

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Chris Scully
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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 centre is located in an isolated and rural location. Set in a former agricultural property, the centre functions as a base from which young people in crisis aged from 11 to 17 years are supported to undertake a wide range of adventurous outdoor activities in which the staff are trained and licensed to provide leadership and guidance. The centre offers placements which are short term for up to 10 young people, most of whom are placed on an emergency basis following a recent history of placement breakdown and difficult or risky behaviour. The placements are aimed primarily at helping young people to gain some stability and control in their lives.

The centre has a full-time manager, supported by a deputy and an adventurous activities manager. Each of the three operational shifts consists of two team seniors and a group of residential care workers, some of whom are qualified instructors for a range of outward-bound activities.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This interim unannounced inspection considers the outcome for young people under the national minimum standard for staying safe. Three young people are currently residing at the centre and one young person took part in the inspection process.

The centre continues to be a good service that meets most of the minimum standards. Operational policies, procedures are used well to ensure the safety and well-being of young people. Opportunities are created for young people to participate safely in a range of outward-bound activities supported by trained and experienced staff who are fully aware of their individual needs. Staff place an emphasis on young people's need and helping them to have some control in their lives.

Improvements since the last inspection

Two actions, in relation to the complaints record and maintenance of the premises, were raised at the last inspection. The Registered Manager now ensures that appropriate systems are in place so that the complaints record contains all relevant information, for example, the action taken in response to the complaint and the outcome of the investigation. Complainants are provided with information on how to move the complaint to the next level, if they not be happy with the outcome. There have been no complaints since the last inspection. The centre was asked to ensure all identified maintenance and repairs are carried out. This was in relation to the path to the cottage, as the surface is uneven and is not safe. The provider has sought quotes to rectify this problem. However, to date no work has been carried out to

make the path safe and, as such, it remains a risk to anyone using it. Therefore, this action has been raised again at this 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.

Young people's privacy is promoted. They have single bedrooms and their privacy and dignity are respected when washing. Procedures are in place should staff need to search a young person's bedroom. However, information is not readily available in relation to these searches for young people who have left the centre. This is because this information is retained on the young person's file and is either archived or moves with the young person to another home within the company. No central log is maintained of those searched. The accommodation provides space where young people can relax and spend time alone if they wish. Staff are respectful of young people's privacy, which is consistent with good parenting and the need to protect them. Confidential information is held securely in the office.

The centre has effective policies, procedures and care practices, which ensure young people are cared for safely. For example, robust individual risk assessments and behaviour management plans ensure staff have appropriate strategies in place to protect young people. Young people are protected from abuse because staff are properly trained and have an understanding of the centre's procedures for reporting and managing safeguarding issues. A suitable complaints procedure is in place and is understood by young people. Staff are open to resolving any concerns young people, their parents or other relevant people may have. Young people's views are actively sought. For example, during young people's meetings they requested jerk chicken be added to the menu and for pony riding to be included in the educational programme. As a result, young people were encouraged to shop for the ingredients for jerk chicken and staff are looking to secure pony riding for the young people. Similarly, staff provide clear explanations as to why young people's request, such as additional items of clothing, cannot be met at this time. This means young people know that they are listened to and their views are respected.

Bullying is not currently an issue for young people. Staff are very aware of the potential for this and have devised risk assessments to reduce the likelihood of this occurring. Young people are provided with good levels of supervision and staff discuss this with them during key worker sessions and young people's meetings. Staff are aware that the young people have significant histories, which place themselves and others at risk, which includes the young people going missing. Staff encourage young people not to go missing through planned, structured activities, while minimising the risk on occasions when young people do go missing. Staff are

able to instigate well-established procedures to ensure that the young person is able to return quickly and safely. Staff are aware to inform Ofsted of any significant events in line with Schedule 5. However, a number of incidents in November have not been reported to Ofsted and this is a breach of regulation. Information pertaining to these events is recorded in the centre.

Staff build positive relationships with the young people by explaining and showing them what is socially-acceptable behaviour. Staff are extremely aware of the young people's individual behaviours, vulnerabilities and the risk that these place upon them. For example, risk assessments outline clearly the potential risks and how to minimise these. Young people are encouraged to behave appropriately and earn additional rewards for good behaviour. Staff are trained in appropriate behaviour management practices and young people are aware of the home's rules. On some occasions physical interventions are required and these are documented appropriately. At times sanctions are imposed upon young people; these are mainly financial and are in response to damage to property, such as damaging vehicles.

Young people live in a safe, secure environment. A strong emphasis is placed upon young people receiving safe outward-bound activities delivered by qualified instructors. This is achieved due to the detailed risk assessments that are in place, which are individualised to the needs of the young people. All gas, electrical testing and fire equipment testing is carried out on a regular basis. Observations of a fire drill demonstrate that both staff and young people know how to evacuate the premises in an emergency. Young people's safety is enhanced as they are cared for by qualified, experienced and appropriately-vetted staff. The identity of all visitors is checked on their arrival. These systems protect young people as they ensure unauthorised persons are not able to gain access the centre.

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
23	ensure that all identified maintenance and repairs for the centre are carried out promptly in particular the path leading to the cottage (Regulation 31(2)(d))	25/02/2011
20	ensure Ofsted is informed if any of the events listed in column 1 of the table in schedule 5 takes place (Regulation 30 (1))	25/02/2011

Recommendations

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

- maintain a record of all room searches, showing the time, date and the reason for the search, noting what if anything was found, who carried out the search and who was present at the time. Such record should be signed by all those present and, specifically, be available for inspection after the young people have left the home. (NMS 9.8)