

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Monica Farrimond
Type of inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	29/10/2010
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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

This is a children's home for six young people of either gender from 10 years to 17 years. The home cares for young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties, and drug or alcohol dependence, from many parts of England and Wales.

It is a large detached house, four miles from the city centre. The location of the house enables young people to access facilities in the community easily. It is close to bus stops, a railway station, local schools, shops, youth groups, leisure centres and parks.

Summary

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

At this unannounced random inspection only key standards relating to staying safe were inspected. Young people's welfare is enhanced by positive relationships that exist between experienced staff and young people, and between young people and their peers. Young people are kept safe and they are provided with support from professional services outside the home. Staff are well supported by the Registered Manager, who is effective, enthusiastic, and has a strong commitment and focus on improvement. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory throughout the safeguarding standards inspected.

Previous actions relating to management and placement plans have been addressed. No actions or recommendations are made following this inspection, which reflects the improvement in the standard of care offered by this home.

Improvements since the last inspection

The manager was asked to ensure that placement plans were developed for each young person, covering all aspects as required by the national minimum standards and Children's Homes Regulations 2001. Also to ensure that the placement plans were regularly reviewed. These issues have been satisfactorily addressed. The manager was also asked to ensure that Regulation 34 checks were established, to monitor and improve the quality of care offered to the young people; this issue has also been satisfactorily addressed.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The fundamental and underlying approach of the manager and staff, is to provide young people with a residential experience that is aimed at meeting their needs and encouraging their development. Young people are enabled to understand their situations and circumstances through a sensitive understanding of their behaviour. Arrangements for safeguarding children, bullying and behaviour management are handled well and ensure that young people feel listened to and protected. Accurate records are maintained showing the home is managed well, providing suitable physical safety and security for the young people resident. This ensures that young people's welfare is promoted. Reporting systems and actions taken in the past in response to significant incidents have been appropriate. There is good internal scrutiny of records and practice enabling a prompt response to any negative issues identified.

Staff demonstrate a strong commitment to preserving the dignity and privacy of young people and they have a very good understanding of safeguarding issues, which ensures that young people are protected from abuse. Training for staff is kept up to date, and detailed policies and procedures are followed by staff. No concerns relating to bullying or safeguarding children procedures are evident. This reflects the good use of observation by staff in accordance with their policies and procedures and training in these areas.

The service has a well-developed complaints procedure; young people know the complaints procedure and say they are confident that any complaint will be taken seriously. Staff are quick to intervene should a bullying situation arise, and issues relating to bullying are handled well, ensuring young people feel safe. Good staffing levels ensure that young people are well supervised. Individual risk assessments and placement plans allow staff to manage any concerns that might arise between young people. There is a clear protocol for staff to follow in the event of an unauthorised absence, which ensures that young people are properly protected. The welfare of the young people is paramount and staff use initiative and local knowledge to ensure young people in their care are kept safe. There are very few incidents of unauthorised absence.

Risk assessments are produced to highlight concerns and vulnerability of the young people at the home. Detailed placement plans are produced to support staff practice. Staff are competent in identifying and supporting the young people's needs. Behaviour management plans and risk assessments are agreed as part of placement planning arrangements. This ensures that all staff have a consistent approach when

addressing issues with a young person. Statutory reviews are used to monitor placement arrangements. Staff with key-worker responsibilities uphold children's rights as well as providing daily support to help them achieve and develop. Communication and relationships between staff and the young people are good. Professional and personal boundaries have been established and the home's routines are clear and accepted by the young people.

There are very few incidents requiring physical intervention; staff have a positive view of the young people they work with. Staff work towards enabling young people to adjust unacceptable behaviour through a reward system that encourages and supports achievement and improvement. They promote and reward positive behaviour and support young people well, which minimises the likelihood of incidents developing into episodes of challenging behaviour. All staff are properly trained to diffuse difficult situations. Individual risk management and behaviour support plans clearly show how staff will work to promote behaviour that is positive and to lessen the risk of behaviour becoming challenging. Restraints are only ever used as a last resort and in very clearly defined situations. The infrequency of such incidents indicates that the strategies that staff use work well and that young people benefit from the way in which they are cared for.

All aspects of health and safety are managed well, and the home's manager takes full responsibility for all matters relating to this. Records are maintained within a central file. Certification is held centrally to show servicing and maintenance of fire alarms and extinguishers, personal appliance testing and electrical installations. Regular fire drills are carried out.

Checks are carried out on the quality of the vetting and recruitment procedures. Suitable evidence including enhanced Criminal Records Bureau checks, references, applications forms and records of the interview were presented on a random selection of staff files. The home follows a robust checking system, and this is evident throughout the recruitment process. Suitable vetting of visitors to the home is also undertaken with identity checks being carried out before access to the home is permitted. There are sound procedures and good care practices that keep young people safe in the home.

The service has a well-developed complaints procedure and all complaints are responded to promptly. Young people know the complaints procedure and they are confident that any complaint will be taken seriously. This ensures that young people feel that their concerns and opinions are valued.

Staff are quick to intervene, should a bullying situation arise and any issues relating to bullying are handled well, ensuring young people feel safe. Good staffing levels ensure that young people are well supervised.

There are sound procedures and good care practices, which keep young people safe in the home. Staff demonstrate a strong commitment to preserving the dignity and privacy of young people and they have a good understanding of safeguarding issues, which ensures that young people are protected from abuse. Training for staff is kept

up to date and detailed policies and procedures guide them in their work.

There is a firm anti-bullying approach that discourages young people from being aggressive or abusive to others and a very strong approach to equality and diversity that has a very positive impact on avoiding racism.

The individual identity of young people is recognised, and they are encouraged and enabled to be involved in the running of the home, to complain if dissatisfied and to have their privacy protected. If young people are missing from the home every effort is made to locate their whereabouts and safeguard their welfare by taking prompt action to return them.

The premises are well maintained, subject to rigorous risk assessments and secured against any external threat. The staff are conscientious about checking the building's infrastructure, fire protection and equipment and reporting any shortfalls.

When recruiting staff, the company has rigorous procedures that ensure only suitable people are employed. People do not start work until all necessary and required checks are complete. There is a similar thoroughness in the way that visitors and other people are treated when they are in 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.