

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC018241
Inspection date	4 February 2010
Inspector	Russell Shackford
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	11 November 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 service is a children's home. It provides up to four placements to young people aged 11 to 17 years. It is near to the bus route servicing local villages and the local town centre, which is approximately five miles away. In the local community there are shops, schools, health, leisure and employment facilities.

Summary

This was an unannounced interim inspection to check on key standards and related regulations under the Every Child Matters outcome group of staying safe. This is a good service. Young people's privacy is well respected and complaints are satisfactorily handled. Very good safeguarding policies and practice promote and protect young people's welfare. This is a notable area of strength. Staff demonstrate a good awareness of the risks to the young people during their known and likely activities. Written risk assessments provide clear detail of the action required to minimise the identified risks and comprehensively promote young people's safety. Behaviour management is good. Good policies and practices help to protect young people's physical safety in the event of a fire at the home. Staff recruitment practices are very good and checks are recorded well. All staff are trained in appropriate safety subjects including fire safety, complaints, child protection and physical restraint.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

It was recommended that the registered person consider alternative methods of communicating the children's guide. Work has begun to address this but it is not yet completed.

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.

Each young person has their own bedroom and a key for it, which helps them to keep it private. Young people have access to a private telephone which is free to use for reasonable periods. Staff demonstrate a very good understanding of facilitating privacy for the young people. This is done very sensitively and safely. Young people confirm this. Details about young people's care is recorded and stored appropriately to maintain good levels of confidentiality.

Good policies and procedures are available to guide staff if they receive a complaint about the service. All staff have received training to ensure that they know what to do if there is a complaint about the service. Young people are supported if they are unhappy. Staff have explained the complaints procedure to young people and there is also information in the young people's guide about how to complain. Young people confirm this. Details of external advocacy agencies and contact numbers are displayed clearly in the home. The young people also have the support of an independent advocate service. The complaints records contain the required details. Therefore, complaints are handled well.

The provider has very good safeguarding systems and procedures for staff to follow in the event of any allegation or suspicion of abuse. The manager and staff have received child protection training. Staff demonstrate very good knowledge and understanding of the safeguarding procedures to promote and protect the young people's safety. Staff describe young people's safety as 'most important' and they take a very proactive approach towards ensuring that young people are not exploited. The staff work collaboratively with social workers and other agencies to minimise the risk to young people's welfare and safety. This proactive, robust approach to protecting young people's welfare is a notable area of strength. The manager has established strong links with the local safeguarding children team and other services involved in safeguarding the welfare of vulnerable young people. Therefore the welfare of young people is promoted well and strong measures help to ensure that as much as possible young people are protected from abuse, bullying and unauthorised absence, and an appropriate response is made to any allegation or suspicion of abuse.

There have been no significant events at the home, but there are systems in place to ensure that, should they occur, they are notified to the relevant authorities, including Ofsted

Behaviour management strategies reflect the age and understanding of the young people with an emphasis on praise, encouragement and incentive. Sanctions are relevant and they are reviewed regularly for effectiveness. Staff are trained in the provider's policy and authorised physical restraint techniques.

Reducing unnecessary risks to young people is a high priority at the home. Good quality written risk assessments are recorded to enable staff to know what action to take to minimise the risk to each young person during their known and likely activities. These are reviewed regularly. Staff talk in a determined manner about their commitment to ensuring that the young people's welfare is safeguarded. They use local knowledge and contacts to support their efforts. This is a notable area of strength.

All staff and young people have been involved in regular fire safety drills. The fire safety check records are up-to-date and accurate. All staff working at the home have received up-to-date fire safety training to enable them to minimise the risks to young people in the event of a fire at the home. Therefore, young people's physical safety from fire in the home is protected.

Young people benefit greatly from the providers robust recruitment policy and practices. All staff have been appropriately recruited and undergone suitable Criminal Records Bureau checks to ensure that they are suitable to work with young people. The records are clear and information is easily retrievable.

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 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
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Recommendations

There are no recommendations.