

Inspection report for Children's Home

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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 outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

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 home aims to provide residential care and support for up to five young people, aged between 11 and 17 years, with emotional or behavioural difficulties. The home is owned and operated by a private organisation and was registered in 2005.

The home is situated in a residential area and within walking distance of local shops, the library, transport links, a hospital, leisure centres, sixth form colleges, three secondary schools and several local parks.

The ground floor consists of two bedrooms, an office, a dining room and kitchen, a bathroom and toilet. The first floor consists of three bedrooms, a staff sleep-in room, a bathroom and toilet, an adequate sized lounge and a utility cupboard. Outside there is a paved garden area.

Summary

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

This interim inspection looked at the outcome staying safe under the Every Child Matters outcomes, one standard under each being healthy, economic well-being and organisation.

The overall safety of young people is managed well and young people spoken to said that they feel safe. Staff also said that the boundaries for young people is managed effectively. This has been helped by the life skills workshops held regularly each week for young people.

The shortfalls identified following this inspection, relate to: the registered person ensuring that risk assessments for the environment is completed, especially relating to the laundry cupboard and clinical waste; general damages or repairs to the home are addressed; food items opened should be labelled; and the crockery and cutlery within the home is sufficient at all times. Additional to this, theft within the home should be appropriately managed.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were five actions from the previous inspection. The registered person was asked to ensure fire drills are carried out and that provider submits an application to register as the manager. Two recommendations were also made relating to guidance to monitor theft and sufficient details to be completed when a room search is carried out. Following this inspection all actions and recommendations have been addressed, except the guidance on how theft is managed effectively within the home.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people benefit from a variety of nutritious home cooked foods which reflect young people's choices and cultural heritage. Young people are offered opportunities to develop an awareness of a variety of different cultural foods and for some this is one of their first opportunities to experience specific cultural foods relevant to them. Young people are involved in the planning, and sometimes, the preparation of meals. However, the home's supply of cups and cutlery, especially the forks, are insufficient and foods opened in the fridge or cupboards were not labelled.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The majority of the young people living in the home have personal mobile phones and they are given additional funds to manage their phones weekly. The home also provides additional facilities for young people to make private telephone call if they so wish, however, the telephone booth was broken. Additional to this young people are able to use the home's phone, but due to the position of the phone young people are unable to make phone calls in private. Young people spoken to said that their safety and well-being is promoted by the home. Room searches take place, if this is necessary, to help keep young people safe. Records clearly show whether young people have been consulted prior to a search and whether the action taken was appropriate and fair.

A complaints procedure is maintained in this home to ensure all young people are able to make a complaint. Young people say that they do not generally want to use the formal systems; they say that if something is bothering them then any staff members will support them. There is now a clearer explanation of what action has been taken by the manager. However, there is a high incidence of theft within the home, and there does not seem to be any clear strategies in place to how this is managed effectively in each case.

Young people are safeguarded in the home. Any child protection concerns are promptly dealt with. Young people are safeguarded by the vigilance of staff and systems, such as detailed daily records about the movements and welfare of young people, adequate staffing levels and good communication between staff. Training is provided annually. Young people have also undertaken workshop training pertaining to their safety and have completed training on 'stranger danger' and 'safety at home'. Young people spoken to reiterate this and also said that they do get a lot out of the workshops they attend.

The home has a 'no tolerance' approach to bullying which is known to all the young people and staff. Issues of bullying are discussed in residents' meetings when they arise.

The home has revised the positive behaviour rewards system. With this positive behaviour system the central incentive is monetary with some activity rewards. Staff state that sanctions are rarely used; it is all about positive behaviour. There are clear ground rules on how points are achieved and when they maybe take off. Young people spoken to had various views on the system, but the main outcome was positive. Staff receive training in physical intervention techniques. Staff seldom use physical intervention or sanctions as a means of control when managing challenging behaviour.

The numbers of incidents relating to young people absence without authority has increased; however this is being managed well by the home. The procedures identify the actions taken when a young person is absent. On returning home, a written record is made of the circumstances of all incidents of absconding, action taken by staff and any reasons given by the young person as to why they were absent. Young people spoken are aware of the consequences of their actions when absent or late back to the home and understand why the police is called.

The manager has adopted a new approach to monitoring and risk assessing the home's environment. Each member of the team is allocated a number of risk areas to complete. However, this has not been monitored consistently and hazardous areas, such as the laundry cupboard and the clinical waste, have not been assessed. Young people spoken to, felt that there should be allocated a day when they are able to do their laundry, because at present the laundry cupboard is closed daily at a specific time. The manager is aware of this and is reviewing this with the young people. All health and safety checks are completed within the allocated time. Fire drills are also completed when a new member of staff and young person arrives at the home. However, the records in place are slightly confusing, seeing that the listed in place records the staff and young people together and, therefore, it is unclear who is who.

The manager has recently advertised for new staff, but no new appointments have been, therefore the recruitment records were not examined at this visit.

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.

Young people are comfortable in their bedrooms and have made it suitable for their needs. However, one of the sofas in the lounge is broken, and the stairs and landing carpet are worn and stained.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The registered provider has applied and has been successfully in completing the fit person interview to become the registered manager. However, to fully complete the process some additional information is needed, which the manager is aware of. Until Ofsted receives this the application can not to be completed.

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/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Std.	Action	Due date
9	ensure that the telephone booth is either repaired or replaced (Regulation 15(4)(a))	31/03/2011
26	ensure that the environmental risk assessment covers all areas of risk such as the laundry cupboard and clinical waste (Regulation 23)	31/03/2011
24	ensure that the home is suitably furnished, reasonably decorated and maintained (Regulation 31(2)(c)(e))	31/03/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure there are suitable arrangements for the disposal of clinical (sanitary) waste and further to this consult with the local environmental health officer on this issue (NMS 26.8)
- provide sufficient crockery and cutlery at all times and ensure all opened food is labelled (NMS 10)

- ensure the fire records have separate columns for staff and young people who were present at a fire drill (NMS 26.8)
- introduce clear strategies to monitor and address how incidents relating to theft are addressed by the home. (NMS16)