

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Trevor Hall
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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 is a multi-site children's home, the main house can accommodate three young people whilst its satellite unit can accommodate one additional young person, giving a total for the registration of four young people aged between eight and 17 years of age.

Both the main house and the satellite home are located in a small village near the outskirts of a small market town. The main house is a compact, comfortable detached family house with a sizeable garden. The satellite home is a two bedded semi-detached property with a large garden. Both homes afford individual bedrooms and have communal spaces downstairs. Each home has their own Statement of Purpose, but share common policies and procedures. Both houses draw staff from an extended staff group based at the main house.

Both houses enjoy easy access to a range of recreational, social and sporting activities and there are regular bus services available within the nearby market town, enabling the young people, where appropriate, to develop their self-reliance and independency skills.

Summary

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

This was an unannounced interim inspection that concentrated on checking all key national minimum standards (NMS) under the 'Every Child Matters' area of staying safe, and on checking improvements in areas where recommendations had previously been made. The home's last key inspection, conducted on 28 April 2010 judged the home to be good but made three recommendations for improvement. Areas requiring improvement included improving the recording of, incidents, sanctions, physical interventions and room searches. Ensuring that all staff received regular supervision and improve their level of training in child care were also areas that required improvement. The home's acting manager was available throughout the inspection. At the time of this inspection the home accommodated two young people, one in the main house and one in the satellite unit, one young person was present throughout the inspection process.

This inspection confirmed that the home remains a place of safety and that it has made appropriate improvements in the areas where recommendations had previously been made. Young people benefit from living in an environment that is centred on meeting their individual needs; they receive good individual support and their education and health is encouraged and appropriately promoted. The home has good regimes in place for the effective assessment of risk and staff take all reasonable

precautions to ensure that young people, staff and visitors are safe at all times. Whilst the home's interim management arrangements are satisfactory, there is a need for these to be formalised to ensure compliance with regulation.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection, the recording of incidents, physical intervention by staff, room searches and sanctions has improved and now more than meets the minimum requirements set out in the national minimum standards. The actions of the staff are clearly recorded as are any outcomes for young people, young people are now routinely encouraged to sign these records, their refusal is also recorded and staff are now completing these records in line with the home's own policies and staff guidance.

Staff supervision has been returned to the frequency and for the durations listed in the national minimum standards, with all staff receiving at least one hours formal supervision each month.

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 respected by staff and is appropriately promoted. All young people have single bedrooms to which they can have appropriate access. The living accommodation provides adequate space where young people can relax and easily find privacy away from others if they so wish. Young people are aware of the circumstances in which staff may ask to search their rooms. This process is fully recorded and young people are invited to add their comments. Sensitive information is held securely in the staff office.

The home has a complaints procedure and information about this is available to young people in their guide. Staff take seriously any concerns and complaints made by young people and respond to these concerns quickly. Young people know how to make a complaint although none of the present residents has done so. There has been one low level complaint since the last inspection from a near neighbour about staff parking which was dealt with appropriately.

Staff have guidance and training to help them respond in a formal manner to any allegations or serious concerns about young people's safety. The home has clear procedures for reporting and responding to child protection concerns and contact the local safeguarding team for advice or to make referrals. Training for staff in child protection is updated by the company's rolling training programme. The manager

monitors all child protection concerns and keeps appropriate safeguarding records. This ensures that everyone who needs to know about specific risks and concerns are kept informed of what actions are being taken and their eventual outcome.

Young people are protected from bullying as staff present a clear commitment to promoting behaviour that is respectful. They actively challenge any form of behaviour that may be perceived as harmful and upsetting. There are well-established staff practices for reporting any event where a young person is absent from the home without permission.

Young people living at these two homes are aware of the reason they are being looked after and how staff will promote their safety and protection within the home and in public places. Staff are appropriately aware of the types of behaviour which young people may display and accordingly develop risk assessments that minimise the potential for young people to subject themselves or others to harm. Staff know how to respond to challenging behaviours. Young people are encouraged to reflect on the consequences of their behaviour after such incidents to learn how to help themselves to be safe and behave responsibly.

Young people are encouraged to behave well, to establish, achieve and maintain levels of behaviour that are socially acceptable and that will sustain them in the wider community. The home's records not only detail sanctions used for poor behaviour but also positive consequences and rewards for behaviour that deserves congratulation and praise. Staff are acutely aware of the need to balance their interventions with positive feedback about young people's achievements, rather than on just punishing poor behaviour.

Staff are vigilant in ensuring young people are kept safe in the home. Daily risk assessments are in place according to which young people are in the home. There are no ongoing safeguarding issues. Safety and welfare are taken seriously and young people live in a home which is both physically safe and secure. For example, risk assessments on the environment are completed and updated on a regular basis and staff within the home are all involved in these routines to ensure that health and safety is promoted by everyone. Portable appliance testing for electrical safety has been done on all equipment in the home and all safety equipment has been regularly serviced. Frequent checks are undertaken on fire equipment and emergency lighting, and fire drills are regularly completed. The acting manager ensures that utilities, domestic equipment and vehicles are checked to ensure they are safe to use. Young people live in a home which provides physical safety and security.

The home employs effective systems for the monitoring of all visitors to the property. No stranger is allowed unsupervised access to the home and all formal visits are announced. The service's recruitment and selection process has been inspected separate to this visit confirming rigorous procedures are in place to safeguard young people by informed staff selection.

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 satisfactory.

The home is currently operating without a Registered Manager. The home is being managed by an acting manager, who is a deputy manager from another home. The acting manager is supported and mentored by an existing Registered Manager in the care organisation and is adequately meeting the care needs of the young people in residence. Whilst the interim management arrangements are satisfactory, they fall short of the requirement of the regulations.

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
34	clarify and formalise the management arrangements of the home by appointing a Registered Manager. (Regulation 7 & 8)	31/03/2011