

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	21 January 2010
Inspector	Wendy Anderson
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	13 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

The home is one of a number of children's services operated by the provider. The home is a six-bedroom detached house in its own grounds, in a rural location. It is close to a local town and all its facilities. The service was registered in November 2004 as a children's home for four young people with emotional or behavioural problems.

Summary

This was an unannounced random inspection and all the key standards under staying safe were inspected as were those standards where actions and recommendation were made at the last inspection.

The home provides a safe environment for the young people. The young people know what is expected of them, that staff will keep agreed boundaries and listen to their views, comments and concerns. The staff provide strong individual support to young people, including helping them to gain skills for independence. Young people are encouraged to behave well by being given personal incentives and rewards. The staff team help young people work well together and they have clear and comprehensive guidance for the work they undertake. Young people are encouraged and supported to continue with their education.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection the manager has successfully become registered with Ofsted. At the last inspection ten actions were made and one recommendation. Only three of these have been actioned. The number of staff at the home has been increased and the manager has reviewed the rotas to ensure that staff on their probationary period do not carry out sleep in duties together or work with bank staff. The manager now includes monitoring the home against its statement of purpose. Those points still outstanding are staff not receiving supervision at the required intervals, notification to Ofsted of all significant events, ensuring all young people have personal education plans and pathway plans. There has been improvement in obtaining consent forms for the administration of prescribed medication but these are not on files for all young people. Also there has been an improvement in the recoding of key workers sessions. However these are not happening at the intervals required in the home's policy and there is a lack of follow up actions being taken or not. The home has not been able to obtain updated looked after children care plans for all young people.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

At the time of inspection there are four young people placed at the home only two of these had consent forms in place for the staff to administer prescribed medication to them.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The home has an appropriate policy and procedure regarding young people's privacy. The home has an appropriate room search policy. Wherever possible room searches are carried out in the presence of the young person. Where a young person is not present they will be informed. Room searches are carried out by two staff and these searches are appropriately recorded. Information on young people is securely stored.

The home has an appropriate policy and procedure on complaints. This information is also in the young persons guide. Records of complaints demonstrated that they are dealt with effectively.

Clear steps are taken to safeguard young people. The staff are trained in and knowledgeable about child protection procedures including arrangements of the Local Safeguarding Children Board. The manager knows when to report or seek advice from professionals outside the home. There have not been any child protection incidents since the last inspection.

Staff at the home are alert to the possibility of bullying between the young people and know how to respond if it is reported. The home's policies and procedures provide clear guidance for staff on bullying. This includes information on cyber bullying via the internet or mobile phone.

There are clear procedures in place for young people who are absent without authority which are linked to young people's individual risk assessments and behaviour plans. Records kept of these incidents are clear and include information on debrief session held with young people upon their return. Since the last inspection there has only been one incident of absconding.

Young people are encouraged to develop socially acceptable behaviour. The focus of the home is the reinforcement of positive behaviours. Each young person has goals to achieve daily for which they receive a financial reward. Young people also earn points towards more significant rewards by their positive behaviour, such as a 'pamper day' or a visit to a football stadium. Young people accept that they are sanctioned when they do not behave in an acceptable way. Regular meetings with the young people are used to talk about their behaviour towards one another, including, when necessary, any bullying issues.

The home has an appropriate policy and procedure for the restraint of young people. The home has developed a clear form for staff to complete when an incident of restraint takes place. However there are gaps in staff completing this form. These gaps include young people's response and views on the restraint and the debrief session held with the young person. Also there was evidence found of a restraint having been used on a young person which was not recorded in the restraint log. Staff receive regular update training on restraint and behaviour management.

The home has an appropriate policy and procedure on sanctions however this is not consistently followed. Within the sanction log there are considerable gaps in the recording. These include the lack of recording of the effectiveness of the sanction, the young person comments and the young person signature. Also the behaviours which lead to the sanction is not recorded in enough detail.

The home has a clear policy on the reporting of significant events to the appropriate organisations. However there was evidence of two significant events that had happened which Ofsted had not been notified.

The bathrooms and toilets within the home provide appropriate privacy for young people.

Records confirm that the alarm systems are tested regularly and other procedures are in place to ensure maintenance of equipment and installations. Risk assessments are used to identify and reduce risks from hazards around the building, grounds and activities by young people. These are reviewed and updated regularly.

The home has a robust selection and recruitment procedure which protects young people. A human resources specialist is responsible for undertaking recruitment checks for all new staff to the organisation. In general, checks undertaken exceed what is required. Wherever possible young people are involved in the interview process for new staff but it is the young people's choice as to whether they are involved in this process.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Young people are well supported at the home, both by members of staff and from other specialists. All young people have a key worker and co-key worker who try to arrange the help and support that each person needs. These key workers are selected by the young person. The homes policy on key working states that key work session will happen on a weekly basis, this does not consistently happen. The recording of the key work sessions has improved but there is a lack of evidence of follow up actions taking place. These key work session also are not consistently linked to the young peoples care plans and their identified needs.

All of the young people are continuing with education and have been strongly encouraged and supported in this by staff from the home. There are positive links with the education placements of young people which have helped to maintain young people's attendance. The education adviser can also be involved to mediate and negotiate with education placements on young people's behalf. Regular attendance in education is encouraged through the young people's incentives scheme. However still none of the young people have a personal education plan.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is not judged.

The information within the looked after children documentation has improved but there are still care plans which relate to young peoples previous placement and not the current one. The manager said the frequent requests had been made asking the social workers for this information but it has not been forthcoming. There was no evidence to support this.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Only one of the four young people placed has a pathway plan. The manager said that these had been requested from the social workers but these had not been forthcoming. There was no evidence to support this.

Records kept of young people's clothing, personal requisites and pocket monies are comprehensive providing evidence of running totals of deposits, withdrawals and balances.

Organisation

The organisation is not judged.

Staff receive supervision but this is still not at the required intervals. The minutes of supervision session have improved and cover the required topics

Since the last inspection there has been an increase in the number of the staff team. The staff rota also evidences that new members of staff who have not completed their probationary period do not slept in on the same shift or carry out sleeping shifts with bank staff. This provides the young people with a higher standard or consistent care.

There is evidence that the manager monitors the records made at the home and responds to points from the Operations Manager's formal monthly visits. The manager does monitor the performance of the home against its statement of purpose

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
13	ensure all young people have a signed consent for the administration of medication (Regulation 20 and 21)	31 March 2010
20	ensure notificactions of significant events are made within 24 hours (Regulation 30)	31 March 2010
7	ensure the record of key work sessions is comprehensive and actions to be undertaken (Regulation 11)	31 March 2010
14	ensure that all young people have personal education plans (Regulation 18)	31 March 2010
2	ensure that all young people have all the required looked after children's documentation (Regulation 12)	31 March 2010
6	ensure all young people have pathway plans (Children's Act 1989, sections 22, 61, 64)	31 March 2010
28	ensure that staff supervision happens at the interval as required by standard 28.2. (Regulation 27)	31 March 2010

Recommendations

There are no recommendations.