

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	14 May 2010
Inspector	Monica Farrimond
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	10 February 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 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 home provides accommodation for young people of mixed gender. Placements are usually planned for a medium to long term period. However, emergency placements can be considered. There is a facility to educate young people onsite if they are unable to maintain their current school placement. The building is a detached property and provides a good standard of accommodation. It is domestic in appearance and contains all the facilities associated with a domestic dwelling. It is located near to a small town and has easy access to transport, education, leisure and other community facilities.

Summary

This interim unannounced inspection looked at national minimum standards in relation to safeguarding, and progress the home had made since the last inspection in February 2009. There were no actions or recommendations made following the last inspection and safeguarding the welfare of the young people is a high priority and staff work positively as a team. However the home is currently without a Registered Manager, and five recommendations are made following this inspection relating to safeguarding issues, and one recommendation relating to placement plans.

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 no actions or recommendations made following the last inspection.

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.

There are sound procedures and good care practices that keep young people safe in the home. Staff demonstrate a strong commitment to preserving the dignity and privacy of young people, but confidentiality is compromised when young people enter the staff office to take official telephone calls; information relating to young people can be seen, thus confidentiality is not handled well. DVDs not suitable for young people were found at the home; this compromises the welfare of the young people and is not acceptable. Training for staff is kept up to date and detailed policies and procedures guide them in their work. Staff are sensitive to gender issues. This helps to ensure that equality and diversity is considered when caring for the young people accommodated.

The service has a well developed complaints procedure and all complaints are responded to promptly. Young people know the complaints procedure and they are confident that any complaint will be taken seriously. The manager has introduced a quality assurance document for young people, parents and social workers; this is to gain the views of all involved with a young person's placement, and to identify any complaints or concerns. This ensures that young people feel that their views and opinions are valued.

Staff are quick to intervene should a bullying situation arise and any issues relating to bullying are handled well, ensuring young people feel safe. Good staffing levels ensure that young people are well supervised. Individual risk assessments are in place, but placement plans showing up-to-date information on the young people's needs is currently being up dated and is not available. There is a clear protocol for staff to follow in the event of an unauthorised absence, which ensures that young people are properly protected.

Relationships between young people and staff are good. Staff have a positive view of the young people they work with. They promote and reward positive behaviour and support young people well, so that they are protected from incidents developing into episodes of challenging behaviour. Individual risk management and behaviour support plans clearly show how staff will work to promote behaviour that is positive and to lessen the risk of behaviour becoming challenging; however, records of physical restraint are not always appropriately recorded, and do not support the policy that restraints are only ever used as a last resort and in very clearly defined situations. There is no record of young people making their views known following physical restraints or sanctions; thus young people do not have the opportunity to say whether they feel safe, during, or after the restraint and whether they feel sanctions are fair. This does not promote the welfare of the young people accommodated.

Health and safety matters are managed well, so that young people benefit from being cared for in an environment that is safe. All staff and young people accommodated have attended training on health and safety, thus promoting the highest possible awareness of hazards to both staff and young people. Risk assessments on the environment and on activities, as well as on individual young people are regularly reviewed so that information is kept up to date and accurate.

The home's procedures for the recruitment and selection of staff are robust. All staff are thoroughly vetted before they are appointed to ensure that they are safe to work with vulnerable children and young people.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is inadequate.

Newly developed placement plans for the young people are in the process of being written by staff. However, during this process, new information relating to changes in circumstances is not readily available or being added to the existing plans. Consequently, it is not possible to assess how the needs of the young people are being addressed or met.

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
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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 does not have any videos or games certified as suitable for over 18s (NMS 15.8)
- ensure that children have their needs assessed effectively and comprehensively, and written placement plans outline how these needs will be met and are implemented (NMS 2.1)
- ensure the location of a telephone, used by the young people is convenient, private and practical (NMS 9.5)
- ensure that physical restraint is only used to prevent injury to the child concerned or to others or likely serious damage to property. Restraint is not used as a punishment, as a means to enforce compliance with instructions or in response to challenging behaviour (NMS 22.7)
- ensure that all staff are aware of, trained in, and follow in practice the registered person's policy on the use of physical restraint (NMS 22.8)
- ensure that when disciplinary measures or restraint are used, children are encouraged to write or have their views recorded and sign their names against them if possible in the records kept by the home. (NMS 22.14)