

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Michelle Moss
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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

The children's home is a detached Edwardian house. It provides care and accommodation for up to six young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties, aged from 10 to 17 years. The accommodation includes a lounge, dining room, kitchen and single bedrooms for the young people. The home is close to all amenities and has good access to public transport.

Summary

This was an interim inspection that has looked at the progress the home has made in regards to two actions and five recommendations raised at the last full inspection. Two outcome sections have also been re-inspected to reassess outcomes for young people. The home has addressed a number of the previous identified shortfalls, although progress on others has only been marginal. Where improvement has been secured, young people's well-being has been better protected. However, shortfalls in the home's recording system means not all aspects of health and care have improved at the same rate.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The recording of prescribed medication is improving and providing more informative details that confirm if a young person has received their medication. However, the home has a limited risk assessment process that assesses young people's responsibilities for self-administering medication. Also, young people do not have all their health needs identified or assessed, inclusive of medical conditions, that required treatment recorded in the health section of the placement plan. These shortfalls limit staff having readily available information that can be used to actively promote and safeguard young people's health.

Only marginal improvement has been made to ensure the placement plan is kept under review. There is limited evidence to show young people are participating in drawing up and reviewing their plans. Furthermore, the plan makes limited reference to issues that arise from the young person's ethnicity, race, disability, faith or belief. This includes not holding under essential information, a young person's religious persuasion. This ongoing shortfall also hinders the home securing the views of young people and ensuring the plan sets out a clear assessment of needs. More positively, the home has ensured plans relating to young people's education are obtained and made inclusive of the placement plan. These plans enable the staff to have access to explicit information on young people's educational needs. Monthly reports are also completed that help to inform on young people's placement progress. These coupled with the education plans, are helping to make up for other weaknesses found in the care planning.

The home's safeguarding practices are more enhanced through staffs' increased familiarity in changes, resulting from local authority's revised procedures. The management of behaviour is becoming more consistent to actively encourage acceptable behaviour. These improvements enhance the welfare and protection of young people.

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 live in a home that provides them with a broad range of safety measures to meet their physical safety and security. This is inclusive of fire, water and electrical safety. The staff show a respect for young people's privacy and maintain appropriate levels of confidentiality of records about their personal care.

Young people have their concerns and complaints listen to. However, the records to validate complaints have been adequately addressed, are not always completed to show what action has been taken and the outcome of any investigation. This limits transparency on the action taken to show young people's concerns are taken seriously. More positively, the vetting of staff is thorough, to ensure any new worker is suitable to work with young people prior to entering the home.

The staff are aware of the different levels of young people's vulnerabilities and undertake risk assessments to assess the extent of risk. These include missing from home, countering bullying, behaviour and risks associated with physical and emotional welfare. The staff have clear procedures to follow regarding safeguarding concerns. This extends to having established links with local safeguarding teams within local authority's and working closely with the police to increase protection for young people.

Staff base their behaviour management on encouraging acceptable behaviour. The use of restraint is minimal and seen as a very last resort. However, sanctions are used more frequently. A log of every sanction is made, including the action taken and why. However, young people are not given the opportunity to make their opinions known on the records held about them. This restricts their feelings being formally acknowledged.

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 good.

The staffing levels are matched against the needs of young people. This includes having sufficient numbers to cover daily activities undertaken by young people. The staff team have a balanced mix of experience to reflect the different backgrounds of young people living at the home.

There are continued training opportunities for the staff to enhance their personal development in their work with young people. This provides young people with access to a competent staff team that have a good range of experience among its members.

The home has a quality monitoring system, that is centred around assessing the quality of care. However, it's effectiveness to drive forward improvement in care planning since the last inspection had been limited. Added to this, the home has had a period of unstable management arrangements, resulting in changes in managers. However, more stable management is now secured and is increasing the efficiency in leadership back to previous levels.

The Statement of Purpose continues to provide clear information that allows intended readers to be informed about the home's purpose and function.

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
2	ensure the placement plan is kept under review and sets out how, on a day to day basis, a young person's needs will be met. This must include health, cultural, religious and racial needs. Also, in preparing and reviewing the plan, young people's views must be taken into account (Regulation 21.1a,b,2,3 and schedule 3.3,4).	30 November 2009
34	ensure all matters set out under schedule 6 are monitored and drive forward improvement (Regulation 34.1a,b)	30 November 2009
16	ensure a written record is made of any complaint including any action taken in response and the outcome of the investigation (Regulation 24.5).	30 November 2009

Recommendations

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

- make sure young people that keep and administer their own medication are assessed by staff as sufficiently responsible to do so (NMS 13.9)
- make sure young people are given the opportunity to have their views recorded on any disciplinary measure used by staff Also, encourage them to sign their names again the log (NMS 22.14).