

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Dennis Bradley
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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 children's home is one of several provided by a county council. The home is a detached house and is on a housing estate in the suburbs of a city. Ofsted registered the home to provide care and accommodation for up to five young people, aged between 12 and 17 years, whose main need for being looked after is due to emotional or behavioural difficulties.

The ground floor has a lounge, a dining room, an activities room with a computer and a separate kitchen. There is also a staff sleep-in room and another bedroom. The first floor is made up of a second sleep-in room and other bedrooms and bathroom facilities. There is an enclosed garden at the rear of the property.

At the time of the inspection, five young people were living in the children's home.

Summary

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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 relating to the 'Every Child Matters' outcome of staying safe. The inspection also assessed whether the registered persons have met the requirements and recommendations made at the previous inspection. The young people currently living at the home were present for part of the inspection.

As this was an interim inspection, not all of the key national minimum standards were assessed. Consequently there was not enough evidence to assess or amend the overall quality rating, or the outcome judgements for being healthy, enjoying and achieving, positive contribution, economic wellbeing and organisation. The overall quality rating continues to be satisfactory.

There is evidence that young people enjoy sound relationships with staff. Staff are good at managing behaviour positively and they try hard to protect young people from bullying. The home provides a secure, safe setting for the young people and staff make sure their welfare is promoted. However, an area for improvement is that staff do not always keep an appropriate record of complaints received by the home.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last inspection, the registered person was asked to ensure that: suitable arrangements have been made for all staff to receive appropriate training; the arrangements for monitoring the quality of care provided in the home are effective; young people's health care plans cover all the recommended issues; the

home's policy on countering bullying is fully implemented; the home is maintained in a good state of decorative repair, and appropriate records are kept of the use of sanctions and physical intervention. The registered person has taken action to address the above requirements and recommendations and this should help protect and promote the welfare of the young people.

The registered person was also asked to ensure that an appropriate record is made and kept of any complaint. This recommendation has not been met and will be repeated.

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 good at promoting young people's privacy and the young people all have their own bedrooms to which they have appropriate access. Doors to the bathrooms and toilets have suitable locks. Staff ensure information about young people is handled confidentially and stored securely. They only carry out searches of young people's possessions when there are appropriate reasons to do this.

There are clear procedures for managing complaints appropriately and ensuring young people are listened to. Staff make sure the young people are aware of who they can go to if they have any complaints. However, staff do not always keep satisfactory records of complaints received by the home. This makes it more difficult to check the operation of the complaints procedure and whether the home took appropriate action to address each complaint or concern.

The home has appropriate procedures for safeguarding young people from abuse and promoting their welfare. There are suitable arrangements for making sure that staff receive child protection training. This helps staff protect young people from abuse and ensure they respond appropriately to any allegation or suspicion of abuse.

Staff try hard to protect young people from bullying. They have completed appropriate bullying risk assessments and the home has a clear anti-bullying policy. Staff now keep suitable records of incidents involving bullying behaviour. These records demonstrate that staff follow the home's policy in practice and that they have responded effectively to incidents of bullying.

Staff take appropriate action when young people go missing or are absent from the home without permission. There are suitable policies and procedures to help make sure this happens. It is good that, as well as reporting young people who are missing to the relevant agencies and people, staff actively search for the young people to try

to keep them safe. The Registered Manager actively monitors all such incidents.

Staff are good at encouraging and supporting the young people to develop and maintain socially acceptable behaviour. Staff have all had training in positive behaviour management and how to deal with unacceptable behaviour by focusing on any harmful consequences and how to repair them. It is evident that they use this training in their day-to-day practice. Staff use physical restraint on young people very sparingly but on one occasion they did not keep an appropriate record of the incident. The Registered Manager said they are taking action to make sure a suitable record is completed. When staff use sanctions they are relevant and reasonable. Staff make sure they respond positively to acceptable behaviour by providing appropriate incentives and rewards.

There are good arrangements for keeping young people and adults safe from the risk of fire and other potential hazards. For example, staff carry out a range of risk assessments, including individual risk assessments for each young person. They regularly review and update these where necessary. Staff also carry out regular checks of equipment such as fire alarms and fire doors and there are appropriate arrangements for making sure an engineer carries out regular maintenance checks of alarms and fire fighting equipment. Staff and young people take part in regular fire drills and there are suitable arrangements to make sure staff take part in regular fire awareness training.

The council takes appropriate action to help make sure the home only employs suitable people. It carries out a range of checks on new staff before they start working at the home. There are suitable arrangements for monitoring and managing visitors to the home. These help ensure they do not have inappropriate access to 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?

Recommendations

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

- ensure that a written record is made and kept of any complaint to include: the person making the complaint, date of the complaint, the nature of the complaint, the action taken and the outcome. (nms 16.3)