

Inspection report for Children's Home

Unique reference number	SC067895
Inspection date	14/03/2011
Inspector	Helen Lee
Type of inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	28/09/2010
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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

The home is registered to accommodate and care for up to three young people. The home provides short to medium-term residential care for children and young people aged between eight years and 17 years old on admission.

The home is a three-storey property in a residential area, with a basement flat that is not designated for use by the children's home. The house is situated very close to the town centre and all the local amenities are easy to access.

There is a mainline rail connection, shops, cinema, sports facilities, parks and the beach within a five minute walk. Medical and dental services are available locally.

Three young people are currently living in the home. One young person was present during the inspection and spoke briefly with the inspector, but declined further discussion.

Summary

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

This unannounced interim inspection looked at the outcome area of staying safe and the progress the setting has made with the requirements and recommendations made at the last inspection in September 2010. The home demonstrates that care is in place for each individual young person. Young people's welfare is enhanced by the excellent relationships that exist between staff and young people. The manager provides strong leadership and demonstrates high standards of child care. However, staff recruitment practices are not robust and fire safety practices do not meet the minimum requirements.

At this visit two requirements were made regarding the recruitment processes of the home to ensure that the registered person does not allow any person to begin working at the home unless the home has full and satisfactory information available. Additionally one requirement was made regarding ensuring that a suitable number of fire evacuations is undertaken by the home thus providing guidance and practice for all staff.

Furthermore, four recommendations were made at this inspection. These were regarding the home obtaining a copy of the local safeguarding procedures; for the registered person to ensure that any risk assessments recorded at the home regarding countering bullying include an assessment of the times, places and circumstances; to review frequently the definition of bullying with the staff and young people and for the registered person to approve formally the homes

Statement of Purpose.

The overall judgement is judged as satisfactory because although not all outcome areas have been inspected at this visit, the outcome area of staying safe has been judged as satisfactory. This is covered in the main body of this report and is due to the requirements regarding fire safety procedures and staff recruitment.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the home was rated good and two requirements were made. The action regarding the homes Statement of Purpose is remade at this inspection. Whilst the home's updated Statement of Purpose accurately reflects the services, it does not reflect the current staff team. The action regarding staff qualifications is remade at this inspection. The home is below the required ratio for staff already possessing or enrolled on a suitable qualification for working with children and young people.

In addition, one recommendation was made at the last inspection. This recommendation is remade at this inspection as an action. The young people have placement plans and 24-hour management plans which include details of how individual needs are to be met. There are also key worker action plans with priority targets to ensure work with young people is focused. Young people are encouraged to be involved in the development of their plan of care. However, the overall paperwork does not enable a streamlined approach. The plans vary between generic and more tailored assessments for each individual child. It is not always clear how the actions will be met and how they will be evaluated to ensure they are effective. For example, behavioural management plan targets, as well as cultural, religious and language needs. One such plan has not been sufficiently completed and although the registered manager demonstrates a good understanding of the individual's changing needs, this is not reflected in the document which other staff are dependent upon.

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 respected in this home. Staff members enable all young people to have time alone and staff will not enter bedrooms without first knocking on the door and awaiting invitation. Young people are provided with a telephone so that they are able to contact friends and family. All information regarding young people is kept confidentially and their personal information is handled sensitively.

Young people know how to complain and make representations. The home's process

is presented in a written format and staff spend time verbally explaining this procedure to further ensure the children's understanding. Concerns are taken seriously, with appropriate action taken as a direct result. This system is well managed and overseen by the manager.

Young people are protected by well-managed safeguarding systems. All staff receive regular, ongoing safeguarding training and implement the home's clear procedures in practice. Appropriate action is taken in response to disclosures, as well as suspected and actual incidents of child protection concern. Staff understand these procedures and make appropriate referrals, consultations and notifications in the best interests of the children. However, the home does not have a copy of the local safeguarding procedures.

Children benefit from positive relationships with staff based on mutual respect and understanding. There are clear professional and personal boundaries in place for both the individual and the group. Policies and procedures are in place for reporting and returning young people who are absent without permission. Discussions with the young person about the reasons why they absconded are placed in their files.

Countering bullying is taken seriously by everyone in the home. Individual risk assessments and behaviour management plans readily identify a young person's vulnerability with regards to bullying and this heightens staff awareness, however, the home had not reviewed these to ensure there had been a reduction, or to cover the times, places and circumstances in which the risk of bullying is greatest. The home does create an atmosphere where bullying is known to be unacceptable and young people confirmed this. Staff take prompt action to deal with any incidents of bullying, with high levels of supervision. However the homes has not reviewed frequently with staff and children a definition of bullying which is included in the countering bulling policy.

Staff are keen to promote positive behaviour and conduct through good role modelling. Staff are good at managing the children's behaviour and support them to develop socially acceptable behaviour. The young people are supported to comment and sign incident records, to show their awareness, understanding of any physical intervention or sanctions used and how they felt. Although the logs are being monitored, trends and patterns are not explored by the manager consistently.

Health and safety is maintained well in this home and staff carry out risk assessments for both the young people and the environment ensuring reduced risks to young people's health and safety. However, there are not robust arrangements in place to keep children safe from risk of fire. Although fire safety systems are routinely checked and serviced, the home has not completed the required number of evacuations and records did not evidence that all staff have been included in a drill. However, young people were aware of the homes fire exits and meeting area and the home now displays a fire building plan for ease of use.

There is careful monitoring of visitors to prevent children being exposed to potential abusers. The recruitment system of the home has a selection and vetting process for

all staff and is managed to ensure all checks are carefully processed and followed up appropriately. However, the system is not robust. For example, one member of staff did not have satisfactory verification of the reason why one of their previous employment or position ended. In addition another did not have a full employment history or a satisfactory written explanation of any gaps in employment.

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?

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
1	ensure the Statement of Purpose provides all the information required in Schedule 1 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001. (Regulation 4(1))	30/04/2011
29	ensure staff have the qualifications necessary for the work they perform. In particular that 80% of all care staff are qualified to at least National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in caring for	01/07/2011

	children and young people, or an equivalent qualification (Regulation 26.3 (b))	
2	ensure the plans of care set out clearly how a young persons welfare is to be promoted including the objectives of the placement (Regulation 12)	16/05/2011
27	obtain for all staff, before they start work at the home, all the information set out in Regulation 26 and Schedule 2 (Regulation 26)	01/07/2011
26	provide clear guidance to staff and children on what to do in the case of a fire and update this guidance regularly, including making arrangements of evacuation in the event of fire (Regulation 32)	30/03/2011
27	obtain for all staff, presently working at the home, all the information set out in Regulation 26 and Schedule 2 (Regulation 26)	14/05/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure a copy of the local safeguarding procedures are kept in the home and that staff have read these, understand and are knowledgeable about them (NMS 17.2)
- carry out risk assessments in the home regarding the times, places and circumstances in which the risk of bullying is greatest, and takes action where feasible to reduce or counteract the risk of bullying (NMS 18.5)
- review frequently with staff and children a definition of bullying to be included in the countering bullying policy (NMS 18.2)
- ensure the registered person formally approves the Statement of Purpose of the home (NMS 1.5)