

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	8 March 2010
Inspector	Jennifer Reed
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	17 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

The home is registered to provide care for up to four girls between 11 and under 17 years of age and have emotional or behavioural difficulties. The home is a period two-storey detached house, located one mile from the nearest village. The home is set in seven acres of grounds which provide a garden, patio area and fields and paddocks. The local town provides access to schools, shops, health and leisure facilities.

The home operates a small-holding with vegetable and fruit gardens. A number of animals are kept including horses, chickens, pigs, sheep, and various small companion animals, including house cats. Young people have the opportunity to work alongside staff in developing and maintaining the grounds and looking after the animals. The young people attend the company's school provision; this is approximately a 20 minutes drive from the home.

Summary

This was an unannounced, interim inspection which looked at the progress the home has made in implementing the recommendations made at the previous inspection and also focused on the staying safe outcomes for young people. The outcomes for being healthy, enjoying and achieving, positive contribution and economic well-being were not looked at during this inspection. These outcome groups were judged as either outstanding or good at the key inspection.

The home has satisfactorily reviewed and addressed most of the actions and recommendations made at the key inspection to improve care practices delivered to accommodated young people. However, not all matters have been dealt with and there continues to be shortfalls in recording practices, progressing staff development plans and the provision of a suitable lock to a door. These matters are further identified within the report.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The home has made a number of improvements to practice and its operation. These include: ensuring notifications are made to Ofsted to contribute to safeguarding young people; entering full details into the home's register of admissions and discharges to provide an accurate history; ensuring the home operates within its conditions of registration and its Statement of Purpose accurately reflects the running of the home; reviewing financial reparations given to young people with regard to their suitability and effectiveness and numbering the pages of the sanctions record to make sure the information is secure; carrying out recruitment and selection processes which include all necessary checks to ensure suitable persons are employed to work within the home and young people are protected; and carrying out an electrical installation check of the premises to ensure the home's buildings are safe for staff and young people to live within.

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.

Policies, procedures and the daily routines within the home provide young people with a sufficient level of privacy. There is ample space for young people to meet privately with their families and visitors. Policy guidance is available to staff about how to manage confidential information and documents are securely stored.

The home has established systems to help keep children and young people safe. Staff can access a good range of policies which provide guidance in how to deal with any complaints, safeguarding or bullying issues, absences without authority and dealing with challenging behaviour. The home has recently developed young people's comment cards which the girls can use to raise any concern they may have. Regular training in control and restraint techniques and safeguarding is provided to staff, to help them look after and protect children and young people from the risk of harm. Any restraint or disciplinary measure undertaken is reported within the home's dedicated records and monitored by the Registered Manager. However, the printed formatting of these records restricts the length of staff's written entries and does not provide sufficient space for staff to ensure that the full details of the young person's behaviour leading to the use of any measure of control, restraint or discipline is included in the written record. Neither is there sufficient space to include in detail, the description of the measure used, to enable effective monitoring of the appropriateness of the action taken to ensure that young people's welfare is protected. An action was raised with the home at the key inspection to improve safeguarding by addressing these identified shortfalls within the records; however, to date, little progress has been made in addressing the concerns raised.

The registered person and the Registered Manager have reviewed the amount of the financial reparations given as sanctions, as recommended at the key inspection. They have concluded that asking young people to repay the full cost of damage or financial loss caused by their unacceptable behaviour is beneficial to their progress and development and their understanding of actions and responsibilities. The management suggests that the giving of realistic financial sanctions helps young people to learn to be accountable for their actions and helps them to modify their behaviour. Any fine given is discussed with placing authority social workers and young people have opportunities provided within the home to earn money to repay any financial reparations incurred. Furthermore, the home has improved the security of recording any sanction given, by forward numbering the pages of the sanction record. However, the home continues to omit entering the amount of the financial reparation within the sanction book record, as recommended at the key inspection. This lack of detail impacts on the effective evaluation and monitoring of practice and does not provide sufficient detail of the sanction given, as is required by the Children's Homes Regulations 2001.

The home makes the required notifications to agencies, to ensure that appropriate persons are aware of any significant events relating to the protection of young people accommodated in the home. Mistakenly, the home has been using an incorrect notification procedure to Ofsted and notifications have not reached the inspector; this matter was rectified by the Registered Manager during the inspection.

Young people's welfare is promoted by the home's health and safety, fire checks and risk assessment systems in place. The home's electrical installations have recently been checked and some work has been carried out to ensure all electrical installation is at the required standard.

However, the home has not acted on the recommendation made to remove the bolt from the downstairs toilet and replace this with a suitable lock that can be opened from the outside by staff in an emergency situation, to ensure that young people are kept safe.

The company's recruitment and selection procedures have been reviewed and improved and recent recruitment processes meet current guidelines for safer recruitment practices. The home has not used agency staff and young people benefit from being looked after by a core group of staff employed within 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 not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The home has reviewed and amended their Statement of Purpose to ensure that it holds the correct information relating to this particular home. The Registered Manager now ensures that the home operates within its conditions of registration and the home has not accommodated too many young people at any one time.

The home maintains a register of the admission and discharge of young people. The Registered Manager ensures that all of the required details are now entered into this record, enabling an accurate history of the home's operation and young people's information to be kept.

The registered person has made some progress in developing a performance management system; however, individual staff members do not have personal development plans in place.

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
22	ensure details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of any measure of control, restraint or discipline, is included in the written record made in a volume kept for the purpose [regulation 17(4)(b)]	26 March 2010

Recommendations

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

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- clarify the sanction given within the dedicated sanction record; in particular, ensure that the amount of the financial reparation is entered in the record [National Minimum Standard 22.10]
 - ensure the staff (not children) are able to open the door to the ground floor toilet from the outside in case of emergency [National Minimum Standard 25.6]
 - ensure each member of staff has a Personal Development Plan in place [National Minimum Standard 28.7]