

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	20 May 2009
Inspector	Jackie Graves
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	3 October 2008
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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

This children's home is privately owned. It is a family business with a number of family members working in it. It 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's aim is to provide a supportive, warm and safe environment for children and young people, in which they can feel free to discuss their needs and work towards their own development.

The home is a two storey house. Each young person has their own bedroom. There is a small garden with a patio at the rear. There is easy access to local transport, shopping, leisure and education facilities.

At the time of the inspection, three young people were placed in the home. No young people took part in the inspection.

Summary

This interim unannounced inspection is to look at a number of standards under Staying Safe and Organisation outcomes. In addition, the home's progress in meeting the three actions and single recommendation made at the last inspection is assessed.

As not all standards are assessed and there is no significant change since the last inspection, the overall outcome of satisfactory remains. The home continues to provide a supportive service for young people.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the home was asked to record the outcome of any complaints, which are now recorded satisfactorily.

The registered manager was asked to conduct full checks on anyone working at the home, including the independent visitor. Most checks have been carried out and arrangements put in place to supervise the visitor whilst waiting for the return of a Criminal Records Bureau check.

Information on safeguarding children has been amended to make it clear for staff.

Records of measures of behaviour control are recorded but staff training in this area has not been provided.

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 home has policies and procedures which staff use to help safeguard young people. Staff take part in regular training to update their skills in child protection. There are clear guidelines for staff to follow should any young person go absent without permission, so that all relevant parties are informed and steps can be taken to try to secure their return.

Young people's privacy is respected; they are able to meet with visitors alone and any personal information about them is treated confidentially. The physical safety of the residents and staff is promoted through regular checks of fire systems and fire drills.

Staff take bullying seriously and make clear this type of behaviour will not be tolerated in the home. Staff work sensitively to support young people if they experience bullying elsewhere. Restraint is not used routinely and staff use methods such as building positive relationships and using sanctions, to help young people learn to manage their own behaviour. Sanctions are appropriately recorded, with young people encouraged to give their views on them, but not all sanctions are appropriate, such as fines. Staff have not had recent training in restraint or managing challenging behaviour, to assist them to help young people.

An improved recruitment system is now in place to make sure prospective staff are suitable to work in the home. There are arrangements to ensure visitors do not have unsupervised access to young people until all checks are completed. There is a complaints policy which young people may use, with details of external agencies they may complain to if they wish.

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 produces written information about the service it provides and a version of this is made available to young people when they move in. Staff make sure young people understand their rights and responsibilities and know what to expect when living in the home.

An independent person visits the home regularly to monitor what goes on and reports on their findings, so the service is further developed. However, as these visits take place only during the day, young people at school might not have an opportunity to meet the visitor if they wish.

There are sufficient staff, of both genders, to support young people and meet their needs. Staff are encouraged to work towards National Vocational Qualifications, although none have yet attained this, and to update their skills through regular training, such as in first aid and child protection. However, some training is overdue and further specific training may help staff develop additional skills for working with young people.

Each young person has a private and secure record of their history and progress which they may view by arrangement. However, some important information, such as health and medical records, is not available, although the home reports trying to obtain this from placing authorities.

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
22	ensure young people are not fined as a sanction, unless by way of reparation and not more than two thirds of their pocket money (the Children Act 1989)	19 June 2009
35	evidence that the home has tried to obtain the necessary information for young people's files, as listed in Schedule 3 (Regulation 28 1 a)	19 June 2009

Recommendations

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

- ensure that all children have the opportunity to meet with the Regulation 33 visitor if they wish (NMS 32)
- consider staff training in managing challenging behaviour and refresher training in restraint (NMS 22)