

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	4 December 2009
Inspector	Deborah White
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	22 June 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 provides care and accommodation for up to three children, of either sex, aged 12 to 17 years old.

The home is made up of two floors with the ground floor having a toilet and shower room, a lounge with a television, a dining room with a computer and a kitchen.

The first floor includes bedrooms, a staff office and a bathroom. There is an enclosed back garden equipped with outdoor furniture and a barbeque.

There were three children present during this inspection.

Summary

The purpose of this unannounced full inspection was to look at the key national minimum standards and the actions and recommendations from the last visit.

All outcomes for children were looked at. Outcomes for enjoying and achieving; positive contribution and economic wellbeing are good and outcomes for being healthy; staying safe and organisation are satisfactory.

Children feel they are supported and consulted about important decisions in their lives. Meals are healthy and mealtimes are social occasions. Education is promoted and children leaving care have their needs fully assessed. Children feel they can talk to staff and relationships are positive. Staffing levels are adequate and monitoring systems promote positive outcomes for children.

Child protection records are incomplete and the registered person has not notified Ofsted of significant events. Complaint's records are not always checked by the Regulation 33 visitor and healthcare plans do not fully include children's known needs. Placement plans are missing important information and records for sanctions do not show the effectiveness of measures taken.

Consent forms do not fully explain what parents are consenting too and children who go missing are not always seen by a person independent of the home.

There are four actions and eight recommendations arising from this inspection.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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 ensure children have access to a telephone. A separate telephone has been installed so children can make and receive calls in private.

An action to improve how restraints are recorded is met and an increase in staffing numbers ensures there is adequate staffing to meet the needs of children.

Risk assessments are improved to reduce risks to children and regular monitoring ensures the registered person checks children are safe and happy.

An action to ensure the home has adequate records of all staff working there is not met.

A recommendation to improve children's privacy is met in part. Children respect each others personal space but the home's policy guidance on privacy does not fully meet the national minimum standards.

Complaints management now ensures children feel able to complain and countering bullying measures ensure children feel safe.

Recommendations to ensure the staffing policy is in the Statement of Purpose and to improve staffing adequacy are met. However, a recommendation to ensure all staff have regular formal supervision is not met.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy with the meals provided and the kitchen is very well stocked with fresh produce. Children are asked their likes and dislikes and meals are planned in line with children's wishes. There are ample snacks and drinks available including fresh fruit. Meals are social occasions and children can help with the shopping and cooking if they wish.

Children's health needs are met. Each child is registered with a local doctor, dentist and optician and supported to attend routine appointments. Where children have complex healthcare needs referrals are made to the appropriate professionals.

Healthcare plans do not fully reflect all known needs and not all recorded day-to-day arrangements fully show how these needs will be met.

There is parental consent in place for the administration of first aid and household medicines but the household medicines section of the consent form does not fully show why some medications may be given to children. For example there are 14 medicines listed but only one has recorded that it may be administered for mild to moderate pain.

All staff are trained in administering first aid.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's privacy is respected and staff know not to enter a child's bedroom without their permission. Where room searches are carried out children are informed and records are signed by them. Children have access to a telephone where they can make and receive private calls.

Children know how to complain and how to access advocacy services. Complaints are discussed in staff meetings and staff will support any child who may feel they wish to make a complaint. Records of complaints are kept but these are stored in a loose leaf file which increases the risk of records getting lost or being tampered with.

Countering bullying measures have reduced the number of bullying incidents since the last inspection. There is information to inform staff about what constitutes bullying and the countering bullying risk assessment is regularly reviewed.

There are procedures in place to safeguard children and staff receive regular child protection training. Children feel safe and secure living at the home and staff help children identify and avoid risky situations. Records are kept of child protection referrals but some of the records are incomplete. The registered person has not always notified Ofsted where a child protection investigation has been instigated or resolved.

Staff know to look for children who go missing and where a child is particularly vulnerable this is reflected in their risk assessment. Staff have good relationships with local police and children know they will be reported as missing if they do not return home on time. Records are kept so the registered person can monitor any periods of absence but not all children see a person independent of the home when they return.

Children's behaviour is managed positively. There are reward systems in place to help children learn how to act in a socially acceptable way. Children know what sanctions can be used if they misbehave and placing authorities are informed about the home's behaviour management policy. Staff receive training in safe handling and know to only use restraint as a last resort. Records are kept of all restraints and these are monitored by the registered person. Records of sanctions are also kept but not all the required details are included. Not all entries show the effectiveness of the measures and some times and dates of events are missing.

Children live in a home that is safe and secure. Health and safety audits are undertaken and all major appliances are serviced and maintained. Generic safety risk assessments are regularly reviewed and fire safety measures are in place.

Careful selection and vetting of staff prevents children being exposed to potential abusers. Good recruitment procedures are in place and safety checks are carried out on all new employees.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are given individual support in line with their needs and wishes. Children feel supported and say they can talk to staff. Where additional support is needed external specialist services are involved and where children are not being treated equally staff promote their rights.

All children are in education and the home supports placements so that children can achieve. Communication between the home and schools is good and staff attend meetings and parent evenings. There are facilities for home study and educational activities are promoted. Where children are not in school there are programs in place to usefully engage them.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's placement plans have the objectives of each placement recorded so children and staff know why children are living at the home. For older children, placement plans are cross referenced with pathway plans but not all outcomes for promoting independent living are fully reflected.

Daily records show how children are progressing but there is no regular evaluation of each plan to show the effectiveness of placements. Children's wishes are taken into account and parents are consulted about their wishes and feelings.

Children are happy with contact arrangements and staff support and facilitate visits that need to be supervised. Feedback from visits is recorded and monitored and staff liaise regularly with social workers. Contact arrangements are agreed at placement reviews but are not always included in placement plans.

Children are made welcome when they come to live at the home. They can bring personal items and decorate their bedroom in colours that they like. The children's guide explains the home's expectations and staff talk to children about how it is to live at the home.

Children are consulted about their care and the operation of the home. Key-worker sessions are held regularly and children's meetings encourage children to talk about their feelings.

Monthly summaries about children are sent to parents and placing social workers to keep them informed. Parents are asked their views about the home and are encouraged to feedback any thoughts or ideas they may have.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Pathway plans show children's assessed needs and what actions are needed to enable them to move into independent living. Children have a young person's advisor and know where they will live when they leave the children's home.

There are some independent living programs in place and children are responsible for keeping their bedrooms clean and doing their personal laundry.

Children enjoy homely accommodation. The house is nicely decorated and children are able to choose what colour schemes or wallpaper are used. Children can personalise their bedrooms and there is space to have private visits. The house is in a good state of repair.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children, parents and placing social workers are given good information about how it is to live at the home. The Statement of Purpose includes the required information and the children's guide advises children how to complain and how to access an advocate.

Children receive the care they need from competent staff. Over 80% of care staff have achieved National Vocational Qualification level 3 in caring for children, and staff left in charge of the home have the required experience. Duty rotas include handover time so staff can ensure important information is shared between shifts.

Staffing levels are adequate to meet the needs of children. Where possible regular staff cover sickness and absence and children know which staff are sleeping in the house each night.

There are systems in place to monitor the performance of the home. Safeguarding records are signed by the Registered Manager and where non-conformities are identified actions are in place to improve outcomes for children.

The providers visit the home once a month to undertake a Regulation 33 visit. Written reports are completed and are available at the home. The visitor looks the home's records and talks to the children but on the report inspected the complaints information had not been checked.

Children have a permanent record of their history and development. All children's records are stored securely.

The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Children are happy living at the home and feel they can talk to staff about their worries. Education is promoted and children are consulted. Children enjoy homely accommodation and feel safe and secure.

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
27	maintain in the children's home the records specified in Schedule 4 and ensure they are kept up to date (Regulation 29 (1))	31 January 2010
17	ensure written records are kept of any allegations of abuse or neglect, and of the action taken in response (Regulation 16 (2) (d))	31 December 2009
20	notify without delay the persons indicated in Schedule 5 any events listed in the same schedule (Regulation 30 (1))	31 December 2009
32	ensure the person undertaking Regulation 33 visits inspects the records for complaints. (Regulation 33 (4) (b))	31 January 2010

Recommendations

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

- provide procedural guidance on privacy and confidentiality (NMS 9.2)
- ensure there is a written record kept in the home that details the time, date and length of each supervision held for staff (NMS 28.3)
- ensure each child has a clear written health plan within their placement plan (NMS 12.2)
- ensure the consent for non-prescription medicine fully explains what medicines can be given to children and why (NMS 13.4)

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- ensure when a child has gone missing, on their return to the home they are seen by their social worker or a person independent of the home (NMS 19.4)
 - ensure the records for sanctions include the effectiveness of sanctions (NMS 22.10)
 - ensure placement plans include all the assessed needs for children (NMS 2.1)
 - ensure contact arrangements are detailed in placement plans. (NMS 4.2)