

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Sophie Wood
Type of inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	10/09/2010
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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 children's home occupies a large farmhouse style property with extensive outdoor space surrounded by fields and countryside. It has four bedrooms for young people and an office/sleep-in room, located over two floors. Each young person has their own room. There is a converted building next to the house which contains a gym, table tennis and pool rooms. The nearest town and village are accessed by the home's own transport provision.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This unannounced random inspection examined the standards for the staying safe outcome group and also looked at the progress made by the home in response to the two actions and five recommendations made at the previous inspection of 10 September 2010. These have been addressed.

Three young people currently live in the home and two were seen, albeit briefly, due to their schedules: the staff team remains committed to providing and supporting appropriate and meaningful activities.

Since the previous inspection, a new manager and two new staff members have been appointed. The team is working hard to effectively minimise any disruption and anxiety such change presents for the young people.

The home continues to provide a safe and secure environment and young people can be assured that their safety and welfare is effectively promoted and supported. Two recommendations have been made as a result of this inspection and these are explained within the main body of the report.

Improvements since the last inspection

Two actions with regards to the home's internal monitoring systems, (Regulation 33 and 34 reports), were made from the inspection of 10 September 2010, in terms of requiring clearer recording and a more robust approach with regards to quality assurance. Subsequent reports demonstrate a clear drive to achieve such aims; reports are detailed and analytical, thus providing the home with a robust critique and clearer drive towards improving its services for young people.

Recommendations were made with regards to food hygiene, safer recruitment training, updating placement plans, redecoration and staff supervision records. From this visit, food storage and necessary checks are clearly evident, thus effectively protecting the health of the young people.

The recruitment procedure now includes the provision that one member of the interviewing panel must have undertaken safer recruitment training and this factor further strengthens the home's recruitment processes.

Placement and behaviour management plans are seen to contain clear details with regards to the individual support needs of young people; hence, young people benefit from consistent approaches. The home is currently being redecorated and consultation between the staff and young people is exploring additional ways to further improve its aesthetics.

Improvements to staff supervision records offer greater clarity, which enables both parties to track and monitor targets more effectively.

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 peoples' privacy is effectively protected. The staff team is fully aware of the home's prescribed guidance, which is implemented in practice. Care files and other sensitive information is securely stored and staff share confidential information appropriately, with only those legitimately needing to know. The physical layout of the home serves to fully protect the privacy of young people when washing. They enjoy the privacy of their bedrooms, in conjunction with the routine good practice of the staff, which includes knocking on doors before requesting entry.

Clear and concise complaints information is readily understood by the young people, who are actively encouraged to make full use of these processes. Written records detail the nature, investigation process and the outcome. Although infrequent, the complaints which have been made show clear outcomes and the satisfaction of the complainants. Robust internal monitoring recently identified minor shortfalls with regards to one such record, resulting in improvements being made.

Young people can be assured of being well protected against possible sources of harm and abuse. All staff receive regular, ongoing safeguarding training, which is congruent with local authority guidance. The organisation has a dedicated safeguarding officer who retains a lead role across all of the homes. New staff have received immediate safeguarding guidance within their induction periods and they are booked to attend the next round of training.

A robust approach successfully tackles instances of bullying. Staff receive appropriate training and guidance, which they successfully impart to the young people, through group meetings and individual key working sessions. A separate bullying log records

individual instances and entries are infrequent. Individual risk assessments and behaviour management plans readily identify a young person's vulnerability with regards being bullied. Information with regards to an individual's likelihood to be a perpetrator is less clear, thereby potentially increasing the risks of engaging in this behaviour.

There have been no instances of young people being absent from the home since before the previous inspection. Policies and procedures are in place, should such an event occur and those staff spoken with demonstrate a sound understanding of how they should respond. Separate risk assessments further describe the very specific risks that would be prevalent for each individual.

Staff are good at promoting positive behaviour and conduct through appropriate role modelling and the use of rewards. Direct observation shows positive relationships are in existence between the staff and young people. An educative approach encourages young people to take responsibility for their actions and sanctions are carefully thought through before being applied. In the event of extreme and dangerous conduct, the guidance on the use of approved physical restraint techniques is clear. Staff receive accredited training on this. Written records are usually clear. Recent omissions have been identified through internal monitoring processes, but it is not always clear how such shortfalls are addressed with the authors of such records. The organisation is currently reviewing the format in an attempt to improve upon this.

The home, including its additional buildings and extensive garden provides good levels of safety and security for the young people. Routine health and safety checks, including a robust maintenance system, further ensures that safety and security is promoted. Due to recent and ongoing refurbishment, generic and fire risk assessments are being reviewed and updated on an almost daily basis to ensure any potential risks are highlighted and minimised. Fire drills continue to be practised, with good results and all of the staff and young people have received appropriate training and guidance.

Young people continue to be protected through the implementation of a robust recruitment procedure. Staff do not commence with their employment until all of the required checks have been satisfactorily returned. Personnel files are in good order and the organisation is currently delivering safer recruitment training to more of its employees. Visitors to the home are closely monitored, with their identity and the purpose of their visit clearly verified before gaining entry.

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?

Recommendations

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

- ensure there is a direct link between entries within the bullying log and individual risk assessments (NMS 18)
- ensure physical restraint logs are accurately completed on each occasion, clearly demonstrating any remedial action taken. (NMS 22)