

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Kay Mehrrens
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Date of last inspection	4 June 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 provides care and accommodation for up to five young people of both sexes, aged between 11 and 16 years, who may have emotional or behavioural difficulties. The home accepts both planned and emergency placements. Young people are admitted to the home on a short-term basis while an assessment of their needs is undertaken. After completion of this assessment, young people either return to live with their families or move on to alternative placements.

The home is a two storey, detached house. The ground floor accommodation includes a lounge, a dining room, a kitchen and an activities room, which is located in an annexe. The young people's single bedrooms are on the first floor, together with shower and toilet facilities. There is an enclosed garden and a separate car parking area.

Summary

This visit was an unannounced inspection of the service. Some standards identified by Ofsted as key areas of care in respect to staying safe were inspected and the progress of the home in addressing previous requirements, from the last inspection, was monitored.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The five actions and one recommendation from the last inspection had all been addressed. Staff are now provided with guidance should a young person refuse to take medication. The storage facilities in the home are improved. Regular monitoring takes place, and is recorded, by the provider and manager. The young people's guide contains information about the home's policy should it be necessary for their rooms to be searched. An excellent piece of work has been completed, with the local fire service, in responses to issues raised at last inspection which has addressed the concerns regarding fire safety in the home. The Statement of Purpose has yet to be fully updated to reflect some of the changes in the home's service provision due to the current review of the home's function.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The home's policy and procedures for administering medicines and providing treatment protects the young people living in the home. There are clear instructions and guidance in place for staff should a young person refuse medication. All staff receive training in medication administration and first aid. The home holds limited medication and all is securely stored and managed.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Information held about young people is securely stored and staff demonstrate a good awareness of the need to keep information confidential. From observation and discussion, it is evident that staff are very respectful of young people's need for privacy. The young people's guide

contains information about the home's policy should it be necessary for their rooms to be searched. Young people are provided with access to a private telephone and given an allowance towards the cost of their mobile phones. Young people's privacy is respected.

Young people are given information about the home's complaint procedures when they arrive at the home. Young people are able to raise any issues or concerns through the use of 'I want to know' concerns forms or in their meetings. Records show that complaints are dealt with effectively and in line with the home's procedures.

There are procedures in place to promote the safety and welfare of young people. All staff receive training in child protection and safeguarding that includes specific issues such as drug awareness and sexual exploitation. Staff have a good understanding of child protection issues. Any incidents are well recorded and outcomes ensure the safe care of young people. However, the provider is failing to inform Ofsted of child protection incidents until the outcome of any investigation. This does not meet the required regulation.

Staff are mindful of issues between young people, including bullying behaviours, and any such difficulties are taken to group meetings for discussion. Individual risk assessments include bullying behaviours. The home works well with the young people helping them look at bullying and its effects on themselves and others. This has included a visit from victim support to talk about knife crime.

There are systems in place for reporting and monitoring young people who are absent without authority. Staff are provided with guidance for intervention and action when young people go missing. Good links are in place with the local police service and there is a clear protocol in respect of involving the police.

The focus for managing young people's behaviour is based upon the promotion and reward of positive outcomes and actions. The use of sanctions has reduced by this change of focus and approach by staff. Training in behaviour management, including de-escalation techniques and the use of physical interventions is provided to staff together with written guidance. The use of restraint is rare which supports the training and positive approaches used by the staff in the home. Records show that young people's comments are sought and recorded. Records of sanctions and restraints are monitored by the manager. The home's rewards system is much appreciated by the young people and is linked towards them achieving individual targets and goals.

The home has worked well with the local fire service to address the incidents and concerns surrounding fire safety in the home and young people's behaviours around this. This has led to very positive links with the fire service and the success of young people in achieving fire safety awards which they received at a formal presentation ceremony. Fire related incidents in the home have greatly reduced due to this initiative and the impact on young people's behaviour and attitudes. All staff receive fire training and records of systems, equipment and fire drills are well maintained. The premises are secure. The home has external cameras to monitor parking and access to the home and new electronic door systems are in place.

Suitable procedures are in place for the recruitment and vetting staff and including safer recruitment training. Records of visitors are maintained and proof of identification is requested where appropriate. Young people are protected by robust recruitment procedures.

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.

The home is well maintained and kept clean and tidy. Young people are encouraged to personalise their own space. The communal rooms are well presented and provide a relaxed and homely environment for the young people to live in. Storage areas are improved. The young people are now provided with ample storage for their bikes and other play equipment and storage areas in staff rooms has also improved. Young people are provided with a pleasant, safe and well equipped home.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The Statement of Purpose and young people's guide set out what care the home will provide and how this will be provided. It has yet to be fully updated to reflect some of the changes in the home's service provision due to the current review of the home's function. The children's guide contains information about the home's policy with regard to room searches so young people are now fully informed about this procedure. Both documents are presented in a form that is easily understood by young people and families. Young people sign to say that they have received a copy of the guide and welcome pack.

The required monthly monitoring visits are undertaken by the provider. Their reports cover all aspects of Every Child matters and set clear actions and highlighted areas for the manager's response. The home's manager meets with the provider's representative and safeguarding manager to discuss the content of monitoring reports to inform the practice and review of care at the home.

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 Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
17	ensure that if, in relation to a children's home, any of the events listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 5 takes place, the registered person shall without delay notify the persons indicated in respect of the event in column 2 of the table. (Regulation 30(1))	2 April 2010

Recommendations

There are no recommendations.