

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Anne Bannister
Type of inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	20/05/2010
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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 is one of a number of residential homes, which are owned and managed by the local authority. It is a purpose-built children's home situated within a housing estate on the outskirts of a small town. The home is within easy reach of all local amenities and there is a regular bus service to the town centre. The home accommodates up to six young people of either gender, whose ages range from 12 years old up to 17 years old. Each young person has an individual bedroom. The home works cooperatively with other agencies in order to meet the specific needs of the young people being looked after. The main aim of the home is to enable young people to return to foster placements or family, or to live independently in the community, in accordance with their agreed care plan.

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 associated with how young people are enabled to stay safe. The inspection also assessed whether the registered persons had met the two actions and two recommendations made at the previous inspection.

As this was an interim inspection, it did not assess all of the key national minimum standards. Consequently the overall outcome judgement made at the previous inspection remains in place. Five young people were resident at the time of inspection. The inspector had the opportunity to meet with three young people during the course of the inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

One action and two recommendations were made following the last inspection. There is now documented evidence that all young people have access to routine dental and eye tests. Deficits identified in the recording of the disposal of unused medication have been addressed. There is evidence that risk taking behaviours are shared with placing social workers. Actions taken to address the risks young people present are agreed both by residential and fieldwork staff.

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.

Staff are sensitive to the needs of the young people living in the home and aware of the need to balance respect for privacy with safety. Staff work with young people to alert them to potential dangers their behaviours may place them in. This empowers them to make safe choices. Room searches only occur where serious welfare concerns are identified and the details of searches are recorded.

The home has a written procedure for how staff must respond when young people are absent without authority. There is careful monitoring of the number of instances where this occurs and actions are taken by staff. There is evidence that in these situations, the manager organises review meetings to address the risks young people are placing themselves in. For some young people this has resulted in alternate placements being found.

Staff take concerns and complaints raised by young people seriously. Young people spoken to confirm that they are aware of the various ways they can raise a concern or complaint. They confirmed that when they first move into the home their key worker explains this to them. They feel that staff do respond to issues they raise with them, which are usually sorted out informally.

Young people are protected well when bullying occurs and there is a clear understanding that it will not be tolerated in any form. Bullying was a major issue at the time of the last inspection. Within the new resident group it is no longer a significant problem. Such incidents when they do occur are well documented and carefully monitored by the staff team. Young people spoken to indicate that staff work hard to ensure their safety and they are clear that bullying in any form is not acceptable to staff.

All staff spoken to have a good understanding of child protection procedures and a rolling programme of child protection training for all staff is in place. This ensures that staff have and maintain the skills, to protect young people from abuse.

All staff have received training in managing behaviour. Staff are consistent in their application of early interventions to try to prevent situations from escalating. The inspector observed good working relationships between young people and staff. Staff work positively with young people and they encourage, praise, reinforce and reward acceptable behaviour, actively supporting young people to develop socially acceptable behaviour. Unacceptable behaviour is addressed and discussed with young people. Young people may be asked to replace items they have damaged. Sanctions imposed in response to unacceptable behaviours are appropriately recorded. Such records are monitored by the senior managers, to identify trends in behaviours and to ensure staff consistency. However, the manner of recording the effectiveness of sanctions used does not reflect the level of discussion which takes place within the staff team.

Evidence and observation shows that the home has a responsible attitude towards health and safety matters. The home has risk assessments in place for all aspects of the safety of the premises and grounds. There are also risk assessments relating to young people's behaviours and planned activities they undertake. These risk assessments are regularly reviewed and updated, to ensure young people's continued safety. Visitors are welcomed into the home, once they have satisfied staff of their identity and the purpose of their visit and when they have signed the visitors book. All fire drills, fire alarm tests and fire safety equipment checks are up to date. All gas and electrical appliances receive an annual check. A health and safety issue was identified during the course of the inspection in a bedroom not currently occupied. A solution to the problem was immediately proposed by the staff on duty. Staff confirmed that action would be taken to address the issue prior to the young person returning to the home. These actions show that there is a commitment to ensuring young people live in a safe and secure environment.

The recruitment system in the home is robust and maintains good levels of safety for young people. This includes Criminal Records Bureau checks at enhanced level, proof of identity and references prior to employment. The Registered Manager is fully involved in the recruitment process so that the right candidate is selected according to the home's Statement of Purpose and the needs of 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/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
26	ensure that all parts of the home to which children have access are so far as reasonably practicable free from hazards to their safety. (Regulation 23a)	07/01/2011