

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Katarina Djordjevic
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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 is a children's home for four young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties between the age of 10 and 18 years. There is a school on site where young people are educated if deemed appropriate. The home 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.

Young people have their own single bedrooms. Communal space comprises a lounge, dining room, kitchen and education room. There is also a second classroom which is detached from the main building. There is a grassed area to the rear of the house, with a patio and outdoor seating.

Summary

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

This was an announced interim inspection and aligned with the education inspection of the school. The purpose of the visit was to assess the quality of care provided for young people, in line with statutory requirements. The focus of the inspection was on staying safe and enjoying and achieving. All standards in staying safe were inspected as were standards 1, 12, 13, 14, 24 28, 29, and 33. The outcome groups relating to being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving and organisation are judged as satisfactory. The outcome group relating to economic wellbeing remains good.

This is a satisfactory service with some good aspects. There have been a number of staff changes since the last inspection including the deputy manager leaving whose post has not yet been filled. This has left a gap in the management structure within the home which has affected the quality of care provided. Although a number of shortfalls have been identified regarding the management of complaints against staff and behaviour management practices, there is no evidence that these have impacted on young people. Staff continue to work hard to meet the complex needs of young people and positive relationships exist. Young people are protected from the risk of harm due to robust recruitment procedures. Young people know how to raise any concerns and where concerns are raised, these are taken seriously. However, where complaints are made against staff, these are not always referred to the local safeguarding team. Furthermore, this shortfall has not been identified by the regulation 33 visits. Records relating to physical interventions do not always give sufficient detail of the holds used. Fire safety procedures and records do not include sufficient reference to the outside classroom which has been in operation since July

2010. The Registered Manager took steps to address these shortfalls during the inspection which helps to minimise any potential risk to young people.

Improvements since the last inspection

Two recommendations were made at the last inspection where the Registered Manager was asked to ensure: the recording of controlled drugs is in line with the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain's guidance 'The Handling of Medicines in Social Care'; and that all young people's records are signed and dated by the author. Both recommendations have been addressed.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Accident report forms are not always completed where a young person has sustained an injury or marks to their body. This makes it difficult to sufficiently monitor the wellbeing of young people.

The management of controlled drugs in the home is now in line with the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain's guidance 'The Handling of Medicines in Social Care' which helps to protect young people from the risk of harm.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

There are child protection policies and procedures and the home has a copy of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board procedures. Staff receive training in child protection. Staff are fully committed to keeping young people safe and go to great lengths to protect young people from the risk of harm or abuse. Young people know how and who to complain to and positive relationships enable young people to raise any concerns they may have. This helps to protect and safeguard young people from the risk of harm and abuse. There are complaints forms with stamped addressed envelopes on the young people's notice board if they wish to make a complaint to the company's complaints officer or Ofsted. Young people said that they can raise any issues and concerns and know that staff will listen and deal with them. Clear records of complaints are kept including letters of acknowledgement and letters detailing the outcome of the investigation sent to the complainant. However, since the last inspection, two complaints have been made against staff. These were not referred to local safeguarding as required and were dealt with internally. In one instance, one of the complaints was received while the Registered Manager was on leave for a number of weeks and the complaint was not dealt with. Furthermore, the regulation 33 visits failed to identify this shortfall in practice. Ofsted have not been notified as required. Although the complaints against staff were relating to the management of behaviours and there is no evidence that young people have been subject to any harm, this calls into question the understanding of staff including other key professionals within the company regarding child protection procedures.

Significant events relating to the protection of children and young people are mostly notified to the relevant agencies as required. Detailed records are kept.

Young people are encouraged to develop socially acceptable behaviours and staff work hard to enable young people to try and change their behaviours. There are clear behaviour management policies and procedures and staff receive behaviour management training. The emphasis is on rewarding positive behaviour and recognising young people's achievements. Where young people's behaviour poses a risk of harm to themselves or others, physical intervention is used. Records kept show that where physical intervention has been used, this was appropriate. However, in one instance, the young person should have been released sooner from the physical intervention. Records of physical interventions mostly contain all the required information. However, some records lack detail about the hold used which makes it difficult to ascertain if the hold being used, is safe. Terminology used in some records is inappropriate and leads the reader questioning if the physical intervention is safe. The Registered Manager monitors and signs all record and discusses incidents with staff where shortfalls or inappropriate practices have taken place. This helps to ensure appropriate and safe management of young people's behaviour. Young people understand why sanctions are imposed. Young people are consulted about the type of sanctions which may be imposed which helps them to reflect on their behaviours and take responsibility for their actions. Records of sanctions imposed are kept, as required, although the records do not include the effectiveness of the sanction.

The management of health and safety is generally good which helps to protect young people and staff from the risk of harm and injury. Servicing of installations and equipment is carried out as required. Fire safety procedures are clear and regular testing of the fire alarm systems helps to protect young people and staff from the risk of harm. However, fire safety procedures and practices do not include sufficient reference to the outside classroom which has been in operation since July 2010. For example, the fire risk assessment which was reviewed in July 2010 does not include all the required information about the outside classroom; the fire extinguishers in the classroom have not been serviced as required and the home's fire detection system is not linked to the classroom which means when the fire alarm is activated, young people and staff would not be alerted. The Registered Manager took steps to address these shortfalls during this inspection.

Young people's privacy and dignity are respected which helps them feel valued. They are given keys to their bedroom doors and they say that staff knock on their door before entering unless staff are concerned for their safety. Young people's information is kept securely and confidentiality is respected.

There is a clear anti-bullying procedure and it is made clear to young people that bullying is not tolerated. Young people said bullying is not an issue although there is sometimes 'bickering' and arguments between them.

Staff are very clear about their responsibilities and what to do in the event of a young person absconding. Staff work closely with other agencies such as the police.

This helps to protect young people from the risk of harm and abuse. Risk assessments are carried out for each young person. All relevant agencies are informed and records kept as required. Staff discuss the dangers of going missing with young people when young people return to the home.

Young people are protected from the risk of harm or abuse by comprehensive, robust policies, procedures and guidance for vetting staff and visitors. The recruitment of the right individual for the job is seen as much more important than filling a vacancy.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people's education is seen as important. There is a school onsite which young people attend if appropriate. Young people are supported to attend mainstream schools where appropriate which also gives them the opportunity to make new friends in the local community. The attendance of some young people at the onsite school is poor which affects young people's ability to learn and reach their potential. Furthermore, routines in the home do not adequately support young people getting up on time and ready for school. For example, the shift pattern for staff means that young people who are educated on site are not woken in enough time to adequately prepare for school in a relaxed and timely manner. Where young people attend mainstream school, staff work very closely with the school to ensure young people are able to maintain their place and achieve their full potential.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is not judged.

Not judged.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The home is decorated to a good standard and has adequate facilities. However, during this visit, it was noticed that parts of the home were cold including some young people's bedrooms. Young people are clearly supported and encouraged to personalise their bedrooms which reflects their individual identity and interests.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The home's Statement of Purpose contains all the information required in Schedule 1 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001. It has been updated since the last inspection to reflect the changes in staffing. The Statement of Purpose informs

young people, their families and placing authorities about the services provided by the home.

Young people receive care based on their individual identified needs from a committed staff team. There have been a number of staff changes since the last inspection. Four new staff have been appointed and the deputy manager has left. The deputy manager's post has not yet been filled which has left a significant gap in management support since July 2010. The Registered Manager continues to provide clear leadership and direction although changes in the staff team have affected her ability to effectively manage in some areas. For example, the supervision of staff and management of complaints has been affected, although no evidence was found that this has impacted on young people. Staff have not received supervision at the required intervals. Regulation 33 visits are carried out as required and reports sent to Ofsted. Although these are detailed reports they have failed to identify shortfalls which have the potential to leave young people vulnerable. For example, where complaints have been made against staff, these have been dealt with internally by the Registered Manager instead of being referred to the local safeguarding team.

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
12	maintain a record of any accident or serious injury to any young child accommodated at the home (Regulation 28 (1))	15/12/2010
17	ensure all staff including staff who carry out Regulation 33 visits fully understand and are competent in implementing the child protection procedure with particular reference to ensuring any allegations made against staff are referred to the local safeguarding team (Regulation 25 (1))	15/12/2010
22	ensure records of physical interventions include a detailed description of measures used and that terminology used is appropriate and in line with safe behaviour management practice (Regulation 17 (4) (c))	15/12/2010
26	take adequate precautions against the risk of fire with particular reference to ensuring: the fire risk assessment includes all the required information regarding the detached classroom; fire extinguishers in the detached classroom are serviced at the required intervals; the fire alarm system within the home can be heard in the detached classroom (Regulation 32 (1) (a) (c))	22/12/2010
14	promote the educational attainment of children by ensuring the	22/12/2010

	routine of the home is organised so as to further participation in education (Regulation 18 (1) (b))	
24	ensure that all parts of the home are adequately heated (Regulation 31 (2) (a))	08/12/2010
33	ensure the quality assurance systems are effective in identifying shortfalls in practice with particular reference to the appropriate management of complaints against staff. (Regulation 34 (1))	15/12/2010

Recommendations

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

- provide further behaviour management training to ensure all staff are fully aware of safe practice during a physical intervention and that staff are competent in the recording of incidents of physical intervention (NMS 22.8)
- include in records of sanctions the effectiveness of the sanction (NMS 22.10)
- ensure all staff receive supervision at the required intervals. (NMS 28.2)