

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Robert Curr
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Date of last inspection	25/05/2010
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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 children's home provides up to four long-term placements for young people aged from 12 years old up to 17 years old. The accommodation consists of four single bedrooms and spacious communal areas for eating, studying and relaxing.

The home is approximately three miles from the town centre and it is close to public transport. One of the main aims of the setting is to equip young people with the skills to make responsible choices and to cope well as citizens.

Summary

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

This was an unannounced interim inspection. Matters looked at during this visit relate to the outcome area of staying safe and recommendations made at the last inspection. Details of the previous recommendations are outlined in the improvements section of this report.

Young people are generally safe in the home, but there are areas for improvement in staying safe identified in this report. Although staff have an understanding about keeping young people safe from harm, training in a number of areas is over due. Systems exist for young people to be supported to raise any issue or concern they may have about their support in the setting.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the registered person was asked to take action in relation to aspects of staying safe, enjoying and achieving, economic well being and organisation. This included less restrictive behaviour management, the provision of greater study facilities, improving the environment and further staff training.

Young people now enjoy freedom of movement throughout the home and there are no restrictions in place. Young people have access to a computer that allows for access to the internet for educational use; it is subject to appropriate restrictions.

The front door had been replaced and the outside area of the home is being improved.

Little progress has been made in relation to staff training and National Vocational Qualification ratios do not meet current standards. This is not ensuring that the staff team provide a competent service.

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's privacy is promoted. Information the home keeps about young people is treated and stored confidentially. Young people are provided with their own bedrooms and they have access to their own private washing facilities to promote their privacy and dignity.

Unauthorised absences are managed efficiently. Where young people absent themselves without authority, staff follow agreed protocols to promote their safe return. Staff assess young people's behaviours and identified risks are recorded to enable staff to work safely.

Although staff have had no formal training in relation to the organisations procedures, young people are able to raise their complaints and concerns knowing that these will be investigated appropriately. Records show that young people's complaints are taken and treated seriously.

Not all young people are allowed access to their own telephones to make and receive calls. Although the staff highlighted significant concerns around one young person's contact arrangements, staff are not following the current contact plan for one young person because of concerns they have. To date this has not been agreed with the placing authority.

The vast majority of staff are trained to undertake their duties professionally, in accordance with their caring responsibilities. They receive relevant training so they know how to protect young people from abuse and deal with allegations or suspected abuse.

Not all the staff team receive relevant training in the use of care and control. This does not equip them with the skills to keep young people safe when physical intervention is required. Staff members have been involved in restraining young people whose behaviour management training is not compatible with other staff members. This approach could compromise the safety of young people. The use of sanctions is consistently monitored to identify any patterns or trends.

All forms of bullying are taken and treated seriously. Staff use their presence as a physical deterrent towards bullying and there are effective supervisory arrangements in place to support and protect young people from bullying.

Health and safety within the home is taken seriously. There are regular fire evacuation drills and routine testing of the home's fire alarm. There is contractual inspection of the home's fire, gas and electrical appliances, which is conducted within the recommended timescales. The home's fire risk assessment is regularly reviewed.

No staff have been employed since the last full key inspection. Recruitment and selection procedures were not inspected on this occasion.

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.

Not all staff used are appropriately trained to meet young peoples needs. This does not ensure a consistent approach. Most staff are given basic training in matters, such as safeguarding, managing challenging behaviour and medication procedures. However, some of this training is overdue and not all the staff that are used have compatible training in physical intervention. Less than 80 per cent of staff have achieved a qualification at National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 3 in caring for Children and Young People.

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	obtain written consent from placing authorities when imposing a restriction, prohibition or condition upon a child's contact with any person (Regulation 15)	31/03/2011
22	ensure all staff working in the home receive appropriate training to meet the needs of the young people living in the home, in particular behaviour management, first aid and child protection. (Regulation 27)	30/04/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure all staff receive training in relation to the complaints procedures (NMS 16.6)
- ensure a minimum ratio of 80% of all care staff complete a National Vocational Qualification level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People or an equivalent. (NMS 29.5)