

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	4 February 2010
Inspector	Julian Parker
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	28 April 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 has been established by the provider to offer a specialised provision for up to six young adolescent males who can present problematic sexualised behaviour related to their early life trauma.

The home offers the young people it looks after an integrated package of therapeutic care, education and outdoor pursuits tailored to meet individual needs from referral to eventual rehabilitation or independence.

The home is set in a large detached property set in its own expansive grounds on the rural outskirts of a North Shropshire town. The home provides a high-quality living environment for the young people it accommodates.

Summary

This was an announced interim inspection. The visit concentrated on the Every Child Matters outcome areas for being healthy, staying safe and organisation reflecting the current resident and staff changes occurring at the home. At the time of this visit six young people were living at the home and some new residents briefly contributed to the inspection process.

At the last key inspection the children's home was assessed as good with some outstanding features. Following this inspection the overall judgement remains the same. This judgement will be reviewed at the home's next full inspection when all key national minimum standards will be re-assessed.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

No actions or recommendations were made by the last key inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people are being taught self-help skills in preparation for independence. They receive coaching and practical help from staff about how to budget, shop, plan and prepare meals both individually and as a communal activity. Guidance includes advice about healthy eating and the importance of balanced diets. Staff encourage young people to put into practice what they learn.

The health needs of young people are comprehensively assessed prior to and during their placement at the home to ensure that individual needs, including those for therapy, can be maintained. Comprehensive health plans are developed that record how relevant guidance, advice and support is being provided. Young people have access to a range of external services and qualified professionals to help them with any specific therapeutic, social and health needs alongside their routine preventive optical and dental checks. When young people are unwell they are helped to arrange appointments with local general practitioners. Annual health checks

additionally compliment the homes preventive and proactive approach towards promoting good health.

Staff at the home receive training in the safe handling and administration of medication and first aid. Medicine is stored securely in lockable cabinets and administered diligently. Arrangements for the treatment and consistent recording of accidents occurring within the home are thorough and confidential.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The right to privacy for young people living at the children home is positively promoted. Young people's private space and confidentiality is respected by staff within a framework of safe care. Informative guidance is provided by company policies and procedures that recognise the value of dignity and respect. Staff display this by not entering residents' bedrooms without knocking. All records and files pertaining to life at the home and individual young people are kept secure and confidential. Young people's issues are not discussed openly or with any unauthorised persons.

Young people are encouraged to raise any concerns or complaints they may have about any aspect of practice at the home directly with their carers or the Registered Manager. Young people have access to a clear responsive complaints procedure and uninhibited access to the manager who maintains a visible and approachable presence. Young people have access to independent advocates. The home takes complaints from young people very seriously and deals with all levels of concern, from whatever source, quickly and effectively.

The home uses established systems and processes, underpinned by company policies and procedures, that promote the protection of young people. Young people live in a safe, consistently managed and facilitating environment where their welfare and safety is the priority. Staff have a very good understanding of the particular needs of individual young people and know how to ensure that they are safeguarded and enabled to responsibly integrate in public.

The provision of regular child protection training alongside behaviour management and physical intervention training effectively informs staff practice at the home, helping to ensure that young people are kept safe. This is further enabled by staff being aware of the correct procedures to report any allegations or child protection concerns they may have. The home's policies and procedures for child protection are aligned with those of the Local Safeguarding Children Board. The home has an effective counter-bullying policy that supports positive interactions between young people. The ethos and culture of the house emphasises open discussion about any oppressive or bullying behaviour through the medium of regular community meetings.

Staff base their management of young people's behaviour on an the active encouragement of acceptable behaviour both within the home and the wider community. Staff are focussed on providing behavioural boundaries that are fair, consistent and easily understood. In this way the young people clearly understand what is expected of them. The relatively low-level of recorded incidents confirms that that young people are helpfully encouraged to take responsibility for their own behaviour and prevented from hurting themselves or others. Where young people have particular difficulty with their impulses these issues are addressed by care staff and therapists.

There are established effective systems in place for protecting young people who go absent without permission that take into account nationally-agreed protocols between children's providers and the police. The home reports these incidents and always makes formal notifications concerning significant events to all relevant authorities. Young people are made fully aware of the actions staff are authorised to take to promote their safety and protection. The possible consequences of any risky behaviour is always assessed, discussed with the young person and accurately recorded in the young person's case files. Ongoing and individual assessments of behaviour inform any necessary future action. Young people are taught to recognise that their behaviour is directly responsible for influencing the levels of trust and free time in the wider community they can receive, thereby realistically preparing them for independent living.

The home is proactive and effective in ensuring that young people, staff and visitors are kept safe from the risk of fire and other hazards. Records are maintained to confirm that regular preventative drills are conducted and that everyone within the home at the time is expected to participate. The overall health and safety of persons using the home is promoted by ongoing review of risk assessments for all potential environmental and activity related hazards. The insurance cover for the home is not fully confirmed by the home's present certificate by not complying fully with national minimum standards.

The vetting of staff and visitors to the home is comprehensive and thorough. Young people's safety is maintained because staff are not employed to work within the home until all necessary checks and references have been confirmed as being clear. All new staff undergo a comprehensive induction process that ably prepares them for working safely with young people. All visitors to the home are required to sign in and be supervised by staff.

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.

The updated Statement of Purpose for the home includes all information required by Schedule 1 of the Children's Home Regulations showing how the home is operated and what services it provides. The young person's guide provides an accurate account, in an age suitable format of what young people can expect from the home. The company policies and procedures provide staff with comprehensive guidance about the high expectations from the company for looking after vulnerable young people.

The staffing rota confirms that the home is staffed according to the levels identified by the Statement of Purpose and that this complement is appropriate to meet the individual care needs of the young people being looked after. Effective contingency arrangements are in place minimise the effect of possible staffing shortfalls and reduce any disruption to the care or support being provided. Young people are very well supported by a stable, experienced, qualified

and committed group of staff that ensure emotional and developmental needs are effectively addressed directly by themselves or through young people having access to trained therapists.

The home's qualified and experienced manager competently supports his staff team to ensure that the care given to young people is of a consistent high quality that improves the attainment of positive outcomes. Changes to the home's management are proposed in the near future and young people are being prepared for these. Regular staff meetings and staff supervision confirm that staff are supported well and communication within the home about young people's needs is constructive. Records supporting professional supervision do not currently indicate the proficiency level of staff working at the home.

The Registered Manager has a clear organisational process in place to regularly monitor and audit the quality of care being provided thereby ensuring its consistency. The production of monthly monitoring reports inform the process of service evaluation and incorporates useful feedback from young people's community meetings. The home's annual development plan identifies proven and attainable goals for service improvement over the next twelve months.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Young people living at the children's home receive an individualised package of care fitting to their age and ability, vulnerability and potential risk. All staff display a good knowledge of the young people they are working with, including their cultural background, which helps ensure that holistic needs are being addressed as far as is possible. The home has developed explicit policies and procedures promoting equality diversity in all aspects of their service for children from differing backgrounds, abilities and cultures. The home is accessible to people with mobility difficulties.

Young people's individual case files are confidentially stored and arranged in a manner that makes them readily usable by staff. They effectively demonstrate that the provider places emphasis on quality recording and evaluating meaningful information. Specific records such as placement plans, pathway plans and health plans effectively confirm how positive outcomes are identified and achieved. Young people are encouraged to access and contribute their thoughts and comments to case records.

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 professional supervision recording log is amended to clearly indicate the staff position, i.e. probationary or experienced and the duration of each support session (NMS 28.2)

- improve the certificate of insurance compliance with the national minimum standards by including the address of the home (NMS 26.9)