

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Helen Walker
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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 local authority children's home provides medium to long-term placements for up to six young people of either gender from 13 to 17 years of age.

The home stands in its own grounds and is on a main road, with transport links to the local town and other towns and cities in the area. There is easy access to schools, shops and leisure facilities.

Six young people live in the home. Three young people talked to the inspector.

Summary

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

The purpose of this unannounced interim inspection is to follow up on actions and recommendations made at the last inspection and to assess key standards under the outcome area of staying safe. Outcome areas other than staying safe have not been considered therefore the overall judgement of the home remains satisfactory. The action and recommendations made at the last inspection are commented on in the improvement section of this report.

An effective acting manager is currently in post to oversee management of the home. A permanent manager has been appointed and an application for Registered Manager made to Ofsted.

Very good progress has been made to improve care given to young people. Young people are well looked after by staff who understand their individual needs. There are good safeguarding practices in place to protect young people from harm. Positive behaviour management strategies help to promote young people's well being.

Young people say they feel safe living in this home and that staff listen to them. Any disagreements in the home then the young people say staff resolve matters quickly and work with them to counter-bullying.

The home environment is warm and welcoming. The house is well maintained with systems in place to ensure health and safety checks are carried out for the benefit of the young people and those working and visiting the home.

As a result of this inspection no actions or recommendations have been made.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was asked to ensure disciplinary measures are properly considered for effectiveness. Disciplinary measures are now routinely monitored and considered by the acting manager for any necessary action to be taken. Better security measures in the home help to prevent thefts and allow young people's personal possessions to be kept safe.

An audit of staff recruitment and employment files shows information relating to staff is complete and up to date. The audit shows the provider carries out relevant checks and obtains required documents to establish staff suitability to work with young people.

Pathway plans to support young people who are of leaving care age are in place. The plans consider young people's future as well as the skills and advice they need as they move towards adulthood and independence.

In the absence of a Registered Manager, the acting manager has responsibility to manage the home. Improvements in care practice and paperwork in the home are evident. Medication records are kept up to date and regularly monitored. This helps to ensure the records are accurate and that any discrepancy is quickly addressed. The appointment of the acting manager supports the effective running of the home.

Redecoration in most parts of the house provide young people with a very pleasant and homely environment in which to live. Both bathrooms in the house have been thoroughly cleaned and repainted for the benefit of young people.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Confidentiality is managed effectively and personal records are securely stored. Young people have an individual bedroom which provides them with their own personal space. They have access to a telephone in the home and some have mobile phones. This allows them to make calls in private without reference to staff.

Staff are aware of the need to keep young people safe. They receive training and are familiar with child protection guidance. Young people say they feel safe living in the home and that they are well looked after by staff.

The complaints procedure is known to the young people and they have the opportunity to raise any issues they are unhappy with. Young people feel staff listen

to them. Any complaint is taken seriously and dealt with appropriately. Key worker sessions and house meetings give young people a forum to have their say.

Young people have contact with people they can talk to who are independent of the home, such as the advocacy service, members of the county council corporate parenting board, and health and education professionals.

Staff know the procedure to follow in the event of a young person missing from the home. This process helps to support young people's safe return to the home. Through negotiation and risk management the staff have enabled a reduction in the episodes of young people missing from the home.

Young people are aware that bullying is not tolerated. Young people say there are times of disagreements but staff deal with these matters quickly and they are soon resolved. Individual risk assessments are in place and the staff promote an anti-bullying environment to support and safeguard the young people.

Positive behaviour management strategies assist staff in their work with the young people. A multi-agency team of professionals also work with the staff and young people to consider appropriate ways to work with the young people. Staff receive support and training to assist them to deal properly with challenging behaviour. Staff talk positively about their work with the young people and the training they receive such as that of 'restorative justice'.

Health and safety monitoring and relevant safety checks of equipment in the home are routinely carried out to ensure this is safe to use. Young people and staff are aware of the fire evacuation procedures and know what to do in the event of a fire in the home.

Thorough recruitment and employment checks are carried out by the provider to verify staff are suitable to work with young people.

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.