

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspection date	17/02/2011
Inspector	Jackie Callaghan / Pamela Nuckley
Type of inspection	Random

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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 primary aim of the home is to provide an environment that enables all children and young people within their care to feel valued, secure and respected.

The home is a semi-detached house in a quiet multicultural residential setting. The home is registered for two young people of either gender aged from 10 to 17 years old. It provides two single occupancy young people's bedrooms and is situated within easy access of local bus routes and other local transportation. There are local amenities nearby, such as shops, supermarkets, leisure centre and parks.

There are two young people currently living at the home. Both young people were present for part of this inspection and one young person actively contributed to the findings in this report.

Summary

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

This was an interim unannounced inspection that concentrated on following up the two actions and one recommendation made at the last inspection. One action has yet to be fully met and is therefore repeated from this visit. This is because staff supervisions are still not taking place in order to robustly develop staff practice and help to promote improvements for young people.

This inspection focused on keeping the young people safe. One new action and two new recommendations have been raised as a result of this visit.

This inspection found that young people are protected by appropriate safeguarding processes. Young people spoke confidently about the anti-bullying stance taken by the home and said, 'I am not bullied but I would feel comfortable talking to staff if I was'.

Discussions with young people and staff demonstrate that young people are encouraged to raise issues. However, when issues are raised informally, staff are not always recognising that they constitute a complaint. Young people's observations on candidates applying to work with them are not routinely sought prior to staff being interviewed and subsequently employed by the company. The sanctions and physical interventions books do not contain all of the required information. The accomplished relationships, however, between staff and young people are a key strength of the home.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the home's last inspection the Registered Manager was asked to ensure all persons receive appropriate supervision and that all staff, before they start work at the home, have all of the information as set out by Regulation 26. The Registered Manager was also asked to ensure that the sanctions given are not unreasonable or excessive.

All new staff that have started employment since the last inspection have undergone all of the required checks prior to deployment in the home. As a result, young people's welfare is safeguarded. Young people confirm that they feel that the sanctions given are appropriate. Staff develop positive relationships with young people and are supporting them to manage their own behaviour in a way that is socially acceptable.

Supervisions, although much improved, are still not meeting timescales as defined by the national minimum standards. This means that the development of staff's practice in the diverse aspects of care is potentially weakened.

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.

Staff respect young people through awareness of their rights to privacy and confidentiality. Room searches are completed and recorded in line with the company's policies and procedures and these searches are only done if there are concerns about the safety and well-being of young people. Young people are informed of such searches, are present when they take place and are encouraged to give their feelings in writing about the search. Sensitive and personal information about young people is kept within the office and placed in lockable cabinets.

Young people are able to raise any issues or concerns through formal and informal communication systems. A young person said 'I know how to complain but I will often just talk to staff before it gets to that point as it is often just a grumble'. However, a recent issue raised by a young person through an informal discussion had not been documented. The young person said that it had been dealt with very well and resolved. The risk, however, is that staff may not appropriately support a young person because they do not recognise that the issue raised constitutes a complaint.

Staff are aware of the procedures to follow if a safeguarding incident and/or concern is identified. There is regular training for staff, and guidance on child protection is

available within the home. When concerns have been raised staff complete a strategy meeting form and then update the young person's risk assessment. These risk assessments also identify the potential for unauthorised absence from the home and strategies are put in place to encourage young people to maintain contact with the home at all times. The home has been successful in reducing the number of absences from the home and generally young people return by themselves.

Young people comment that bullying is not a concern at this time. Advice on bullying can be found in the young people's guide and on their notice board. Young people have an opportunity to contact outside support agencies if they feel concerned about the behaviour of other residents and/or staff.

Young people are encouraged to develop socially acceptable behaviour through encouragement, praise and reward charts. Young people state that sanctions are appropriate. Behaviour management plans give a detailed and clear assessment of young people's behaviours, as well as the strategies staff are to use to support young people in times of difficulty. In the sanctions and physical intervention books, the matters recorded are not in line with regulations. As a result, they do not hold the information required to monitor the appropriate use of sanctions and physical interventions as defined by individual behaviour management plans.

The home has the required fire safety procedures and policies in place. Fire safety risk assessments have been completed and young people participate in fire drills. Staff complete training in all the safe working topics and demonstrate a clear understanding of the issues for keeping young people safe.

The home operates an appropriate staff vetting procedure and staff demonstrate proactive awareness of the need to safeguard young people. Currently young people's views on the new staff recruited are ascertained once staff have been employed. The home is not assessing or observing if young people are happy with the selection of staff prior to employment. Involving young people in advance of employment empowers young people to actively contribute to the appointment process.

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 satisfactory.

There continues to be shortfalls in meeting required timescales for the supervision of staff. New staff do not receive fortnightly supervisions for the first six months of their employment. This means that these staff members are at risk of not receiving the support and guidance they need to help them fulfil their job role.

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
22	maintain an accurate and up to date record of measures of control used (Regulation 17)	17/03/2011
28	ensure that staff receive appropriate supervision and appraisal. (Regulation 27.4 (a))	17/03/2011

Recommendations

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

- develop staff training to explicitly understand what constitutes a complaint (NMS 16.6)
- consider developing the opportunities for including the observations of young people in the recruitment of staff. (NMS 27.7)