

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Janice Hawtin
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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 children's home provides care, education and accommodation for five male children between the ages of 11 to 17 years. The home accommodates children or young people who have emotional or behavioural difficulties or a learning disability. The home specialises in working with young people whose assessed needs are linked to sexually inappropriate behaviour. Young people are expected to engage in regular therapy sessions which form a key component of their placement. Young people attend school on site which is operated by the same organisation. The home is situated in a rural location. The accommodation comprises of a living and dining room, a quiet room and a games room. Young people have their own bedrooms and have access to two bathrooms. The home has a front and back garden with grass areas suitable for the young people to either play games or grow plants. There is a gravel area which is used for parking vehicles belonging to the home.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This was an unannounced interim inspection. Actions and recommendations made at the last inspection were reviewed along with standards for staying safe.

Three recommendations were made as a result of this inspection and one previous action relating to refurbishment of the bathrooms remains.

Overall there are good quality systems in place to promote the welfare of, and protect young people. Successful practice is supported by an 'approachable and supportive manager' and maintained by comprehensive individual risk assessments and consideration to the needs of young people.

The service demonstrates a particular strength in having clear boundaries and expectations of young people. There is an emphasis on educational achievement and school attendance. Education facilities are well equipped; staff are well trained, skilled, and enthusiastic about their work. Contact with families is maintained where appropriate. Young people took part in the inspection and reported that they would like to return to live with family members, however they understand the need to be involved in therapy and why they are currently living away from home.

A variety of individualised leisure activities are provided alongside the provision of a games room which helps keep young people occupied.

The environment is spacious and homely, the dated bathrooms are due to be

refurbished and attention is paid to health and safety. On the day of inspection some fire doors were not working effectively compromising safety should there be a fire.

Improvements since the last inspection

At a previous inspection the manager was asked to consider implementing a more consistent approach to the recording of incidents when young people leave the home without permission. Records now follow a consistent format which includes additional information and allows for analysis and identification of trends.

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.

Staff practice is underpinned by appropriate training, policy documents and guidelines which promote the safety and welfare of young people living in the home. There is vetting of visitors, identification is carefully checked and there is a visitor's book in place.

Children's privacy is respected; there are locks on bathroom doors and young people have locks on their bedroom doors. Confidential information is stored under lock and key in a staff office. Staff understand the need to work in partnership with young people when addressing issues of safety and could describe appropriate practice if there is a need to search children's possessions or rooms. This practice is not recorded, therefore not available for scrutiny, analysis or made as information available to young people.

Young people can request to use the home's cordless telephones; however there is a blanket policy detailed in the young people's handbook stating 'phone calls will be supervised on loud speaker', this policy is not reflected in practice. Where private telephone calls are not allowed the reasons and risks are not always recorded.

Young people report that they know how to make a complaint and can describe the process. Detail of how to complain with details of agencies which could help are included in the young people's handbook. Staff receive training in dealing with complaints and an easy to follow flow chart is available to guide staff through the process.

Staff receive training in child protection, they can access comprehensive policies and are able to describe how to deal with child protection issues and disclosures of abuse. Individual assessments are in place to identify potential risks; consideration is given to risk management covering most aspects of young people's lives in attempts

to keep them and others safe. There is a careful balancing act between risk management and risk avoidance. Sufficient staffing numbers and the employment of waking night staff allows for vigilance in reducing risk. Incidents are well recorded and the detail allows for analysis, there is avoidance of criminalising unacceptable behaviour especially if influenced by dealing with issues following therapeutic input.

Bullying is known to be unacceptable, guidance is available to staff and detailed in the young persons' handbook including examples of what constitutes bullying behaviour. Incidents of bullying are few.

Young people are encouraged to develop socially acceptable behaviour through the use of individual support, therapeutic input and work in partnership with other agencies e.g. NACRO and the local safeguarding board. Routines and expectations are clear and known to young people. Praise and rewards are used to improve behaviour as well as sanctions of which there is an approved list. Sanctions are recorded and attempts are made to link these to the inappropriate behaviour. A range of activities are provided for young people and these can be individualised, one young person reported undertaking 'goal keepers training' another described having been on lots of activities including ice-skating and swimming. A well equipped games room is also available.

Restraint of young people is infrequent and a record of incidents is kept up to date, the staff receive training in de-escalation and restraint techniques.

Incidents of absence without authority are unusual, detailed policy is available for staff and guidance for young people. A joint protocol with the police is in place for dealing with incidents, however the staff make every effort to return young people to the home without police involvement as would be expected of a reasonable parent.

The home is spacious and welcoming; the environment is subject to regular health and safety checks, and risk assessments are completed. Fire drills are carried out and fire detection equipment is tested weekly. Not all fire door closures were effective and this would compromise smoke and fire retention in the event of a fire. Vehicle safety checks are up to date and evidence is kept on the premises of electrical testing.

Six new staff have commenced employment since the last inspection, the manager is able to access records and determine that appropriate checks have been made before someone starts work. These were available during the inspection.

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
24	ensure both of the bathrooms used by young people are modernised to provide a homely and pleasant domestic enviroment in accordance with Regulation 31 (2) (c) (NMS 42.2)	30/04/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure that where arrangements for private use of a telephone are limited, these are fully recorded in placement plans, agreed and understood by young people. (NMS 9.5)
- provide staff and young people with guidance on when it maybe necessary to search young people's rooms or belongings. (NMS 9.8)
- ensure that fire door closures are in good working order and doors provide an effective barrier to fire. (NMS 26.8)