

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	9 March 2010
Inspector	Deborah White
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	20 October 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

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 with satellite television, 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 purpose of this unannounced interim inspection was to look at the actions and recommendations from the last inspection and the staying safe outcome.

The home has improved in a number of areas since the last inspection to promote positive outcomes for children. How staff record events is much better and allows for the registered person and Ofsted to monitor the home's performance.

Work is being undertaken to consider what websites children can access on the computer. Children at the home feel very strongly about this and it is good that the providers have responded to the children's wishes that were made known at the last inspection.

Children are very positive about living at the home. They are complimentary about staff and feel they receive good care. Children feel that staff genuinely care about them.

Children are not adequately protected from bullying in the home. Measures are in place but these are not fully effective.

Healthcare plans do not reflect children's known needs and the Registered Manager has not attained an appropriate management qualification.

The Statement of Purpose does not fully reflect the service and risk assessments do not always record possible hazards to children.

There are two actions and four recommendations arising from this visit.

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 registered person was required to improve how complaints are recorded. The recording has improved to detail complaints, and compliments, and the complaint's log shows what actions have been taken.

An action for the Registered Manager to attain an appropriate management qualification is not met. This action will be re-issued in this report.

Recommendations to improve recording are met. Medication charts and the visitors' book are completed in full. Staff write their full names in the documentation for sanctions and the children going missing log shows safeguards are in place.

Children talked in detail about their feelings regarding a previous recommendation to consider allowing children computer access to social networking sites. Children are aware the providers are actively reviewing internet safety, specifically around these sites, and are happy the matter is being looked into.

Recommendations to improve healthcare plans and the Statement of Purpose are not met. Healthcare plans do not adequately reflect children's needs and the statement does not include all the elements of Schedule 1.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's healthcare plans do not adequately reflect their assessed needs to ensure individual child-centred interventions are in place for day-to-day arrangements.

Tasks are recorded in the needs section of the plan and where significant incidents are recorded in other documents, these are not linked to the healthcare plans. Referrals are not always made to the appropriate healthcare professionals to ensure children receive holistic care.

Individual medication charts show why non-prescription medicines are given to children. This enables the registered person to monitor if and when a child, who is complaining of mild to moderate pain, should have a doctor's appointment.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's privacy is respected. Children have access to a private telephone and receive top-up vouchers for their personal mobile telephones. Children confirm staff knock when entering their bedrooms and staff are aware of gender issues when working with children of the opposite sex.

There are procedures in place for room searches but children do not always sign the log to signal they are aware of, and are happy, that staff have entered their bedroom in their absence. However, records do show the reasons for room searches are appropriate and children know under what circumstances staff may look through their private possessions.

Children know how to complain and feel they are listened to. A child said 'I can talk to any of the staff here, if we are not happy they will listen to you.' Good procedures and regular staff training safeguards children's welfare and agreed protocols with local police ensure where children are missing they are looked for.

Children are not always protected from bullying in the home. Measures are in place but records show these are not always effective. A child said 'Staff tell us about bullying and they are around to stop bullying but it still goes on sometimes.'

Behaviour is managed positively. Children know the home's expectations and know what sanctions can be used. Restorative justice techniques enable children to understand the consequences of negative behaviour and rewards are used to promote positive outcomes. A child said 'They treat you all right here.'

Risk assessments include positive steps to keep children safe. Known risks are included and where additional observation and supervision is needed; this is recorded. There are however occasions where possible risk factors are not included to alert staff where children may be at risk from self-harming behaviour.

The home's visitor's policy protects children from potential abusers. All unknown adults have their identification verified and all callers sign the visitors' book so staff can monitor who comes into the house.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

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 Statement of Purpose does not fully reflect the services offered by the home. Some important information is missing, for example, the categories of registration are not included in the admission criteria.

The Registered Manager does not have an appropriate management qualification to ensure he has the necessary academic skills to meet the home's Statement of Purpose.

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 Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
34	ensure that a person shall not manage a children's home unless he is fit to do so by having the qualifications necessary for managing the home (Regulation 8 (1) (2) (b) (i))	31 May 2010
12	ensure the registered person shall promote and protect the health of the children accommodated in a children's home (Regulation 20 (1)).	30 April 2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the health care section of each young person's residential placement plans covers the recommended issues (NMS 12.2)
- ensure the Statement of Purpose includes all the elements listed in Schedule 1 (NMS 1)
- ensure children are protected from bullying (NMS 18)
- ensure risk assessments are carried out and recorded in writing and include all known risks to children (NMS 26.2).