

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Paula Lahey
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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

The home is registered to provide care for up to four girls between 11 and under 17 years of age and who may 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, ducks, 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

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This was an unannounced interim inspection, the purpose of which was to assess the Every Child Matters outcome area of staying safe. This inspection reviews the progress the provider has made with one action and two recommendations following the previous inspection in August 2010. Two recommendations are raised resulting from this inspection visit.

The home continues to ensure good outcomes to young people and their safety and well-being is promoted. Young people say 'Loyalty Hall feels like a proper home and you know that the staff really care about you.'

A strength of the organisation remains the positive relationships between staff and young people. Staff demonstrate a good knowledge of young people's individual needs and work in partnership with them to develop their rights and responsibilities and to maintain their safety.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the key inspection held on 4 August 2010, one action and two recommendations were made.

The Registered Manager was required to ensure that the home obtained a copy of the placing authority care plan for each young person. The Registered Manager has made good progress to meet this action including having on file three care plans. Liaison with a placing authority to obtain the fourth care plan has continued,

however, at the time of inspection this was still outstanding. A recommendation has been made to ensure the Registered Manager continues to ensure that all young people have a placing authority care plan on file.

The home has reviewed its records for restraints; entries now contain details of any injury sustained, effectiveness of the restraint and signatures of the person making the entry.

There is an absence without authority policy in place, young people's risk assessments detail action to be taken and when local authorities will be contacted. The Registered Manager ensures that the emergency duty team are contacted on each occasion and has established links with the local police to produce more detailed individual protocols. Both these recommendations are met.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people's privacy is respected. Staff ensure that confidential records are kept in locked facilities with restricted access. Young people are supported to develop respect for their own and other's privacy. Comments made by young people include, 'Staff knock on my bedroom door and wait before they come in.' There are facilities available for the young people to store personal belongings securely and to make and receive calls in private. Young people's access may be monitored; however, this is subject to and in accordance with their care and placement plans. Young people say that this provision makes them feel safe.

The welfare of young people is protected. All staff have received safeguarding training, updated on an annual basis. Staff are clear about actions to take in response to disclosures or allegations and the policy and practice is consistent with the Local Safeguarding Children Board's procedures. There has been one child protection referral made since the last inspection and in addition, notifications of serious incidents are sent to Ofsted and placing authorities in a timely manner.

Measures are taken to protect young people from bullying. An anti-bullying policy is established which is conveyed to young people. Young people and staff do not currently see bullying as an area of concern within the home.

The complaints procedure is identified in the young person's guide and includes details of contacting external agencies. Young people said 'I can tell any member of staff if I am unhappy, they listen to me and help me.' One complaint has been made since the last inspection; this was raised by a young person resident in the home.

The complaint has been managed appropriately, consistent with safeguarding requirements.

The organisation works proactively to safeguard young people who are absent without authority. This includes; clear risk assessments and effective partnership working with local agencies. There are good arrangements for young people to discuss the reasons for them going missing with a person independent to home. The local police visited on the day of the inspection to follow up a recent incident.

Staff have developed positive and supportive relationships with young people, and through encouragement and reward, strive to promote socially acceptable behaviour. The young people are clear about their rights and responsibilities and spoke openly about consequences to unacceptable behaviour. Sanctions are fair and reflect the age and understanding of the young people. Sanctions include financial reparation or mending damaged furnishings. One young person stated 'I had to paint my bedroom wall after I had put holes in it.'

Staff are provided with regular behaviour management training designed to assist them to develop skills to manage and respond to the young people's behaviour effectively, while understanding the reasons why young people with complex needs may react in unacceptable ways. Physical restraint is only used when absolutely necessary and the central log contains the required information. Young people said 'the staff do restrain you sometimes, like when you are hurting yourself or breaking things. They do it for your own safety and they stop holding when asked.' The Registered Manager monitors the sanction and physical intervention logs for their effectiveness and to ensure they are fair and proportionate. Young people have the opportunity to talk about behaviour incidents in key working sessions, however, their views following sanctions and restraint are not formally recorded.

The home is maintained to a high standard and young people's physical safety is well protected. Robust risk assessments are in place regarding the premises, fire risks, and activities. All staff and young people have been involved in regular fire drills. Fire and electrical equipment is checked at appropriate intervals and records are up to date.

Recruitment files are held at the head office and were not seen on this occasion. On previous inspections, staff files have met the requirements of the Children's Home Regulations 2001.

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?

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the home is in receipt of placing authority care plans for all young people (NMS 35.2)
- ensure that a written record of young people's views on restraint and sanctions are recorded in the home. (NMS 22.14)