

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	17 November 2009
Inspector	Caroline Brailsford
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	25 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

This is a children's home for four young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties between the age of 10 and 18 years. It is part of an organisation and is located on the outskirts of a small town with local facilities including a post office and shops. There is access to public transport and the home has its own transport for trips to the wider community.

The home is reasonably well maintained, decorated and furnished. Young people have their own single bedrooms. Communal space comprises of a lounge, dining room, kitchen and education room. There is a grassed area to the rear of the house, with a patio and outdoor seating.

Summary

This is an unannounced interim inspection. The purpose of the visit is to assess the key standards under staying safe from the national minimum standards for children's homes. Also to check progress made on recommendations raised at the full inspection of the home on 25 June 2009. The home continues to provide a satisfactory service to the young people overall and a judgement of satisfactory has been made under the heading staying safe. Strengths of the home include commitment from the manager and staff group and behaviour management which is good. There has been a high turnover of staff during the last year and although this has not impacted directly on the care of the young people, it has proved a challenge for the manager. Staff have had times where their moral has been low. However, this is an improving picture as recruitment is underway. The manager has achieved all of the actions and most of the recommendations set at the last inspection. As a result of this inspection, there are two actions and four recommendations, two of which are carried over from the last inspection.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

There were three actions set at the last inspection to the home. One was regarding food handling and hygiene routines and this has been achieved. There is now a housekeeper in post, training has begun for staff and the hygiene practices in the home have improved. The second action is also achieved, this was regarding the young people's access to a private telephone. The manager now ensures that wherever possible and appropriate, the young people receive free access to a private telephone. The third action is also achieved and the statement of purpose states the home's criteria for taking emergency admissions. However, a further action is set about extending this to include how emergency admissions will be managed.

There were seven recommendations raised at the last inspection. Five of these have been achieved. Improvements include training for staff in the handling of food, the fire risk assessment and the cleanliness of the home. It is also now clear that the outcomes from review meetings are recorded in the placement plan, so that staff understand what they should do to ensure that these are met.

There are two actions that will be repeated from this inspection because they have not yet been achieved. These are relating to placement plans where it is not clear that young people's

cultural, religious, language and racial needs will be met. Also placement plans do not include physical restrictions that are imposed on young people.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people enjoy privacy and confidentiality in the home. This helps them to feel safe and protected.

The complaints procedure is user friendly and easily accessible to young people. They know how to use it and feel very confident that staff take their complaints seriously. They are pleased that staff regularly ask them to express their views about the running of the home and in turn, this enables them to contribute. There are good relationships between the young people and the staff, and therefore regular discussion takes place. This means that concerns are often sorted out before they become complaints. Staff also ensure and enable young people to express any concerns they may have about bullying and young people feel able to talk to the staff freely about this.

The safety and welfare of the young people has high priority in the home and they feel safe. The staff are trained and therefore are very clear about safety aspects for individuals. They also demonstrate a good working knowledge of the home's policies and procedures and are fully aware of their responsibilities in this area. They know what they should do if there is an allegation or concern in the home. This ensures the safety and welfare of the young people.

There is a recruitment system in the home which is robust. Records of the process are kept in the home and include Criminal Records Bureau checks at enhanced level, proof of identity and references prior to employment. All gaps in employment are identified and all parts of the application process scrutinised to ensure that safety of the young people.

For each young person, there is a very clear procedure identified for staff to use should they go missing. This minimises risks well. Young people feel well supported in this area and evidence suggests that they progress well helping them to become safer.

The staff see the young people in a positive light. Young people's behaviour is well understood. Staff have completed training and are competent in diffusing situations to try to avoid the use of physical intervention. All physical intervention is defined for individuals in their care plans and risk assessments, and documented in line with the national minimum standards. The staff are very familiar with all information for individuals and support young people well. There has been a high staff turnover during the last year resulting in new staff being recruited. This then becomes difficult to manage, as not all new staff complete the training before being on the rota. However the manager is clear that she can ensure that the young people are safe at all times by making sure that there are enough trained staff on duty.

The building appears to be safe for the young people, staff and visitors. Fire drills have taken place regularly as have tests on all fire equipment in the building in line with the requirements of the fire authority. Staff and young people know what to do should there be a fire, ensuring their safety and welfare. There are generic risk assessments with regard to the building. There

is also information in the young people's files which goes some way to ensuring that risks are as far as possible minimised. However, there are not individual risk assessments in place for each young person and potentially this could impact on young people's safety. Although actions and recommendations about hygiene practices in the home have been achieved, the food is not routinely probed in line with the homes own guidance on food safety.

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 not judged.

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
1	include in the statement of purpose, all matters listed in Schedule 1. This is in particular relation to paragraph 9 of that schedule (Regulation 4)	24 December 2009
26	ensure that unnecessary risks to the health or safety of young people are identified and so far as possible eliminated. (Regulation 23,c)	24 December 2009

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the placement plan for each young person includes their cultural, religious, language and racial needs and how they will be met (NMS 2.1)
- ensure physical restrictions on normal movement within the home are used only in relation to a child where the restriction has been agreed within their placement plan and are used only where necessary to safeguard and promote that child's welfare. Such restrictions do not impose similar restrictions on other children (NMS 23.5)
- ensure that risk assessments are carried out in relation to bullying (NMS 18.5)
- ensure that where there are areas of risk identified, that action is taken to reduce risks to an acceptable level. This is in particular relation to the probing of hot food. (NMS 26.2)