lighting is recorded correctly to show regular tests are happening (NMS 26.8)
- ensure the registered person of the home regularly reviews the implementation and effectiveness of action identified as a result of risk assessments carried out (NMS 26.3)