

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC035220
Inspection date	20 May 2009
Inspector	Deborah White
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	22 December 2008
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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 provides care and accommodation for up to three children, of either sex, aged 14 years to 17 years who are preparing to leave care.

The house is detached with an enclosed garden to the rear. The ground floor is made up of a lounge with satellite television, a dining room with a computer and a kitchen. The first floor has bedrooms, the staff office and a bathroom. Each young person has their own bedroom.

There were three children accommodated at the time of this visit and one child briefly talked to the inspector about how it is to live at the home.

Summary

The purpose of this unannounced random inspection was to look at the action and recommendations from the last inspection and to review outcomes in staying safe.

Outcomes in being healthy, enjoying and achieving, positive contribution and organisation were not looked at. These outcomes will be inspected at the next key visit.

Outcomes in staying safe are good and the overall quality rating continues to be good.

The home is good at keeping children safe and managing behaviour positively, and relationships between children and staff are purposeful and based on mutual respect. Children's privacy is respected and their rights are promoted by being able to voice any worries, or complaints, they may have.

Some of the management of children's risky behaviour is unsatisfactory as there are not always adequate measures in place to reduce, or minimise, known risks. The home needs to ensure all previous actions, and recommendations, are met so that overall standards for children are improved upon between inspections.

There are two actions arising from this visit, one of which is outstanding from the last inspection, and four recommendations.

The overall quality rating is good.

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 placement plans are written to fully reflect a child's assessed needs, the objectives of the placement and how these will be met on a day-to-day basis. The plans have improved since the last inspection, but still do not adequately show how individual children's needs will be met. Some problems that are known are not recorded in the plans and not all day-to-day arrangements are detailed, and child-focused, so that children know what to expect from staff.

Recommendations that have been met are the home's statement of purpose now includes the correct age range of the children it proposes to look after and the registered person has begun to ascertain views of parents about the operation of the home.

Recommendations that have not been met are that some children, who are preparing to move into independent living, do not have a pathway plan to ensure they make a smooth transition into adulthood and individual healthcare plans do not fully include all children's assessed and known healthcare needs.

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.

Children's privacy is respected. Each child has their own bedroom that they can secure, and staff are mindful not to go into children's bedrooms without permission, unless there is a need to do a room search. When room searches are carried out, where possible, children are present and written records are kept so any searches can be monitored by the registered person. There is a telephone to make and receive calls in private and staff are aware of confidentiality.

Children know how to complain and feel comfortable talking to staff if they are worried or unhappy. There is good information available to inform children, and staff have had training to help them manage complaints effectively. Children who go missing are protected by good procedures and staff agreeing protocols with local police to look for vulnerable children.

There is no bullying in the home and children know what to do if they feel threatened. Staff know to be vigilant to counter bullying but the home's risk assessment does not fully meet the National Minimum Standards (NMS). Children's welfare is safeguarded and where concerns have been raised these have been reported to the appropriate agencies, and good records are kept of all child protection referrals.

Staff are seen to have very positive relationships with children. Behaviour is managed well in relation to the children's age and understanding, and children feel they are treated fairly.

Health and safety risks are managed well. The home undertakes regular environmental risk assessments and action plans are in place where hazards are identified. Staff receive regular training and the home is supported by the local authority health and safety department.

Individual risk assessments for children do not always fully reflect known risks and potential hazards to children. Where risks are identified not all risk management strategies are specific and individualised to ensure children know how they will be kept safe from harm. The home's lone working risk assessment is also inadequate. Where incidents have occurred that may put children, staff and visitors at risk these are not reflected in the assessment.

Visitors to the home are vetted to protect children from potential abusers. All unknown visitors have their identification checked and sign the visitors book. Any suspicious visitors to the home are challenged by staff, and children are advised on how to stay safe.

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

Standard	Action	Due date
26	ensure that unnecessary risks to the health and safety of children accommodated in the home are identified and so far as possible eliminated (Regulation 23 (c))	30 June 2009
2	prepare in consultation with a child's placing authority a placement plan for the child setting out in particular the elements listed in this regulation (Regulation 12 (1) (a) (b)).	30 June 2009

Recommendations

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

- ensure each child has a clear written healthcare plan within their placement plan that covers all the elements listed in this standard (NMS 12.2)
- carry out recorded risk assessments of the times, places and circumstances in which the risk of bullying is greatest, and take action to reduce or counteract the risk of bullying (NMS 18.5)
- ensure that where only one member of staff is on duty a risk assessment has been carried out in writing that identifies any risks to children, staff and visitors (NMS 30.5)
- ensure there is a comprehensive plan for young people preparing to leave care (NMS 6.1).