

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Anthony Kyem
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Date of last inspection	09/11/2010
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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

The children's home is run by a local authority. It is registered to accommodate up to four young people aged from 11 to 17 years old, of either gender. The accommodation consists of four single bedrooms, two staff sleeping-in rooms and spacious communal areas for eating, studying and relaxing.

The home is situated in a residential area and is close to public transport routes. One of the main aims of the setting is to give young people the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Summary

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

This unannounced interim inspection was undertaken to assess the home's performance to promote young people's welfare and safety. The outcome areas for being healthy, enjoying and achieving, positive contribution, economic well-being and organisation were not inspected on this occasion. Actions and recommendations identified at a previous visit, were also re-assessed to monitor compliance with the standards and regulations.

The home provides young people with a satisfactory standard of care, where young people are safeguarded and protected from abuse. Issues to do with health and safety are managed well to ensure the safety of those resident within the home. Positive improvements have been made since the previous visit, with a noticeable reduction in the use of restraints.

The current approach towards behaviour management is not based on establishing positive relationships with young people. The use of sanctions is excessive, which means they are less likely to be effective in practice. Sanctions are not monitored consistently to evaluate their overall effectiveness. Whilst there is regular external monitoring of practice, visits are not conducted by someone entirely independent of the home to report on the home's conduct and performance.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection the home has managed to meet most, but not all of the previous actions and recommendations identified. There have been positive improvements made with some aspects of behaviour management. However, there are still aspects of current practice which are ineffective, excessive and controlling. Young people are often denied access to communal living areas and certain types of sanctions are used too often to enforce compliance. The types of sanctions used

could contribute towards young people misbehaving and lead towards other types of anti-social behaviour.

Young people's records, for example, placement plans, risk assessments and behaviour management plans have all been updated to reflect their needs as individuals. The home's fire risk assessment is currently being reviewed and all outstanding work has been completed. Sufficient staff are now trained to administer medication and the process for managing new admissions is carried out in a way which considers the needs of the individual, as well as those already resident within the home.

Whilst staff strive actively to improve the standards of the accommodation provided, the home is not currently maintained to a good standard of decorative repair. Young people spoken to thought the accommodation provided for them was of a poor standard. A recommendation was made previously in respect of this issue and is raised again.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people's privacy is promoted. Information the home keeps about young people is treated and stored confidentially. Young people are provided with their own bedrooms and they have access to their own private washing facilities to promote their privacy and dignity.

Unauthorised absences are managed efficiently. Where young people absent themselves without authority, staff follow agreed protocols to promote their safe return. Staff assess young people's behaviours and identified risks are recorded to enable staff to work safely.

Young people are able to raise their complaints and concerns knowing that these will be investigated appropriately. Records show that young people's complaints are taken and treated seriously. However, the recording of complaints does not routinely include the action taken or the outcome of the investigation.

Staff are trained to undertake their duties professionally, in accordance with their caring responsibilities. They receive relevant training so they know how to protect young people from abuse and deal with allegations or suspected abuse. They are trained and familiar with their roles and duties to safeguard.

Staff receive relevant training in the use of care and control so that they know how

to manage difficult behaviours safely. No irregularities with the restraint records inspected were identified. Several sanctions were identified to be excessive and unfair. The use of sanctions is not consistently monitored to identify any patterns or trends.

All forms of bullying are taken and treated seriously. Staff use their presence as a physical deterrent towards bullying and there are effective supervisory arrangements in place, to support and protect young people from bullying.

Health and safety within the home is taken seriously. There are regular fire evacuation drills and routine testing of the home's fire alarm. There is contractual inspection of the home's fire, gas and electrical appliances, which is conducted within the recommended timescales. The home's fire risk assessment is being reviewed; however, the completed assessment was not available.

Recruitment and selection procedures were not inspected on this occasion.

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
22	ensure that no measure of control is used to enforce compliance. Specifically, in relation to routinely denying or restricting young people access to communal living areas (Regulation 17.1)	31/03/2011
34	ensure robust monitoring of all care practices within the home to improve the quality of care. Specifically, in relation to improved recording and evaluation of Regulation 34 and independent monitoring visits by elected members (Regulations 33 and 34).	31/03/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure there is a revised fire risk assessment available (NMS 26.8)
- maintain a record of all complaints made by young people and the actions taken as a result (NMS 16.3)
- monitor the use of sanctions to identify any patterns or trends and review their overall effectiveness (NMS 22.11)
- ensure that any sanction used is based on establishing positive relationships with young people which are designed to help the child (NMS 22.3)
- complete the planned programme of refurbishment to ensure that the home is maintained in a good state of structural and decorative repair (NMS 24.3).