

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	8 January 2010
Inspector	Carole Moore
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	3 July 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

This children's home offers a therapeutic placement for up to two young people aged six to under 18 years who have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The home is on three floors; the ground floor consists of a large communal lounge, kitchen, utility room, care office, toilet and a conservatory dining room. The young people are provided with their own bedrooms which are located on the first floor along with a bathroom and staff sleep-in room. An activity/classroom is located in the attic space on the second floor.

The house is set in its own grounds and comprises a hard standing area to the front of the building and lawned area to the rear.

Summary

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the key standards in the Every Child Matters outcome group of staying safe and one standard in organisation. It also looked at progress to rectify one recommendation raised at the last inspection in July 2009 in relation to training. One young person was present during this inspection.

The last inspection found the service to be good in all areas of practice and this inspection makes no change to that judgement.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The management and staff responded positively to the recommendation that was made at the previous key inspection.

The home was asked to ensure that 80% of the staff team have completed their National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 3 in caring for children and young people. Although this standard is not yet fully met, the home ensures that all new staff are enrolled on the NVQ programme following the end of their probationary period.

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 are benefiting from a service that has a good focus on safeguarding and protection matters. The home has a good range of operational policies and procedures that are used effectively to promote the safety and welfare of young people. The home has strong leadership that consistently promotes an environment where safety is acknowledged as important.

The privacy and dignity of young people is maintained very well in the home. Young people have individual bedrooms where they can spend time alone and access to a telephone that they can use in private. Staff ensure the information that is held about young people is shared only

with appropriate individuals and that it is stored securely. This protects the young people's right to confidentiality.

There is a robust process for dealing with complaints. Young people understand the procedure and there is evidence that their complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly.

Staff are trained in child protection issues. They have a clear understanding of the home's safeguarding procedures and of their own responsibilities in relation to responding to child protection concerns. There is good evidence that the home manages safeguarding issues well.

Bullying is not currently an issue in the home. Young people are made aware that bullying is not tolerated. Staff deal promptly with any difficulties that arise between young people and help them to understand the impact of bullying on others.

There is good evidence that there are very few incidents of young people going missing from the home, although there is a clear protocol for staff to follow should this occur. Staff are clear about the steps they should take to ensure the safe return of any young person who is missing from the home.

Young people are supported to behave in a way that is socially acceptable. Staff give young people firm and consistent boundaries and provide positive role models for them. Staff are trained to respond positively to behaviour that is challenging, so that this is managed in the least restrictive way possible. This safeguards the individual young person and others in the home. Staff undertake individual work with young people after any incidents to help young people look at the feelings they have experienced and to help them to consider different and more positive ways of responding. Relationships between staff and young people are positive.

Health and safety matters are well managed, to ensure that the home is a safe place for young people to live. Equipment and installations are regularly checked and serviced and there is a range of risk assessments in place that are regularly reviewed, so that staff can take appropriate steps to minimise hazards in the home. Staff and young people take part in evacuation drills, which means that young people understand what to do in the event of a fire or other emergency.

Careful vetting of potential employees and the routine checking of visitors ensures that young people are protected in the home from individuals who may pose a risk to them. The recruitment process is comprehensive and thorough with further checks being made to contact the referees and noting and verifying any gaps in the employment record of applicants. The home is selective, with the recruitment of the right person being more important than the filling of the vacancy.

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 good.

Young people benefit from being cared for by a committed and enthusiastic staff team. Staff are competent and well supported by managers and senior staff. They are trained to understand the specific needs of the young people they look after. Staff are expected to gain a relevant qualification for their work and the home enrolls each member of staff on the National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in caring for children and young people as soon as they have satisfactorily completed their probationary period. There are enough staff on duty at any one time, to ensure that young people are looked after safely and properly supported. Gaps in the rota are well managed, so that there is continuity of staff and young people know the staff who look after them.

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 80% of the staff team have completed their National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in caring for children and young people. (NMS 29.5)