

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Liz Driver
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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 is a registered children's home for up to seven young people between the ages of 12 and 17 years. The home is owned by a local city council. It is a purpose built, two-storey building that opened in August 2001. The accommodation is spacious, well-maintained and provides appropriate accommodation for the young people living there. The home is located in its own grounds with parking at the front and an enclosed garden at the back. The home is in a busy residential area and there is easy access by public transport to the city.

Six young people live at the home of whom three were present during the inspection and spoke with the inspector.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This unannounced interim inspection looked at the progress the setting has made with the requirements and recommendations made at the last inspection.

Requirements related to placement plans, recommendations made by the fire and rescue service, the setting's Statement of Purpose and the use of the emergency bed. The provision has taken appropriate action to resolve these requirements.

Recommendations related to parental permission, staff supervision, leaving care plans and the regulatory body, Ofsted. All four recommendations have been addressed.

Being Healthy, Enjoying and Achieving, Positive Contribution, Economic Wellbeing and Organisation were not looked at during this inspection. Staying Safe was looked at.

The setting continues to ensure young people are safeguarded as a result of good policies and procedures, good standard staff training and competent staff practices. Behaviour management is sound with staff trained to carry out physical interventions although not all records show the duration of any carried out. Health and safety is robust with regular checks carried out. The home's fire risk assessment was not readily available on site for staff to access or for inspection purposes.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the registered person was asked to ensure all young people had a written placement plan, undertaken in consultation with the child's placing authority in place, to make sure all outstanding recommendations resulting from the last fire and rescue service report were actioned, and to ensure the settings Statement of Purpose reflected the correct use of the emergency bed in operation. Placement plans have been discussed at senior management level and

documentation provided at the point of admission is discussed on a case by case basis. The registered manager continues to communicate with placement officers to ensure all information is gained. Outstanding recommendations from the last fire service report have now been addressed. The setting's current Statement of Purpose is up-to-date but due further amendment in the coming months as a result of the restructuring of all residential children's services currently under way in this local authority.

Four recommendations were also made around obtaining written parental permission for the administration of first aid and non prescribed medicines, staff receive regular supervision, formal leaving care plans to be in place within the timescales stated in the homes policy and the correct regulatory body is referred to in regulation 33 reports. All four recommendations have been addressed.

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.

Young people's privacy is respected including staff seeking permission by knocking before entering their rooms. Staff discuss confidential information in private and information relating to young people is stored in a locked facility. There is a policy for room searches and all young people are made aware of it on admission. Room searches are only undertaken if it is felt a young person is putting themselves at risk. Records show a number of room searches to have taken place. Shared facilities such as toilets and bathrooms all have appropriate locks.

The home's complaints procedure is accessible to young people. This enables young people to raise any complaints or concerns to a range of people independent to the home. Records show that complaints raised by young people are taken seriously and outcomes of investigations are provided to young people in writing. Staff ensure young people are aware of their rights and encourage them to take up formal complaints where they remain unhappy with the action taken. Young people say they would not hesitate to use the complaints procedure if they were not happy. The complaints procedure also covers the procedure if a complaint is made about the manager which involves an external person investigating rather than the manager himself.

The home operates with an experienced staff team who are aware of the need to provide a safe and caring environment for the young people. The local procedures for safeguarding children are thorough and training is provided to all staff. There are a number of policies directly related to child protection and the reporting of any issues relating to abuse. Young people at the home sometimes choose to put

themselves at risk by their behaviour. There are sufficient staff on duty at all times to support young people in a range of situations. Staff regularly engage in frank discussions with young people about their safety and protection. The staff do all they can to discourage risky behaviours and ensure the young people are aware of the dangers. Good communication with the local police helps protect young people from some of the risks they take.

The home operates a policy of zero tolerance toward bullying and all young people are made aware of it on admission. There is a good anti-bullying policy and risk assessments highlight any known problems. Staff actively discourage bullying and remove rewards from young people who are seen to behave in a bullying manner. Young people involved in bullying are supported in resolving their difficulties. Key-worker sessions and individual counselling are used to try and minimise this behaviour. The risk of bullying is taken into account when assessing placements.

Incidents relating to young people being absent from the home without authority are clearly documented. Records show that these incidents are communicated promptly with relevant professionals such as the police. Young people are encouraged to engage in dialogue with staff to speak about their safety and vulnerability when they fail to return home at the agreed times. The number of incidents of missing young people varies according to the young people's behaviours living at the home. This variation is due to the nature of the setting taking young people for short term periods awaiting more permanent placements, some of which are emergency placements and the behaviours as a result of this situation.

The approach towards behavioural management ensures that young people understand the consequences of unacceptable behaviours but to also celebrate good behaviours. All forms of de-escalation and physical intervention are recorded in the restraint book. The number of physical interventions is low however the duration of the intervention is not always recorded. Sanctions are imposed as a result of unacceptable behaviours and young people are given an opportunity to comment on these. Records show high numbers of sanctions given generally for smoking in places not permitted, swearing and returning late.

Fire safety checks are carried regularly by visiting contractors. An fire risk assessment has been undertaken but was not readily available for staff or for this inspection. Young people are involved in regular fire drills and the minimum number of drills are achieved in a twelve month period. In-house safety checks are carried out to ensure that the fire detection system is in good working order.

The council has a safe recruitment process managed centrally. This ensures correct checks are made prior to any staff member starting work with young people. The personnel records are held at the central office at a city location and were visited at the last inspection but not at this one.

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 the duration of all physical interventions are recorded. (Regulation 17 (4)(d))	19/02/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure the fire risk assessment is in place and easily accessible for staff and also readily available for inspection purposes. (NMS 26)