

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Fiona Parker
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Date of last inspection	05/05/2010
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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 children's home currently provides care and accommodation for up to six young people aged from 12 years to 17-years-old. Young people may need care and support with emotional and behavioural issues.

The property is detached. Young people have individual bedrooms and share bathroom and shower facilities. The home has a lounge, dining room, quiet lounge and two kitchens. There is a separate area with laundry facilities. There are gardens to the front and rear of the home and a patio at the rear. The home is situated in a large estate with good transport links into the town and to local leisure facilities.

Five young people currently live in the home, two young people contributed their views to this inspection.

Summary

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

This visit is an unannounced interim inspection to review progress on the previous action and recommendations arising from the key inspection. In addition, the majority of the key standards under the staying safe outcome are assessed.

The overall judgement for this home is satisfactory, a change from good, as a result of the shortfalls identified at this inspection. Some measures to address shortfalls have already taken place and are taken into consideration with forming the judgement at this inspection.

The Registered Manager is currently absent. Temporary management cover is provided by the two assistant managers with additional support from an external assistant manager.

Young people feel safe, listened to and fully supported by the staff team. The staff team show commitment, understanding and positive respect for young people. Staff work to promote young people's safety and increasing self-awareness of their own choices and responsibilities, in line with their age.

This inspection results in two actions and two recommendations. One action results from the lack of clarity on any agreements with police regarding young people's unauthorised absences from the home. A further action relates to ensuring all staff recognise and act upon safeguarding issues which impact upon young people outside of the home. One recommendation relates to ensuring four fire drills are undertaken

each year. The home is also asked to consider using a bound book for recording visitors, as pages in the current system could be mislaid and therefore not fully accountable.

Improvements since the last inspection

One action relating to fire evacuations is partially met. Young people and staff are aware of the evacuation procedures. Staff have undertaken training in fire safety and some evacuations have taken place. A recommendation is made regarding the frequency of fire drills.

Of the three recommendations, all are met. Young people now have access to the complaint information and the young people's guide in additional languages. A policy and recording system for room searches is now available which is fully understood by young people and staff. Good progress has been made on issues raised at the last inspection.

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 enjoy positive and supportive relationships with a caring and committed staff team. As a result young people feel safe, listened to and supported in all aspects of their daily lives. Young people say staff are 'easy to get on with and support you all the way' and 'everyone gets on, it's a nice place to live'.

Interventions such as searching rooms, sanctions and physical restraints are kept to the minimum while the focus is upon giving young people opportunities to openly discuss their feelings and problems. Young people say they can relax and feel comfortable in their home, their privacy is respected and, on the whole, they are treated fairly. Although no room searches have taken place, an updated policy and recording system is fully understood by staff.

Young people are confident staff will act to address any issues as they arise. Bullying is not a concern and as a result complaints are infrequent, comments such as 'never needed to make a complaint, no reason to' support this. Independent support such as a children's rights visitor, further promotes young people's opportunities to discuss any concerns they may have. Overall there is an open culture to listening and advising young people to keep safe and make positive choices for themselves.

Staff receive suitable training in safeguarding and interventions, which they employ in line with the age and developing responsibilities of the young people. Staff are

aware of the policies and procedures which support their role. However, not all staff are clear on wider safeguarding concerns which may impact upon young people outside of the home, therefore procedures may not be correctly followed. Measures have been taken to improve the operation of the home. There is also a lack of clarity about agreements with the police when young people may choose not to return to the home when agreed. Individual risk assessments do not detail agreements with police resulting in a lack of clarity for staff regarding when to use or not to use the formal reporting missing procedures. Although there is no current impact on young people this potentially leaves young people vulnerable, should changes in their patterns or whereabouts not be picked up. In all other respects, staff minimise risks for young people through following detailed risk assessments which clearly outline behaviours, triggers and strategies. Regular reviews ensure strategies and assessments remain current.

Physical health and safety receives good attention with regular checks and tests of all fire equipment and systems. Updating the fire risk assessment, regular staff training and practising fire evacuations maintains safety in the home. Young people know how to evacuate and receive written information to support safety expectations. Young people say they have recently practised a drill, however, the frequency of evacuations does not fully meet the standard.

Due to a relatively stable staff team and no new staff members, recruitment is not assessed at this visit. Visitors are appropriately checked and sign their times and reasons for visits. Young people's friends are welcome in the home. Young people and staff are clear on the visiting times and boundaries for friends to ensure everyone's needs are considered as part of living as a group.

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
17	follow procedure when a child is absent without premission. In particular, the individual arrangements agreed with the police are clear, form part of young people's plans and are fully understood by all staff (Regulation 16 (4) (b))	18/02/2011
17	ensure the prompt referral of any allegation or neglect affecting any child. In particular, refer all matters which impact upon young people's welfare and safety. (Regulation 16 ((2) (b)	18/02/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure at least four fire drills, including evacuation of staff and children from the building and fire drills at night, take place in a twelve month period and are recorded (26.8)
- consider using a bound book, as good practice, to record visits to the home. (NMS 27.11)