

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Steve Pearson
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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

The home provides long-term residential care for up to six looked after young people, of either gender, from 10-years-old up to 17-years-old. The home is newly built and is three storeys high. There is a garden and play area at the front of the property. There is access to additional play and leisure facilities shared with other provisions on the same site. There are two local youth centres, a swimming pool, local shops and other amenities, all within walking distance. The home is situated on the outskirts of a city and is easily accessed by public transport.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This was an unannounced, interim inspection. It assessed the key national minimum standards (NMS) associated with how young people are enabled to stay safe. The inspection also assessed whether the registered persons had met the requirement and recommendation made at the previous inspection on 6 October 2010. These were about the recording of staff recruitment procedures and the recording of bedroom searches.

At the time of the inspection, six young people were living in the children's home and two of them spoke to the inspector about the care they receive.

The Registered Manager and staff are effective at promoting the safety of young people. Young people are fully supported to raise concerns informally and formally, the staff receive training in child protection and fully understand how to respond to allegations, suspicions or evidence of abuse. Young people very rarely go missing from the home and they rate the quality of care as high.

The premises are maintained in a safe condition and robust recruitment procedures are in place.

Some shortfalls in the recording of restraints means accountability is not robust. The registered persons are already working on improvements to this documentation.

Improvements since the last inspection

Recruitment procedures are now more robust because the registered persons seek from anyone applying for work at the children's home, details of all employment since they left school.

The recording of room searches has also improved because the records now show that on each occasion the staff have explained to the young person the reasons why the search was carried out.

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 Registered Manager and staff promote young people's need for privacy appropriately. Young people can lock their bedroom door and can make and receive phone calls in private. A bedroom door monitoring system is in use to alert the staff to the whereabouts of young people. This system is described in the home's Statement of Purpose and placing authorities have approved its use. The staff sometimes have to search young people's bedrooms but they only do this to promote young people's welfare.

Young people are able to raise concerns formally and informally. For example, one young person said 'if I was concerned about something I could bring it up in a house meeting or fill in a complaint form'. No formal complaints have been made since the previous inspection.

The staff have ready access to the policies and procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board and to the registered provider's own child protection procedures. All staff receive training in child protection and they understand how to respond appropriately to allegations, suspicions or evidence of abuse. Young people said that occasional bullying does occur but only among some young people and the staff step in to stop it. Often, such issues arise around the dynamics of group living. A good staffing level and proactive work with young people helps to prevent bullying becoming a problem.

Young people very rarely go missing from the children's home and a protocol is in place should this happen.

The Registered Manager and staff use rewards and consequences to promote positive behaviour and the measures are fair. For example, one young person said 'the consequences for poor behaviour are fair for example, we might lose our TV for a night, get grounded or lose a leisure activity. Sometimes we get a choice of what the consequence can be. The staff also give us rewards when our behaviour is good'.

One young person raised concerns about how they are sometimes restrained. However, they were clear that restraints are only conducted for appropriate reasons such as to safeguard welfare. Nevertheless, the recording of restraints in the home's

bound book does not lead to sufficient accountability. Particularly, the staff sometimes rely on jargon to describe how a restraint was conducted, young people do not record their views or have their views recorded by the staff and the pages of the book are not numbered. The bound book of consequences also does not have numbered pages. However, the registered persons are already in the process of upgrading the recording formats.

The premises are maintained in a safe condition. Professional technicians regularly service the electrical equipment, gas appliances and equipment for preventing, detecting and extinguishing fires. The staff conduct regular fire drills with young people and appropriate liability insurance is in place.

Appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure that staff recruited to work with young people are suitable and safe.

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?

Recommendations

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

- ensure that when restraints are used, young people are encouraged to write or have their views recorded in the bound books kept by the home (NMS 22.14)
- ensure the pages of the bound books of sanctions (consequences) and restraints are numbered in advance (NMS 22.9)
- avoid reliance on jargon when describing in the bound book how a restraint was carried out. (NMS 22.9)