

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Graham Robinson
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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 service provides activity-based intervention for young people who are experiencing a period of difficulty or crisis. Up to three individual placements for young people aged between 12 and 17 years of either gender are provided. Placements are usually short term and are activity based.

A planned yet flexible programme designed to meet a young person's individual needs and circumstances is agreed with placing authorities. Young people are cared for at various locations around the United Kingdom in accommodation that includes bunkhouses, youth hostels, campsites, canal boats and an ocean-going yacht.

Mobile units can be operative in a wide geographical area, although the service is managed centrally from the organisation's main office. Good communication systems allow for regular contact to be maintained and services in the field are visited regularly by the manager and other senior staff.

Summary

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

This short, unannounced interim inspection was used to follow up the recommendations made at the previous inspection. In addition, the key standards linked to staying safe have also been reviewed. No other areas were inspected on this occasion, so no change to the overall quality rating attained at the previous full inspection has been made.

Since the previous inspection, minimal changes to the staff team have taken place. However, the management, ethos, structure and working practices adopted by the service, remains as it was. Currently, there is one young person in placement.

The young person provided positive feedback regarding their experiences of the service, the manager and staff, confirming they have felt and been kept safe during this time. Since the previous inspection there have been few issues around behaviour management. Young people have experienced periods away from their home areas that has allowed them to reflect on past difficulties and to plan positively for the future.

No issues, concerns or complaints were raised by either young people or staff. One new action linked to the consistency of external monitoring and one new recommendation around the reviewing and updating of risk assessments have been made. Three recommendations made at the previous inspection have been carried over.

Improvements since the last inspection

The report from the previous inspection contains five recommendations. One has been fully addressed, three partially addressed, with one upgraded to an action.

This has led to an improvement in the number of staff who have received first aid training, which meets with minimum standards. With regard to the those recommendations partially addressed, some improvement has been achieved in the numbers of staff having received physical intervention training, as well as those who are undertaking, or about to commence appropriate National Vocational Qualification training. However, they remain below the expectations laid out in the minimum standards.

Some improvement in the frequency and consistency regarding the implementation of the formal staff supervision programme, has also taken place, although not with enough consistency to meet the targets set out in the standards.

The external monitoring of the service has not taken place consistently, within the required timescales, so the previous recommendation regarding this matter has been raised to an action.

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.

The safety and rights of young people are protected. The organisation, working practices, links with external agencies and agreed strategies to keep young people safe remain intact. The records detailing complaints, absences without authority, accidents, sanctions and physical interventions are well maintained and kept up to date. Individual risk assessments for young people are also up to date. However, some risk assessments linked to general health and safety issues have not been reviewed for some time.

Young people confirm they are provided with information about the complaints procedures and understand how to access them if necessary. There is a confidence that any concerns or issues they may have are resolved quickly by the manager and staff.

Behaviour management incidents have been rare since the previous inspection and this is reflected in the low number of entries in the records detailing absences without authority, sanctions and physical interventions. For example, there has been

only one sanction imposed and no incidents of physical intervention. Staff speak positively about building relationships with young people and working positively, rather than punitively with them. Young people echo this philosophy when discussing their own experiences of the service. Training for staff in physical intervention techniques is ongoing, although not all staff have yet received it.

Young people feel that staff are fair and supportive by encouraging any issues or incidents that arise to be talked through, rather than just impose sanctions. Bullying is not a concern to them as they are in single occupancy placements within the service.

Staff and young people speak well of each other and enjoy each others company. The relationships between them were observed as excellent, with young people and staff seen to be relaxed and at ease in each others company.

One new staff member has been recruited since the previous inspection, with another due to commence their duties next month. The systems to clear and recruit staff meet with regulatory requirement.

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
32	ensure the external monitoring of the service takes place consistently, within the required timescale. (Regulation 33)	28/02/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure that all staff are fully trained in physical intervention (NMS 22.8)
- ensure that risk assessments identifying risks and hazards are reviewed regularly and if necessary, updated (NMS 26.2)
- ensure that the formal supervision for all staff takes place consistently, within the recommended timescale (NMS 28.2)
- aim towards achieving a minimum ratio of 80% of all care staff having completed appropriate National Vocational Qualification or equivalent training. (NMS 29.5)