

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	21 January 2010
Inspector	Fiona Parker
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	14 August 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 setting provides up to six long-term placements for young people aged from 11 years old up to 16 years old. The accommodation consists of single bedrooms and spacious communal areas for eating, studying and relaxing. Further accommodation is provided in a bungalow situated in the large garden at the rear of the main house. This provides separate accommodation for one young person as part of the overall registration of six young people. The home is situated in a small coastal town. There is easy access to public transport, leisure facilities, health services and education.

The home aims to offer longer-term care and provide support for young people with emotional and behavioural needs.

Summary

This inspection was an unannounced interim inspection. The purpose of the inspection was to review progress on the three actions and four recommendations made at the last inspection. The key national minimum standards in staying safe were also assessed.

This inspection took place over four hours with contributions from one young person, three staff members, the manager and a visiting social worker. The manager was visiting the head office of the company therefore discussions with the manager took place over the telephone. As the manager was not able to be present this limited some access to files kept locked in his office. In addition the reviewed policies and procedures were not available as the manager was collecting them from the head office.

Young people feel safe and well cared for, they report good relationships with staff and each other. Robust arrangements are in place to safeguard young people, staff understand their responsibilities and a good level of care is provided.

The overall judgement of this inspection remains as good. Progress has been made on the previous actions and recommendations. This inspection resulted in one action in relation to regulation 33 visits and three recommendations relating to, recording the full context of physical intervention, ensuring every young person takes part in fire drills and ensuring risk assessments are easily accessible for reference.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The previous inspection resulted in three actions and four recommendations.

The three actions have been addressed. The practice of switching socket electrics off at night has stopped. Although this was to ensure young people settled to sleep at night without distractions there are now appropriate strategies in place to manage this. The lighting outside the bungalow is now repaired and working therefore any hazard from unlit areas is reduced. The manager has improved the format and the quality of internal monitoring therefore ensuring more robust management of day-to-day care arrangements in the home.

Three recommendations are fully addressed. Two carpets have been replaced and further improvements are underway such as decorating and maintaining areas generally. Improvements have been made to supervision levels, where one gap is noted this is due to holiday periods and not a regular pattern. Policies and procedures have been reviewed although they were in transition to the home at the time of this visit, therefore not seen.

The recommendation for 80% of the staff team qualified to national vocational qualification level 3 is in progress. In addition to the staff team, two further members of staff have almost completed this and new members are identified for this following induction. Arrangements for providing the qualification have also improved therefore this recommendation is not repeated this inspection but will be reviewed next visit to ensure progress is maintained.

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 feel safe, well cared for and report positive relationships with other young people and staff. Bullying is not of concern and there is confidence any issues will be quickly addressed. Staff demonstrate good understanding of individual young people and how to keep them safe. Young people report their privacy is respected and they enjoy their own space and individual time with staff. Staff understand that privacy is important and they ensure they keep personal information confidential and written information secure. In any circumstances where privacy may be compromised, such as room searches, staff involve young people and record all actions.

Policies and procedures have recently been reviewed and updated. Central records for absences, complaints, and sanctions show good practice is in place. Recording is clear and detailed and evidences standards are met. Restraints do not happen frequently, young people report they feel sanctions and any reason for restraint is fair. Records, although well recorded do not always explain the full context of situations, this is detrimental for the home as this can give a different impression of the reason for intervention. Full exploration with young people, staff and a visiting social worker found physical intervention practice is not of a concern therefore there is no impact upon young people.

Young people are protected from individual and physical risks through a range of appropriate risk assessments outlining their particular needs, strategies and agreed sanctions. Risk assessments are wide ranging and in place for each young person, however the current filing system does not support easy reference to these. The evidence from this visit does not support any impact upon young people's care. Swift action is taken with any potential risks within the community and good liaison is in place with local police. Fire risk assessments are updated annually and recommendations from the fire officer followed. Records show regular fire drills take place and these exceed the standard, however not all young people have taken part since living in the home. Although this was addressed on the day of this visit, this is a recommendation.

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 satisfactory.

Young people live in spacious accommodation. New carpets have improved the hall and lounge area and further improvements are underway to maintain the house. A recent leak in the 'chill out' room has put this out of action although a new carpet has been ordered this week. There is minimal impact on young people as the two young people accommodated have ample space in the home.

A bungalow situated separately in the large garden provides homely accommodation for one young person. This is decorated to a good standard.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Staff feel supported and they belong to a good team. They report good training opportunities and access to nationally recognised qualifications. Supervision levels have improved and are now frequent.

Improvement in management monitoring is in place. Reports in the home show all key areas of practice and the central records are regularly monitored and reported upon. Actions result from these and tasks are clearly delegated. Young people report very good relationships and they feel listened to. Local authority social workers report good communication and regular written updates detailing the care young people receive.

Independent visits are also undertaken monthly and the frequency of visits meets the standard. Although reports make clear recommendations there is no evidence that young people are consulted as part of these visits and the regulation 33 reports do not contain their views. Therefore it is not clear whether young people can actively contribute about the quality of their care during independent visits. This shortfall results in an action.

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
32	interview with their consent and in private, such of the children accommodated there, as appears necessary in order to form an opinion of the standard of care provided in the home. (Regulation 33 (4) (a))	28 February 2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure records of physical intervention are sufficiently detailed and outline the full context of situations (National Minimum Standards 22.9)
- ensure every young person takes part in fire drills, particularly following admission to the home (NMS 26.8)
- ensure risk assessments in files are prioritised and easily accessible for day-to-day reference. (NMS 26.2)