

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Jackie Graves
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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 children's home is privately owned. It is a family business with a majority of family members employed within it. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four children and young people of either gender, between the ages of 11 and 17.

The home is a two storey house. There is a bathroom, toilet and staff office on the first floor along with three children's bedrooms. On the ground floor there is a fourth child's bedroom, a kitchen, dining room and a lounge which is also used as a staff sleeping-in room. There is a small garden, with a patio and laundry room at the rear of the property.

There is easy access to local transport, shopping, leisure and education facilities.

At the time of the inspection, no young people were placed in the home.

Summary

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

The home is not currently providing accommodation to children and young people. Our inspection methodology relies on evidence found at the time of inspection and this essentially includes users' views about the service. As the evidence is not available when there are no children and young people present, we have completed a proportionate inspection. The purpose of this is to decide that, should an admission be made, the service would be able to work to a satisfactory standard.

Where a service is not providing services, it may only be judged as satisfactory or inadequate. The home was found to be satisfactory. There are satisfactory arrangements in place for promoting young people's health needs, keeping them safe and for the management of the home.

Improvements since the last inspection

Five actions and eight recommendations were made at the last inspection. As the home has not been operating, it has not been possible to achieve all the recommendations and part of an action. Therefore these are repeated in this report.

The Statement of Purpose has been updated to provide more accurate information on what the service provides. A children's guide to the service has also been improved. Staff are keeping the guide under review until they can seek young people's views on the suitability of this document. They also plan to further improve

the appearance of the booklet, for example, with colour inserts, to help young people's understanding.

Staff have made clear when young people's visitors may be in the house and how this is to be arranged. This ensures the building does not become too crowded and that individuals are able to spend time with their friends in private.

The home has introduced a policy of assessing risk before a new resident is admitted to the home to consider the impact this may have on them and the existing residents.

A Criminal Records Bureau check is now in place for the member of staff who was employed before a check was obtained. Although new staff have not been appointed since the last inspection, the Registered Manager advises that the home's recruitment policy will now include obtaining checks with the Bureau before an employee commences work.

The home was asked to ensure that the person carrying out quality monitoring visits, under Regulation 33, interviews young people, visitors and staff to help them form an opinion of the standard of care. This was incorporated into these monitoring visits.

Staffing levels were reviewed to ensure that there were sufficient staff to enable young people to take part in leisure activities.

The policy on allowances and pocket money has been amended to ensure that young people are encouraged to sign their financial records.

Although staff are working towards National Vocational Qualification level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People, the home has not yet achieved the recommended minimum ratio of 80%.

The Registered Manager was asked to make sure that staff have the qualifications for the work they perform in relation to first aid and restraint training. Training in first aid has been provided but training in restraint has not yet taken place due to the home not operating for the past few months.

Three further recommendations have not yet been fully implemented as the home has not been operating. These related to, setting up mealtimes to be social occasions, developing the child protection policy to ensure it complies with standards and to consider the effectiveness of monitoring visits carried out by a person directly concerned with the conduct of the home. The Registered Manager advises that these recommendations will be met in the near future when the home is operating again.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

There are systems in place to manage the health needs of young people. There are effective links to ensure that all young people can access the health services they need, for example, general practitioner, optical and dental services. The home would support young people to access any specialist services they need, as has been arranged in the past. Health information is available in the home which young people may refer to. Staff training has taken place to ensure that someone qualified in first aid will be available on each shift to provide emergency treatment.

There is appropriate storage for medication. Arrangements are in place for staff to develop their knowledge and confidence in administering medication.

Some information on healthy eating is available in the home. Staff will draw up menus based on suggestions from young people. In the past, some young people have eaten meals alone. The home plans to respond to a recommendation to ensure that meals are social occasions as and when young people are placed in the home.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

There are sound arrangements for young people to receive privacy in the home. For example, all bedroom doors are lockable, lockable storage for valuables is provided and laundry facilities ensure young people may launder their clothes in private.

A complaints policy is available which encourages people to raise any concerns with staff. The behaviour policy includes encouraging acceptable behaviour with rewards, for example, for regular attendance at school. The policy also includes only reasonable sanctions and restorative justice where this is appropriate, for example, helping to repair any damage caused deliberately in the home.

Arrangements for safeguarding are in place. Annual refresher training is provided for staff and refresher training is due in the near future.

There are satisfactory arrangements for countering bullying, including a policy on bullying and assessing the risk of bullying or being bullied when young people move in.

Arrangements are in place for staff to respond to any incidents of young people not returning to the home when they are expected. These arrangements include notifying the local police and trying to contact young people to bring about their safe return.

Fire safety has been maintained with regular checks of the fire system and fire fighting equipment to help promote the safety of the premises. Records indicate that

fire drills were carried out regularly when the home was occupied. There is appropriate public liability insurance in place.

The staff recruitment policy and practice was examined fully at the last key inspection. This has been amended to ensure that an enhanced check with the Criminal Records Bureau is carried out before staff start to work with young people.

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 satisfactory.

Individual bedrooms are provided which have the required basic furnishings and are reasonably decorated. The Registered Manager advises that young people are encouraged to decorate their own rooms with soft furnishings, pictures and so on, to make them individual to them, soon after they move in.

Communal areas of the home are of a reasonable standard and homely in appearance. Maintenance and cleaning has been ongoing while the service has not been operating.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The home produces suitable information to tell people about the service provided, although it plans to further develop the children's guide in consultation with young people.

There are suitable arrangements in place to ensure that any information held on young people is stored securely.

Although the minimum ratio of trained staff has not yet been achieved, staff and the Registered Manager is pursuing appropriate National Vocational Qualifications. Training in first aid has been provided for all staff.

The home reports that sufficient staff are available to meet the needs of any young

people placed. Arrangements to cover shortages and vacancies are in place, including the use of bank staff rather than agency staff, to ensure there is continuity of staffing.

Visits to monitor the performance of the service have been carried out in the past and supplied to Ofsted as required. The home plans to improve the quality and effectiveness of the visits once young people are placed.

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
29	make sure staff have the qualifications for the work they are to perform, in this instance relating to training in restraint. (regulation (26) (3) (b))	06/06/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure meals are set up to be well-managed, social occasions (NMS 10)
- ensure that the child protection policy and procedures complies fully with the standard (NMS 17)
- ensure a minimum of 80% of care staff have completed their Level 3 in the Caring for Children and Young People National Vocational Qualification (NMS 29.5)
- consider the effectiveness of monitoring visits carried out by a person directly concerned with the conduct of the home. (NMS 32)