

Inspection report for Children's Home

Unique reference number	SC020630
Inspection date	07/02/2011
Inspector	Julian Parker
Type of inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	27/09/2010
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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

The home is a two-bedded children's home providing services for young people in crisis between 10 and 18 years of age. The Statement of Purpose for the home indicates that it offers 'intensive and focused support' to young people who may have been previously referred to secure accommodation. The home is rurally located on the outskirts of a small village. The home is in a remote location so staff transport is a key feature of how young people access community facilities and services.

Accommodation is provided in a large farmhouse-style home affording young people individual bedrooms and ample communal space. Education is provided on site for young people of school age by a qualified tutor. Life and social skills development are encouraged and supported by care staff in the home.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

The purpose of this interim inspection was to assess key standards under the outcome area of staying safe and to assess the response to the recommendation raised at the key inspection..

The home continues to provide a good level of care to young people. Effective safeguarding practice and systems promote the well-being of the young people at the home. Young people's behaviour is encouraged and managed positively. Young people respond positively with caring staff and the rewards and incentives used by the home which support them to develop their understanding and social skills.

Young people make their views known through their behaviour and show that they are listened to. Young people are empowered to challenge each others behaviour constructively and this boosts their esteem. The home environment is being comfortably maintained with routines and systems being in place to ensure appropriate health and safety checks are carried out.

On this inspection only one recommendation is made to improve the effectiveness of aspects of behaviour management recording.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the registered provider was asked to record effectively how the home ensures that the young person has opportunity to talk with a person independent of the home on return from an unauthorised absence. The Registered

Manager has satisfactorily addressed this issue, but this has yet to be tested in practice.

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 and confidentiality are promoted by the home. Young people are provided with individual bedrooms which allow them to have their own lockable and personalised space. They have access to a house telephone and can make calls privately. Any room searches deemed necessary for the safety and welfare of young people and are conducted in line with the registered person's procedures that respects personal privacy.

Young people know about the home's complaints system and will use the opportunities that exist to raise and discuss any matters they are unhappy with. This can include talking with staff, the manager, having one-to-one discussions with their key workers or contacting advocates who are independent of the home. Complaints are dealt with effectively by the manager and young people are kept informed of the progress and outcome of these. Written feedback from complaints identify that young people are generally content with their resolution but those which require consultation outside of the home do not always adhere to the provider's timescales.

Staff take all reasonable steps to keep young people safe from harm and know how to respond in the event of any allegation or serious concern about a young person's safety. A rolling programme of child protection training supports staff in their work with the young people. Since the last inspection no young people have gone missing from the home. When this may occur staff are familiar with the procedure to follow to safeguard them, which now ensures that young people are afforded the opportunity to discuss their actions with a person independent of the home.

Staff display a good understanding about countering bullying by taking an assertive stance against oppressive behaviour in the home. Young people are fully aware of the behavioural expectations in the home, including the unacceptability of any form of hurtful or oppressive behaviour. This zero tolerance approach against bullying is highlighted by the young person's guide and staff practice in the home. Young people have individual risk assessments describing their behaviours and a management plan identifying areas of behaviour that that will be worked with. Importantly young people are encouraged to discuss with each other behaviours they find oppressive as a way of resolving difference. In this controlled way tolerance can be promoted and self esteem enhanced.

Young people receive day-to-day care from staff that are properly trained to understand their particular needs and encourage good social behaviour. Training for staff include techniques to manage challenging behaviour including the appropriate use of physical intervention employing an approved methodology. Sanctions used within the home are relevant and proportionate. Young people are constantly encouraged to maintain or improve their behaviour to an acceptable level by responding to the rewards and incentives systems provided by the home. The manager actively monitors both sanctions and incentives to consider their effectiveness. These are flexible and support positive behaviour thereby encouraging better outcomes for the young people. Required records, however, do not always include young people's comments which would more effectively corroborate the effectiveness of these interventions.

The home environment is well-maintained and systems are in place to ensure appropriate and regular health and safety checks are carried out. Fire drills take place routinely which are effective, inclusive and well recorded.

Since the last inspection, two new staff have been employed at the home. The manager reports that personnel files confirm that the organisation follows a thorough recruitment and employment process and that staff are not admitted to the home without all statutory checks being verified. This confirms that staff are suitable and safe to work with young people within 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?

Recommendations

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

- ensure that when disciplinary measures or restraint are used young people are encouraged to write or have their views recorded. (national minimum standard 22.14)