

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	18 January 2010
Inspector	Joseph Hobson
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	11 August 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

This children's home currently provides care and accommodation for up to five young people, males or females, aged from 15 years old up to 18 years old.

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. It is situated in a large estate with good transport links into the town and to local leisure facilities.

Summary

This unannounced inspection was undertaken in one day. The purpose of the visit was to check the improvements made by the home since the last inspection, and assess the key standards under the staying safe outcome.

The inspection found that the home has met the two actions and two recommendations made at the last inspection. Staff at the home are qualified and well trained to ensure that young people are protected from abuse. The home has a particular strength in helping young people develop socially acceptable behaviour. There is a good complaints procedure in place, however, this is not in a format accessible to young people with English as a second language. Young people's privacy and confidentiality is generally maintained and respected, but the home does not have a policy or system to record when young people's rooms are searched.

Young people reported that they like living at the home and are protected from bullying. Effective assessment and management of risks help ensure that young people's welfare is safeguarded. However, a potential environmental risk was identified to the home's management, which was immediately dealt with.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The home's management has taken action to ensure that the home is secure from unauthorised access. External doors are routinely kept locked. Each young person at the home is now in receipt of a placement plan which contains all of the matters required by regulation. This ensures the home has the required information in order to meet young people's assessed needs.

The home now exceeds the ratio of staff with National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People. Currently 90% of staff hold this or an equivalent qualification. Training has been provided to staff in order for them to meet the needs of young people with English as a second language accommodated in the home.

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.

Arrangements to ensure that information about young people is maintained securely and kept confidential is good. The home has a policy in respect of this and staff are careful not to be overheard when taking or making telephone calls. Young people reported that staff do not discuss their care needs in the presence of other young people or visitors to the home. Each young person has a key to their bedroom and bathrooms have suitable locks to ensure privacy. Young people are able to make and receive telephone calls in private.

The home has good procedures for dealing with complaints made by young people. Complaints information is openly displayed and includes a contact number for the regulator. However, the home caters for a number of young people seeking asylum and the information is not available in languages other than English. Copies of complaint forms are available without request together with telephone numbers for children's counselling charities. Young people considered that staff take their concerns seriously and deal with them effectively. There have been no complaints made since the last inspection.

The home's procedures for dealing with welfare concerns in relation to young people living at the home are good. All staff have been trained in the Local Safeguarding Children's Board procedures, which are available within the home. Staff demonstrated a very good understanding of these procedures and the action needed to keep young people protected from abuse.

Young people are effectively protected from bullying. The home has a zero tolerance approach to bullying and has a good anti-bullying policy in place. Young people reported that bullying is not an issue in the home and that they were confident that staff would take action to deal with their concerns. There is a system to record incidence of bullying which is monitored by the home's management. Staff are particularly vigilant for any bullying which is racially motivated and have received training in dealing with racial harassment.

There are satisfactory arrangements in place to deal with incidence when young people are absent without authority. The home maintains a record of places where young people have previously stayed when they have gone missing and this information is used for future reference. Young people have mobile phones and report that staff maintain regular contact to ensure that they are safe. They also report staff talk to them upon return about where they have been and the reason for their absence.

Arrangements to report all significant events relating to the protection of children to Ofsted, in accordance with regulation, are satisfactory. There have been no incidents since the last inspection which have required notification to Ofsted.

The home is excellent at helping young people develop socially acceptable behaviour. Staff receive training in dealing with incidence of challenging behaviour, which emphasises the use of strategies such as diffusion and distraction. Although they are well-trained in restraint techniques, the staff's emphasis on positive reinforcement has resulted in there being no incidence of restraint since 2007. Similarly, sanctioning of young people is seldom applied. Young people consider the sanctions, which are imposed are 'fair.' Other comments made by young people about the home included, 'It is very relaxed here. I prefer this home to my last home,' and 'I think this home is between good and excellent.'

The home has good systems in place to identify, assess and manage risks to young people's welfare. The quality of risk assessment and management plans is good. The home is well

maintained overall. However, a broken wall socket was observed, which posed a potential risk to young people's welfare. Immediate action was taken by the home to have the socket repaired. Staff are trained in fire safety, health and safety, food safety and first aid. Regular fire drills and evacuations are undertaken and the home has a programme for the maintenance of all fire and safety equipment.

Recruitment and vetting arrangements for employing staff are rigorous. The home's systems to vet and record all visitors to the home are satisfactory. These measures ensures that young people are not exposed to potential abuse by those employed or visiting the home.

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 meets the Care Standards Act 2000, The Childrens Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
26	ensure that all environmental risks posed to young people's welfare are eliminated in particular all electric sockets are in safe working order	19 January 2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure the home's complaints procedure is available in formats accessible to young people who have English as a second language (NMS 16.3)
- improve the home's system for when room searches have been conducted, particularly develop a policy and a system to record when searches to bedrooms are made (NMS 9.8)