

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	30 March 2010
Inspector	Anne Bannister
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	18 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 is one of a number of residential homes, which are owned and managed by the county council. It is a six bed children's home, situated in a rural location on the outskirts of a town. It provides accommodation and care for young people of both genders, aged from 12 years old up to 17 years old. Access to all local amenities and the town centre is catered for by transport from the home and a driver is employed at key times of the day to achieve this. The home is a large, detached property with spacious grounds, including an extensively grassed area, which may be used by young people. Young people are all accommodated in single bedrooms and share all communal recreation areas and bathroom and toilet facilities.

Summary

This was an unannounced, interim inspection. It assessed the key national minimum standards associated with how young people are enabled to stay safe. The inspection also assessed whether the registered persons had met the two actions and two recommendations made at the previous inspection.

As this was an interim inspection, it did not assess all of the key national minimum standards. Consequently the overall outcome judgement made at the previous inspection remains in place. However, the outcome judgment for protecting young people from harm and keeping them safe has during this inspection been judged as outstanding.

Six young people were resident at the time of inspection. One was on home leave, others were engaged in activities outside of the home. The inspector had the opportunity to meet with two young people during the course of the inspection.

The Registered Manager and the care staff team are very good at promoting the safety of young people. The staff promote young people's need for privacy, they enable young people to raise concerns and they deal with such concerns effectively. The staff are fully aware of how to safeguard the welfare of young people and how to respond appropriately to any allegations, suspicions or evidence of abuse. When bullying does occur staff respond effectively to address it.

Staff are also consistent in the actions they take to promote positive behaviour. There is an ethos of focusing on positive rather than dwelling on negative behaviour. Nevertheless, there are appropriate consequences for any significant negative behaviour. Any sanctions are recorded appropriately and young people are encouraged to reflect on the behaviours which led to them being necessary.

There were no actions or recommendations made as result of this inspection.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Two actions and two recommendations were made following the previous key inspection. These have all been addressed by the Registered Manager.

One action and one recommendation related to the manner in which staff were recording sanctions, and in particular how they assessed whether sanctions were being effective in promoting positive changes in young people's behaviours. The Registered Manager has revised the format of the sanctions/ consequences log to ensure that these issues are now routinely assessed by staff completing the logs.

The other action and recommendation related to the quality monitoring systems in place to review practice within the home. Both have been addressed and are commented on in the organisation section of this report.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Overall, the arrangements to safeguard and promote the safety and welfare of young people are highly effective. The home's management team have established very detailed recording systems. Reporting systems and actions taken in response to significant incidents are well documented. There is good internal monitoring of all records and practice enabling a prompt response to any issues identified. Documentation viewed shows the home to be managed well, providing suitable physical safety and security for the young people who reside there.

Reporting of safeguarding incidents complies with local safeguarding procedures and the Ofsted protocol for reporting significant incidents. Management and staff always reflect on incidents to see if improvements to practice can be made. There is excellent liaison with other professionals, many of whom have taken the time to write to the Registered Manager praising the manner in which the staff team work co-operatively to ensure that young people's welfare and safety is promoted. Arrangements for complaints, bullying and behaviour management are handled well and ensure that young people feel listened to and protected. Staff receive ongoing safeguarding training to ensure their practice continues to promote young people's safety.

Risk assessments are produced to highlight concerns and vulnerability. Detailed behaviour management plans are produced to support staff practice. Staff are competent in supporting the young people's needs. All staff are trained in methods and techniques of physical intervention. However, staff would only use such techniques in extreme circumstances, preferring to use their skills in de-escalation to try to support young people experiencing difficulties. Behaviour management plans and risk assessments are agreed as part of care planning arrangements. Accurate records are produced on all incidents and events. There are many opportunities presented for discussion and consultation on the placement arrangements. This ensures the continued safety of both young people and the staff team working in the home. It also involves multi-agency working to ensure that all agencies are working together to promote young people's welfare and safety.

There have been a number of reports of young people going missing from the home without permission. There is careful monitoring of the number of instances where this occurs and actions are taken by staff to try to ensure that young people are not continuing to place themselves at risk by this practice.

Staff work together to uphold children's rights as well as providing them with daily support to assist them to achieve and develop. Communication and relationships between staff and the young people are excellent. Professional and personal boundaries have been established and the home's routines are clear, providing consistency when working with young people.

The young people's privacy is respected. This is clearly evident in how the daily routine is managed and how information is shared and recorded between staff.

There is a coordinated response being taken to all aspects of health and safety. Records are maintained within a central file and safety and servicing certification are held. A premises fire risk assessment has been completed. No hazards were observed to the young people's safety during a tour of the accommodation. Risk assessments of the building are regularly reviewed ensuring the young people are safety is promoted within the home environment.

Personnel files are maintained in the authorities Human Resources Department These have been checked previously and found to contain full and satisfactory information. A robust vetting, recruitment and selection procedure is in place. Policy at the home is that there is no access to young people until full and satisfactory clearances are received. This shows that all reasonable steps are taken, to ensure that staff employed are suitable to work with young people. Vetting of visitors to the home is also undertaken with identity checks being carried out before access is permitted.

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 good.

Not all key standards were judged under this section, only the actions and recommendations from the previous inspection were followed up. Therefore the previous outcome judgement remains the same as at the last inspection. One action and one recommendation had been raised following the previous inspection. The local authority had failed to fulfil its responsibility to undertake monthly inspections of the service provided by the home. This action has been addressed and the local authority's quality assurance process now met the requirements of Regulation 33.

A recommendation had been made that, when the Registered Manager's own quality assurance monthly report identified deficits in practice, the following report should comment as to whether actions have been taken to address the issues. The format of the Registered Managers Schedule 6 report now contains feedback on issues raised in the previous report.

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
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Recommendations

There are no recommendations.