

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	22 July 2010
Inspector	Thomas Webber
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	15 December 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 home provides care and accommodation for up to four young people, male and female, aged 13 to 17 years at any one time who may have emotional or behavioural difficulties. The purpose and function of the home is to return young people to their parental home or to identified foster placements or a settled care environment.

The premises are situated on a large estate surrounded by similar style family homes. The home is a purpose-built property which is well resourced.

Summary

This unannounced interim inspection took place over one day. This forms part of the annual inspection programme to examine the standard of care and services provided to young people. The focus of the inspection was to review the actions and recommendations identified at the last inspection. The key

standards relating to staying safe were also evaluated. At the time of the inspection, four young people were accommodated.

This home continues to provide a satisfactory standard of care to young people which ensures that satisfactory to good outcomes are achieved for them. This is supported by comments made by young people, documentary evidence seen and observations made.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Two actions and five recommendations were identified at the last inspection. These have been complied with apart from the action relating to the recording of sanctions and the recommendation relating to staff supervision which remain outstanding.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The home continues to encourage young people to eat healthily. A satisfactory and varied menu is established which caters for young people's preferences as well as providing them with the opportunity to try different cultural meals. Individual records are also maintained which record meals offered, eaten and refused by young people. A selection of fresh fruit and juices are readily available to young people on a daily basis. Young people commented very positively about the quality and quantity of meals offered to them.

Young people live in a healthy environment where their health care needs are met and young people confirmed this. Young people access the various health care services such as doctors, dentists and opticians as well as receiving specialist input to meet their specific needs. Staff support and accompany young people to their health care appointments and suitable records are maintained of these visits.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff actively promote the rights of young people by ensuring that their privacy and dignity is respected. Young people's records are kept secure and staff understand the need to keep their information confidential as well as being clear about the limits of confidentiality.

Clear policies and procedures are established for dealing with complaints. Staff support young people to raise any issues of concern openly and ensure that the process of making a complaint is clearly understood by them. Young people feel confident in discussing any concerns with staff. The home has received one complaint since the last inspection which is still ongoing.

Young people live in a safe environment where their welfare is promoted and they are protected from abuse. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place in respect to child protection which comply with the Local Safeguarding Children's Board procedures. All staff have received safeguarding training and a clear system is established to ensure that staff receive regular ongoing refresher training in this area of practice.

An anti-bullying policy is established which is conveyed to the young people. Systems are established to challenge and deal with incidents of bullying which focuses on its effects and to seek a resolution. However, these are only effective if the young people engage in the process. A points system is also established to minimise incidents of bullying. Although all incidents are usually recorded, these do not provide clear evidence of the action taken and whether the incidents have been appropriately resolved.

A system is established for the reporting and recording of any event where a young person goes absent without consent. However, currently the recording is deficient and does not show all action taken by staff, the circumstances of the young person's return, any reason given by the young person for going missing and any action taken in the light of those reasons.

Routines and boundaries are established to assist young people to develop socially acceptable behaviour. Staff use encouragement, reinforcement and positive behaviour incentives and challenge any negative behaviour of young people. Sanctions and physical intervention are also used where necessary. However, there are still deficiencies in the recording of sanctions applied. Staff are trained in the use of physical intervention. Physical intervention plans together with individual behaviour management plans are established. However, these do not provide staff with clear guidance on how to effectively manage challenging behaviour.

The health and safety policy and practice guidelines within the home are robust to ensure that the staff and young people are appropriately safeguarded. Young people and staff regularly practise fire evacuation procedures and the various fire safety records are kept accurate and up to date.

Previous records show that the authority has established robust staff recruitment practices for the careful selection and vetting of all new staff to ensure the protection of young people. However, records for newly appointed staff since the last inspection were not readily available being held centrally by the authority. New staff do not commence employment in the home until all the relevant checks have been carried out.

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 satisfactory.

An up-to-date Statement of Purpose is established which describes the level of service provided to young people. Copies of this document are readily available on request to all interested parties. A young people's guide is also produced which provides young people with information they need to know about the home. A copy of this document is on display within the home.

Formal individual supervision is still not provided to all staff at the recommended intervals. As a result, young people are still not being looked after by a staff team who are themselves properly managed and supported in promoting their welfare.

Young people are looked after by a staff team who are competent and trained to meet their needs. An induction programme is provided to all new staff. Staff are supported to increase their knowledge and expertise by attending a range of training courses. The organisation are working proactively to achieve a fully qualified workforce. The minimum ratio of 80% of the staff team has now achieved in the National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in the Care of Children and Young People.

The home is committed to providing sufficient staff on duty to meet the individual and collective needs of young people. It provides a minimum of two members of care staff on duty during the day and three in the evenings. Two members of staff sleep in each night. The manager's hours are additional to these staffing levels. Young people are cared for by a stable staff team who have a variety of experience. Staff undertake a multi-purpose role in carrying out most aspects of care to young people.

Young people live in a caring and supportive environment where positive relationships exist between staff and young people. A friendly and relaxed atmosphere has been created where young people are able to freely express their views about any issues. Although, young people's comments about their experience at living at the home varied, they spoke positively about the care provided.

The home was without a Registered Manager from January 2009, although arrangements were in place to cover the management of the home. However the organisation has recently appointed a Registered Manager who is suitably experienced and qualified. The organisation is currently arranging for the manager to be registered with Ofsted.

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
22	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, restraint or discipline, a full written record is maintained with particular regard to sanctions. (Regulation 17(4))	9 August 2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the bullying log records all incidents of bullying and always shows the resolution and action taken to minimise incidents (NMS 18.5)
- ensure that detailed records are maintained when young people go absent without consent (NMS 19.6)
- ensure that effective physical intervention and individual behaviour management plans are established for young people (NMS 22.3)
- ensure that all staff receive one to one supervision from a senior member of staff each month. (NMS 28.2)