

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	16 February 2010
Inspector	Karen Malcolm
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

Channel House is a semi-detached three storey property in a residential area. There is a basement that is designated as the registered manager's office. The house is situated very close to the town centre and all the local amenities are easy to access.

There is a main line rail connection, shops, cinema, sports facilities, parks and the beach within a five minute walk. All health services are available locally.

The home is registered to accommodate and care for up to three young people. The home provides medium to long term residential care for up to three children and young people aged between eight and 17 years old on admission. At the time of this inspection all bedrooms were occupied.

Summary

At this unannounced, interim inspection the outcome areas of staying safe, economic wellbeing and organisation were inspected. The outstanding recommendations made at the previous inspection were also followed up.

The general organisation around working practices is good and the home functions well. Staffing levels are high and young people receive a good standard of care. Individual needs are recognised and plans are in place to address them.

The young people are settled, they are protected and recognise they are living in a safe environment. This is underpinned by a reduction in the incidents of unauthorised absences. No serious issues or concerns were raised by young people.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

There were four recommendations from the previous inspection. These were that the provider should ensure that 80% of the staff team were qualified at National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 3; that consultation with the young people in relation to their care is recorded and that there are regular checks on emergency lighting in between the annual contract. In addition to this to also ensure that training in fire prevention is in date.

One recommendation relating to the home having 80% of staff qualified to NVQ at level 3 has not been addressed. The other recommendations have been addressed.

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's privacy is respected. For example, each young person has his or her own bedroom, the door to which is fitted with a safety lock and their room is regarded as exclusive

private space. Where staff need to enter those rooms they knock and wait to be invited to enter so that the occupants' privacy is not compromised. Bathrooms and toilets are also fitted with safety locks and are close to the young people's bedrooms. Staff are sensitive to gender issues especially when dealing with young people of the opposite sex. Room searches are only conducted when necessary. A record is maintained, which clearly states if the young person is present and if not why.

Young people know how and feel able to complain if they are unhappy with any aspect of living in the home. At each resident's meeting 'complaints' is on the agenda. Young people are asked individually if they have any concerns or issues they would like to discuss. The majority of the time there is nothing to report. There are clear procedures as to how complaints or concerns are addressed by the manager. However, not all complaints or concerns received by a young person have been consistently managed in accordance with the home's policy.

Young people's welfare is safeguarded and they are protected from bullying. They are also protected by procedures for dealing with unauthorised absences. The staffing levels have been increased to ensure young people are feeling more settled and safe within the home environment. The impact is that unauthorised absences have reduced significantly. Therefore this shows that young people feel more settled and protected living in the home. All staff have received safeguarding training and they have a sound knowledge of reporting procedures. Young people have comprehensive individual risk assessments. Bullying is not currently identified as a problem but strategies are in place to address this, if and when it occurs.

The home has an effective behaviour management system, which clearly shows what action has been taken and whether or not the behaviour is linked to a sanction or physical intervention. Young people spoken to are aware of the consequences of unacceptable behaviour and although they feel these may not be fair at times, understand why actions are taken. Detailed up to date records are kept of any incident that has required physical intervention. Training in positive handling techniques have been undertaken for all staff within the team and this is updated regularly.

There is now a designated health and safety officer assigned to the home. General health and safety issues are addressed with a range of risk assessments in place including specific individual assessments. They identify hazards in and outside of the home as well as risks faced when taking young people out for a community based trip and activity. Appropriate service contracts for fire, gas and electrical equipment are in place. Emergency lighting is now included in the home's overall weekly checks.

Appropriate recruitment practices are in place and all staff working at the home have received an appropriate Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check. However, one member of staff's record show that no second written reference was sought prior to their employment, only a verbal one. There are clear procedures in place to monitor all visitors to the home.

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 good.

Furnishings are homely and reasonably maintained. Young people were observed as being comfortable and relaxed within their surroundings. The home is spacious and provides adequate space. The general standard of repair, décor, fixtures, fittings, furnishings and equipment is good. Young people can personalise spaces if they so wish. The garden area is small and neat and has a shed to keep young people's bikes safe. There is a picnic seating area and the manager said that in the warmer months this area is used for barbeques and parties.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Not all the staff have obtained their NVQ in caring for children and young people. Those who are yet to gain their qualification are now training, and should complete this by June this year.

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
16	ensure all complaints raised by young people are addressed following the home's policy and procedures (Regulation 24)	31 March 2010
27	obtain two written references including a reference from the person's most recent employer prior to employment. (Regulation 6, 8, 26) Schedule 2	30 June 2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure that 80% of the staff team are qualified at National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 3 in caring for children and young people (NMS 29)