

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	25 February 2010
Inspector	Paul Gillespie
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	20 July 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 offers care and accommodation for up to four young people, between the ages of 13 and 17 years old with emotional or behavioural difficulties.

It is a detached cottage with three bedrooms, and an annex that provides a semi-independent unit for another young person. Both buildings are situated in spacious gardens, two miles from the local shopping centre and all required leisure facilities. Other shops are a short walking distance from the home.

At the time of the inspection three young people were at home and one of them took part in the inspection.

Summary

At this unannounced interim inspection the main focus was to find out how well the home meets the needs of young people living there under the staying safe outcome area. The inspection also looked at the progress that the home has made with the two actions and one recommendation under organisation made at the last inspection. These related to reviewing the Statement of Purpose and ensuring Regulation 33 visits were undertaken. The remaining outcome areas for being healthy, enjoying and achieving, positive contribution and economic well-being were not assessed and the previous judgements remain valid.

This continues to be a good service. Young people are happy and report they enjoy living there. They confirm that they are well looked after and get all the help they need from staff who are described as 'very fair' and who 'listen to them'. They live in a secure and stable environment that enables them to make significant progress in all aspects of their lives, especially in relation to their social and emotional development. This has enabled young people to build positive relationships with adults based on trust and respect.

The home can further promote the welfare of young people by ensuring individual risk assessments better reflect the effectiveness of action taken to reduce risks. The staff records held at the home need to include all of the matters identified in Regulation 29 and the manager needs to receive regular professional supervision. Additionally, some fire precautions checks had not been consistently completed to fully ensure the premises are safe and secure. Finally, although Regulation 33 visits are now being undertaken the reports lack detail and evaluation.

Addressing these points will help ensure the focus continues to be on the promotion of the welfare of young people and the quality of care in the home.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The home has taken appropriate action to resolve the action and recommendations identified at the last inspection. The Statement of Purpose has been amended to ensure that it is up to date and provides useful information. The Regulation 33 visits are now being undertaken with a report submitted to Ofsted as required. There is improved evidence of young people having

their views recorded about sanctions, and supervision is now consistently undertaken for residential staff which means they receive good levels of formal support from the manager.

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 are cared for well. Safeguarding procedures and regular training ensure staff are fully aware of their responsibilities to keep young people safe. Staff have a good knowledge of young people's behaviour and this enables them to respond quickly and appropriately to any behavioural issues that arise. The support for young people is based on promoting positive behaviour in a nurturing environment. Their individual needs are well identified although individual risk assessments do not always include an evaluation of the effectiveness of the action identified to reduce risk to keep young people safe.

Young people's privacy and confidentiality are well respected. There are good bathroom facilities that promote privacy and young people have well-appointed single bedrooms where they can spend time alone if they wish. Information about young people is managed confidentially and held securely in the office. This means that staff respect young people's privacy in a way that is consistent with good parenting and the need to protect young people. Young people also have independent access to a telephone without the necessity to ask the staff on duty.

Young people know how to complain. They say that they are confident that they 'can speak to the staff' if they feel the need and that staff listen to what they have to say. Young people have good access to information about the complaints procedure of both the home and the placing authority and feel that their concerns are always addressed by staff.

The staff at the home work hard to encourage young people to develop socially acceptable behaviour. Young people know what standards of behaviour are expected and this has resulted in young people demonstrating an increasingly mature and responsible approach to how they conduct themselves. The use of sanctions is proportionate and young people view them as 'fair'.

Staff view young people in a positive light and show a good understanding of the issues that may influence young people's behaviour, such as their past experiences. Staff are adept at helping young people feel positive about themselves which helps build self-esteem. For example, young people spoke about how, with staff support, they have 'changed their attitude' and have come to understand how their behaviour impacts upon others. This approach is very effective and has led to young people commenting that they 'feel listened too' and 'cared for'.

At present young people are very settled and young people confirm bullying is not a problem within the home. They state staff talk regularly with them about friendship and what a good relationship should be like. They also have support from external agencies to help them understand how aspects of their behaviour may present a risk to their welfare. This means that young people develop an understanding and awareness of risk-taking behaviour and its potential impact.

Young people are well protected by thorough staff recruitment practices that are designed to ensure all staff recruited to work with young people are suitable to do so. Additionally there is a robust approach to the vetting and supervising of visitors which also helps ensure young people are kept safe. However, the details on Regulation 29 records do not fully capture all of the matters necessary.

Overall, health and safety is taken seriously. Staff carry out regular health and safety checks. These checks are supported by a comprehensive range of detailed health and safety procedures and risk assessments. However, some details regarding the ongoing monitoring of fire precautions had not been consistently undertaken to fully ensure the premises are safe and secure.

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.

The home has a clearly written and informative Statement of Purpose which accurately describes what the home sets out to do for the young people it accommodates. This means young people know what support they can expect from the home and how they will be cared for.

Staff now receive support through regular supervision and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. However, the frequency for the professional supervision of the manager of the home is limited.

There are sound systems in place to monitor the performance of the home. The frequency of external and internal monitoring is now in line with requirements although the reporting with regard to Regulation 33 lacks the degree of analysis and evaluation that would help drive forward and promote improvement in the provision of care.

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
27	ensure the details on Regulation 29 records fully capture all of the matters necessary (Reg 29 (1) Schedule 4)	26 March 2010

26	make adequate arrangements for reviewing fire precautions, and testing fire equipment, at suitable intervals. (Reg 32 (1) (c))	12 March 2010
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Recommendations

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

- evaluate of the effectiveness of the action identified to reduce risk in order to keep young people safe (NMS 26.3)
- ensure suitable arrangements exist for the professional supervision of the Registered Manager of the home (NMS 28.5)
- improve the level of detail and evaluation in the Regulation 33 reports in order to promote improvement in the provision of care. (NMS 32)