

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC066912
Inspection date	4 March 2010
Inspector	David Morgan
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	19 October 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 provides therapeutic residential care on a medium to long-term basis. It can accommodate two children and young people of either gender from the age of eight up to 18 years who display varying degrees of emotional or behavioural difficulties. The home is a normal domestic property within easy walking distance of local amenities. There are good public transport links and the home also has its own vehicle.

The organisation has its own school for children and young people whose needs cannot be met within mainstream education at this time. Children and young people enjoy high levels of support in school and they are able to access the National Curriculum. Therapists provide the third main part of the service. Children and young people are encouraged to engage in activities that address previously unmet developmental needs, promote their self-esteem and enable them to experience success and achievement.

This is a time of some growth for the organisation, with new personnel and properties being added.

Both young people presently accommodated in the home contributed to the inspection process.

Summary

This interim inspection was undertaken at minimal notice rather than completely unannounced to ensure that the young people and staff were present. The overall quality rating remains good. The inspection covers safety issues and matters raised at the last inspection; other standards are not addressed. The action and recommendations made last time have been addressed. Actions raised this time include the need for clarity regarding the amount of time the manager spends on site and the supervision arrangements for therapists. A recommendation is also made for the home to justify preventing children and young people entering the lounge at certain times.

Overall, children and young people continue to benefit from a well organised home.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The last inspection made one action and four recommendations. Since then, evidence is on site regarding the therapists who work with the children and young people. The format for placement plans is improved with easier attention to important issues on a daily basis. Systems of consultation with parents are under review. Children and young people are now more involved with their records in so much as they are asked to sign to acknowledge particular transactions or details. Their home has been improved by decoration of communal areas and re-carpeting.

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.

Children and young people's privacy is respected well and any information about them is confidentially handled. Staff ensure that private conversations are not overheard. Children and young people know how to make complaints but records indicate this has not been necessary for some time. Instances of bullying and children or young people being absent without authority are minimal and well managed by staff. Staff are kept up to date with safeguarding policies.

Children and young people have thorough individual crisis management plans that staff follow in practice when dealing with negative behaviour. This is an important contribution to the consistent practice that children and young people experience. Children and young people receive high levels of physical safety and security in the home. Fire safety, for example, is well managed with appropriate consideration of different emergency scenarios. Safety is also helped by effective recruitment processes.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Individual support is provided when children and young people need it and is of a high standard. Therapeutic input is a corner-stone of the service and clear arrangements are in place regarding how the therapists operate. However, there is no evidence regarding the current supervision arrangements of the therapists. This is particularly important because of the specialised nature of the work undertaken.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Partial implementation of a new placement plan format shows how children and young people's needs are met on a daily basis. This is a well thought-out document that helps to ensure effective care implementation.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Children and young people are encouraged to be involved in managing their personal allowances and sign when necessary. In certain cases the principle of signing their own records also helps to ensure they are consulted about issues such as physical interventions, which is good practice.

Children and young people enjoy a pleasant home providing sufficient space to meet their needs. It benefits from recent redecoration and re-carpeting in parts and more is planned. The lounge door is locked at night, which is not in keeping with providing a homely atmosphere and has not been agreed with interested parties.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Staffing arrangements are adjusted to meet the needs of the children and young people and to ensure staff are able to work effectively; this is good practice. However, attendance by the manager at the home is infrequent. Although there are other support arrangements in place this is a significant issue with the potential to impact on welfare issues.

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
7	ensure there is proper provision for the care, education, supervision and, where appropriate, treatment, of children, with regard to up-to-date evidence of the supervision of therapists (Regulation 11(1)(b))	5 April 2010
34	ensure that written notice is given to Ofsted if a person other than the registered person carries on or manages the home. (Regulation 38(a))	5 April 2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure that physical restrictions on normal movement within the home, with regard to locking the lounge, are used only in relation to a child where the restriction has been agreed within their placement plan and are used only to safeguard and promote that child's welfare. Such restrictions for one child do not impose similar restrictions on other children. (NMS 23.5)