

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	2 February 2010
Inspector	Gavin Thomas
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	10 June 2009
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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 is a local authority children's home that provides care and accommodation for six children and young people of either sex. The home aims to provide a period of stability for children and young people with complex needs in an environment with a therapeutic emphasis. In addition, there is multi-agency involvement in addressing their needs. Children and young people stay at the home for periods in excess of six months. They are helped to return to their families, move to substitute family placements or to more independent placements. The home is located in a rural setting with local facilities in close proximity.

Summary

This was an unannounced interim inspection. The focus of this inspection was to verify the progress made in implementing the one recommendation made at the previous inspection. The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures were also assessed. Young people's safety is given high priority. The types of support and intervention are wide ranging and includes input from external professionals. Young people's records such as risk assessments and behaviour plans are regularly reviewed and updated for ensuring appropriate levels of support. Some of the young people are gradually adapting and accepting the culture and ethos of the home. This is a slow process. However, the types of incidents involving unacceptable behaviours and young people placing themselves at risk are beginning to decline.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection, the Registered Manager was asked to ensure that Ofsted is informed of serious incidents involving young people with the police outside of the home. This aspect of reporting has improved and notifications relating to these incidents are being submitted.

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.

The home's policies and practices promote young people's privacy and confidentiality in a number of ways. This includes the siting of the young people's telephone booth, arrangements for private meetings and storage of confidential records. The guidance on room searches is accessible to staff and young people. The reasons for conducting room searches and outcomes are clearly documented and communicated to young people. This ensures that their privacy is not breached. The numbers of re-offending behaviours have reduced as a result of recent room searches undertaken and action taken to address findings.

The complaints process is transparent and all complaints received are taken seriously. The one complaint received by the service since the last inspection demonstrates this. Young people receive a copy of the complaints procedure on admission and details of independent agencies are also accessible to them. This enables young people to voice their concerns or worries to a selection of professionals independent to the home.

The implementation of safeguarding procedures ensures effective working relationships with a range of professionals at different levels. Staff are kept abreast of practice through regular induction and training programmes relevant to the safety and protection of young people. Young people are being supported as a result of high risk behaviours and circumstances surrounding some of these behaviours. Young people are engaged as much as possible to ensure that they understand how the home sets out to keep them safe.

Young people's bullying behaviour is more predominant since the last inspection and extensive work is being done to counter these behaviours. Records such as risk assessments and behaviour support plans are comprehensive, setting out agreed protocols for supporting individual young people. These include examples of preventative work. As a result of the support and work undertaken with young people, the types of behaviours exhibited prior to and after admission are showing a decline.

The depth of work undertaken to discourage young people being absent without authority is extensive. In doing so, underpinning influences are explored and challenged through consistent working with other professionals. Young people are fully supported following all incidents of absence without authority and records demonstrate the quality of this support. Risk management processes are robust and includes agreed protocols to be followed if it is suspected that a young person is likely to go missing. This proactive approach minimises opportunities for young people putting themselves at risk.

The notification of significant events to Ofsted since the last inspection has improved. As a result, notifications are now submitted when young people are linked to serious incidents outside of the home involving the police. This process provides key information, demonstrating the impact of working with external professionals and working towards safer outcomes for young people.

The implementation of behavioural management systems are consistent with a clear focus on supporting young people with a range of behavioural issues. This is achieved through establishing and sustaining positive relationships with young people in all given situations. In doing so, positive behaviours are celebrated while behaviours regarded as unacceptable are challenged and explored in line with agreed plans. The numbers of sanctions and methods of interventions have increased as a result of high risk behaviours since the last inspection. However, recent monitoring records show that some of these disciplinary measures are now declining although preventative work and support levels remain high. Behavioural management plans include very clear procedural guidance for preventing and responding to unacceptable behaviours. Additional records such as sanctions and restraints are monitored and scrutinised. This promotes fairness for young people when imposing disciplinary measures.

The quality and frequency of health and safety checks minimises risks to young people, staff and visitors. Young people are engaged in essential procedures such as fire drills and evacuations. Routine safety checks conducted by the home and approved contractors are up-to-date. This includes fire safety and electrical testing. Health and safety risk assessments are robust and relates to a wide range of activities and situations which may impact on the safety of young people. These assessments are enhanced through monthly visual checks carried out on the premises.

Recruitment processes examined at the previous inspection evidenced the thorough vetting of applicants to prevent young people being exposed to potential abusers. Records were not examined on this inspection. However, the Registered Manager gave examples of how recruitment processes are being revised to raise the profile of appointing suitably experienced and skilled staff 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 not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is not judged.

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
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Recommendations

There are no recommendations.