

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Malcolm Stannard
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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 is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to six young people aged between 12 and 17 years.

The house is detached and is situated in a residential area on the outskirts of a town. It is within easy reach of schools, shopping and leisure facilities. There are two communal lounges, a dining room and kitchen on the ground floor. Young people have individual bedrooms and share bathrooms. There are separate staff bedrooms and bathroom facilities. The house has an enclosed garden to the rear and a smaller garden to the front.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

This was an unannounced, interim inspection to monitor progress since the last inspection. The recommendation made at that time and all of the key standards in the staying safe outcome were looked at during this visit.

A particular strength of the home is the support given to young people by staff to ensure their behaviour is appropriate. Staff spend a lot of time engaging with young people and encouraging them to show investment in the home. A recent unsettled period in the home was dealt with appropriately with staff preferring to engage with and offer support to young people rather than resorting to physical intervention.

The content of some of the recording in the daily log remains an area for development.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection in November 2010, one recommendation was made, this has not been fully addressed.

Management at the home were asked to ensure that the daily log does not contain additional or confidential information which should be recorded elsewhere. There has been an improvement in the content of the recording in the daily log and all staff are currently undertaking recording training. However, on occasions the entries made continue to be duplication of information in relation to young people, which has also been recorded elsewhere. Some of the information recorded is confidential and should not appear in a general daily log. The recommendation is 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 outstanding.

The privacy and dignity of young people at the home continues to be respected fully. All bedrooms and toilets are fitted with locks and young people are able to hold their own key for their rooms. Any confidential information is held very securely by the use of electronic passwords and written information is stored in lockable filing cabinets in a locked office area.

A comprehensive complaints procedure is available which is understood by the young people. They are able to access this independently and can make complaints directly to the local authority if they so wish. Many issues, which young people raise in the home, are dealt with informally by staff ensuring a quick response to young people. A careful record is made of any instance where an issue has been resolved informally, which is very good practice. An independent advocate visits the home and holds a formal meeting with all young people. The advocate can also be contacted by telephone if a young person has a concern they wish to discuss. The structure in place ensures that young people can be confident in the raising of issues if they are unhappy with any aspect of their care.

The child protection system in operation at the home ensures that young people's welfare is extremely well protected. There are formal procedures which are known by all staff and carefully followed should any allegation be made. All staff are well trained in safeguarding practice and procedure. Local children's services social work teams are consulted for advice should any concerns be noted by staff. All young people have an individual bullying risk assessment carried out and are protected effectively by prompt staff action should any instance of bullying be suspected.

The protection of young people who are absent from the home without authority is exceptional. Agreed protocols are in place with the police and risk assessments which detail specific dangers for each young person are available. Staff at the home have good local knowledge and are able to call on this to make enquiries as to the whereabouts of a young person should they not return to the home as expected.

Notifications following any significant event are made promptly to the appropriate bodies and agencies. A detailed record is held showing when and to whom notification has been made.

Young people receive encouragement from staff to display appropriate and positive behaviour. An incentive scheme, which offers rewards for attainment in all aspects of the young person's life, is also in place. Individual behaviour management plans are

completed for all young people and these detail the agreed strategies to be used to address any negative behaviour. Recently some behaviour shown by some of the young people in the home has created disruption and some damage to the fabric of the home. Staff managed this period very well and continued to interact positively with young people, taking time to discuss all aspects of behaviour with them. Physical intervention is used infrequently in the home and indeed this has continued to be the case during a difficult period. Staff have used appropriate professional relationships with young people to address any negative behaviour. There is minimal use of sanctions and where possible reparation will be undertaken with young people as an alternative. All behaviour management records are completed fully and undergo rigorous internal and external auditing.

Robust recruitment procedures are in place which relate to the vetting of new staff. No recruitment records were viewed on this visit due to no new staff having been appointed since the last inspection. Any visitors to the home or tradesmen are asked to provide identification and are accompanied by staff while in the home. These procedures ensure that young people are not exposed to potential risk from unvetted adults.

The welfare of all at the home is protected very well by the health and safety practice in operation. Robust risk assessments are in place for all areas of the building, servicing is carried out on gas and fire detection and prevention equipment and evacuation drills are held regularly.

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 the daily log does not contain additional or confidential information which should be recorded elsewhere. (NMS 35)