

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	26 January 2011
Inspector	Karen Forster/Angela Adams
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	22 July 2010
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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 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the *Inspections of children's homes – framework for inspection* (December 2010) and the evaluation schedule for children's homes.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service that exceeds minimum requirements

Satisfactory: a service that only meets minimum requirements

Inadequate: a service that does not meet minimum requirements

Service information

Brief description of the service

This home is maintained by a local authority and provides care and accommodation for up to four young people, aged 13 to 17 years, 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 situated within a short distance of a large city.

Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness of the children's home is judged to be good.

The home provides highly consistent and well planned care, which means that the outcomes for young people are good. Young people make good progress through their placement; and the young people and staff recognise and celebrate progress and achievement. All of the young people are complementary regarding their placement, and feel that the service helps them within all areas of their lives. The high level of qualified and motivated staff is an obvious strength within the home, as this competence positively informs the care of young people. Young people benefit from sound relationships with staff and feel that adults care about their welfare. Robust safeguarding practice promotes the safety of young people who feel safe within the home.

Areas for development include the review of the need for adaptations to the premises, such as closed circuit television and locked or key fob access doors. The home routinely collects feedback from young people regarding the quality of care, however, this feedback does not inform the home's quality assurance reporting system.

Areas for 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 Person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
31 (2001)	ensure that all parts of the children's home are equipped with what is reasonably necessary and adapted as necessary in order to meet the needs arising from the resident group of young people and in particular; the use of key fob door	31/03/2011

	locks, radiator covers and centrally locking bedroom doors (Regulation 31 (2)(f))	
22 (2001)	ensure that the use of closed circuit television surveillance within the home, is only provided where all the required conditions are met, including that such a measure is provided for in each young person's placement plan (Regulation 22 (a)(b)(c)(d))	28/02/2011
(2001)	ensure that the internal quality reporting system incorporates all collected information, including the feedback from young people, their parents and placing authorities. (Regulation 34 (3))	31/03/2011

*These requirements are subject to a statutory requirement notice.

Recommendations

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

- ensure that a designated young person's telephone is provided within the home, that young people can use without recourse to staff (NMS 24.11)
- ensure that the young people's guide refers to the use of a token reward system (NMS 1.3)
- ensure that appraisal records for staff include the level of performance achieved, targets for the coming year and the agreed training needs to be met within the following year. (NMS 28.7)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for children and young people are good.

Young people are developing their own identities, supported by their ready access to information about their heritage. The home facilitates this development, through consistent emotional support and advice. Young people enjoy a balanced diet and active lifestyles, which keeps them healthy. Young people access suitable health services, which could include appointments with their doctor or sexual health advisor. This means the group receive and follow personalised and age appropriate healthcare programmes.

Young people have good attendance at school or college, and make good use of their learning opportunities. These opportunities might include personal tutor sessions or work experience programmes. Young people make good progress within these educational programmes and their positive achievements are clearly captured

and recognised.

Individuals enjoy consistent opportunities to jointly plan for the group's activities and décor plans. Young people see the results of their ideas, which include their own choice of television or music systems, and kitchen décor. The young people are well informed and consulted over their own placement plans and receive information about prospective admissions to the home. This promotes a highly collaborative culture within the home, which gives young people a good degree of control over their living arrangements. Young people make good use of independent or accompanied access to community activities and resources. These opportunities include community youth groups, hairdressers or health and beauty activities.

Young people benefit from consistent and well facilitated contact with their families and significant people in their lives. Planned meetings are enjoyed by individuals and incoming telephone calls can be received in private. The level of personal outgoing telephone calls from the home is impeded by the lack of a designated young people's telephone. Young people can take the home's telephone for their personal use, but have to ask staff beforehand.

Young people make good use of well planned opportunities to practise and develop life skills, at their own personal pace. This means that individuals manage their money, use public transport and complete domestic tasks which help their plans for adult life. Those who are aged over sixteen are positively involved in further educational opportunities. This demonstrates the group's commitment to continuing education and preparation for employment.

Quality of care

The quality of care is good.

Equality and diversity is well promoted in the home. The service consistently identifies, and positively meets young people's individual needs relating to their cultural background and heritage. Consequently, young people are developing their own identities, that are personal and important to them. Care plans clearly reflect young people's identity needs and how the home will support them to develop a positive self-image.

Young people benefit from relationships with key workers who know young people well, and understand their strengths and care needs. Individuals feel that staff care about their welfare and help them in all areas of their lives. There are plentiful opportunities for young people to consult with their carers, as their staff spend the majority of their shifts supporting young people. Young people are helped to manage their own behaviour and use the de-escalation techniques that staff suggest, to good effect. Risk taking behaviour is sensitively assessed and young people are involved in suitable strategies to minimise the impact of these behaviours. This might include episodes where young people are missing from home.

The young people are confident in providing their views and suggestions for the

service. This is indicative of the collaborative nature of the group. Young people are motivated to reply to feedback requests, as they can see the results of their previous suggestions. This might include their choice of television in their room or their knowledge of possible new admissions to the group. The home takes good account of young people's complaints, and addresses these concerns consistently.

Young people's care plans clearly reflect their strengths and needs, and effectively address the placement objectives outlined by the placing social worker. The young people and staff group are very familiar with the placement's aims and work hard to achieve those ends. Very suitable, personalised health and education plans are implemented with young people consistently making good use of these programmes. This might include anger management or personal tutor sessions.

The arrangements for the management of medication are safe and effective, which means that young people receive their medication in line with their prescription.

While the home is well maintained and mainly domestic in style, there are certain additional features that do not clearly link to the needs of the resident group. The closed circuit television system and radiators are fitted with protective grills. There is no identified need for these measures in the young people's placement plans. The majority of first floor doors, including young people's bedrooms, are kept locked. Young people do not have keys to their bedrooms, and have to ask staff to gain access. The ground floor entrance and porch doors are fitted with staff key fob entry systems. There are risk assessments for staff access to keys, but no evidence of the same for young people's possession of a key to their own room. This means that young people are not clear why their keys are held by staff.

Children and young people are safe and feel safe

The service is good at keeping children and young people safe and feeling safe.

Young people confirm that they feel safe and protected within the home. They can openly talk to their carers over their worries and concerns, and feel that the adults listen well and care about their welfare. The home has clear and well understood risk management strategies in place, that recognise the personal vulnerabilities of young people and provide suitable strategies to manage any associated risks. The staff group is proficient at recognising and managing risk taking behaviour, and consistently implement the agreed strategies to reduce risks to young people.

The home has a clear missing from home procedure, that includes agreed protocols with the local police. These procedures provide for effective actions when young people go missing and include positive responses when young people return. The home has worked with young people to devise alternative strategies to manage feelings of frustration or confusion. These strategies are having some positive effect as incidences of young people missing from home are reducing.

There is a clear and robust policy regarding bullying in the home. Any incidents of bullying are swiftly addressed and proactive responses are in place to identify any

triggers. These strategies include open discussions within key worker sessions and larger group forums. Positive behaviour is well recognised and suitably rewarded. Young people enjoy meaningful monetary or token rewards for their positive behaviour. The young people's guide does not explain the token reward system. Reparation, where young people can make good or pay for any intentional damage to property is well used in the home. There is minimum use of physical intervention. Where restraint is used it is clearly recorded and all episodes are followed up by the manager. This means that young people can reflect on their presenting behaviour and consider alternative strategies to manage their feelings.

Staff are suitably vetted prior to employment, which means that young people are cared for by suitably cleared adults. Investigations into allegations or unexplained injuries are handled quickly and consistently to protect young people. The home maintains an open dialogue with young people, their social worker and the local safeguarding team. This means that all disclosures are suitably referred to statutory agencies to keep young people safe. Health and safety systems are well maintained, and keep the occupants and visitors safe. These systems include clear and well implemented fire risk management systems and regular safety checks on the home's power and heat supplies.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of the children's home are good.

The home has suitably addressed the one requirement and the recommendations raised at the last inspection. The restraint records are now centrally logged and include all of the details required by the regulations. Positive behaviour management strategies are now clearly recorded and are well known by the young people. The bullying and missing from home records now include a clear account of the incident and a full follow up by staff and those involved. Supervision programmes for staff are regularly provided and are of a high quality. They consistently include discussion of young people's care planning and review, team plans, support for staff and the identification of individual strengths and training needs.

Staff value training and the content of their development programmes matches the needs of the young people very well. Following training, staff put their newly acquired knowledge and skills to good use, when caring for young people. All of the care staff team are trained to National Vocational Qualification Level 3 in Caring for children or Young People or equivalent. This means that the competence of the whole staff team has been assessed against a national standard, which promotes positive care practice and good outcomes for young people.

The Statement of Purpose clearly outlines the service's aims and objectives, which are well known by staff and stakeholders and are addressed in practice. The leadership team self-assesses the home's progress in achieving the service's aims and objectives. Consequently senior staff have a clear understanding of the service's strengths and areas for development. Effective measures are taken to improve outcomes for young people, and identified areas for development are beginning to

be incorporated into improvement plans. The service's positive quality assurance systems help the home to focus on their continual improvement, and makes good use of some stakeholder feedback. However, the surveys for young people, used to capture young people's feedback about their care, do not inform the quality assurance reports. This means that some, but not all, available feedback information is being used to improve outcomes for young people.

Communication within the home, and between the setting and external stakeholders is sound. All significant events relating to the protection of young people, are consistently notified to the appropriate parties. Young people and placing social workers feel well informed, and are regularly updated over the progress of the placement.

Staff feel supported in their roles, through their consistent supervision programmes, regular staff meetings and team planning days. While, staff receive an annual appraisal, there is little crossover between one year's objectives and the checks on progress the following year. This means that completed and outstanding personal objectives for staff, are not clearly recognised or recorded. The staffing levels in the home are good and support young people well in their daily plans. Clerical and domestic staff support is well provided, which enables care staff to focus on supporting young people.

Young people's records are complete and reflect their individual history and their placement plans. This enables young people and key staff to use this information when required, which currently includes a programme of helpful life story work.