

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC357455
Inspection date	26 January 2010
Inspector	Elaine Clare
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	20 August 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 home is a private children's home owned and managed by a family partnership. It is situated in a small industrial town close to local amenities. It is registered to provide accommodation for up to four young males, aged from 10 years old up to 17 years old, with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Their overall aim is to offer a family atmosphere and environment, which will allow vulnerable young people in crisis the stability and care, giving them an opportunity to settle and achieve.

Summary

This is an unannounced interim inspection. Only the key standards relating to the outcome group staying safe are assessed on this occasion. There were no actions but two recommendations raised resulting from this inspection.

The home provides an excellent standard of care for young people who have complex needs. The staff team work very hard to ensure that care and support are delivered in a detailed and sensitive manner. The staff team are very well managed and systems operated in the home ensure that monitoring assesses the standard of care on a regular basis.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

There were three recommendations made at the last inspection and all three have been addressed satisfactorily. A written consent is on each child's file from the social worker giving the home permission to use surveillance, the complaints procedure now also includes the address of Ofsted and staff have commenced their National Vocational Qualification training.

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.

Children say staff respect them and value their right to privacy and confidentiality. Children's information is only discussed with them, and no other young person is allowed access to any details of their private lives. Staff knock on children's doors before entering their rooms and contact with friends and family can be conducted in private. Staff are aware of the need to ensure children have appropriate privacy and strive to achieve this.

Robust procedures are in place to address any complaint or representation made by a young person. All staff receive training in this important area and are aware of the need for detailed recording of any incident. Procedures are in place to ensure the complainant is kept informed of the process and conclusion of any concern. Children are aware of their right to make complaints and to seek external support if they wish. Weekly key worker and house meetings provide both a private and an open forum for children to express concerns. Children say that

they typically make a verbal complaint and see little reason to make a written record. Also if the matter was more important or a concern to them, they would make the complaint in writing.

Well-managed safeguarding procedures are in place in this home. Practice is of a high standard and records are well maintained. The home's safeguarding policies and guidance mirror that of the local authority. A recent event led to an informal discussion between social workers regarding an incident that had happened and Ofsted was not notified; this was not good practice. All staff receive mandatory and annual refresher training in this area.

Robust anti-bullying procedures are in place to counter any discrimination or victimisation. Children say bullying within the home is not a problem. If it does occur, staff are quick to deal with it. There is also the opportunity to talk things through with key workers and during weekly house meetings. The manager ensures staff maintain vigilance within the home and the topic forms part of open discussion in staff meetings. Any incidents are recorded and reported separately.

Children who go missing or leave the home without permission are supported by well planned and effective responses. Procedures for staff include the searching, reporting, and recovery of any missing young person. Upon a young person's return, staff try and ascertain why the young person went missing and consider methods to counter any reoccurrence. Current children say they have not felt the need to become absent without authority. If they did, they believe that staff will meet with them, sit down and talk things through.

Staff employed by the organisation support the home in meeting the behavioural and emotional needs of children. There are also excellent working relationships with external agencies. When children behave in a negative manner, staff use agreed methods of behaviour management which may include approved sanctions. Recording of such events includes a consideration of the effectiveness of any control or sanction used. However a central log is not kept of all the incidents. The manager oversees all methods of behaviour control, which are discussed in staff meetings. Children say although they may not like the sanctions, they are fair and reasonable. Children say they are always advised when their behaviour is unacceptable and given an opportunity to modify their conduct.

Comprehensive health and safety policies and procedures are in place, of which staff have sound knowledge. Fire safety is robustly maintained in the home. Regular fire drills and evacuation take place. Risk assessments are comprehensive and in place for all key areas of the home. In addition, staff consider how children's known behaviour may impact on such risk. All checks on appliances and electrical installations are maintained within their statutory timescales.

Staff appointment records are well managed. In ensuring children are appropriately safeguarded, required checks are completed prior to individuals commencing work. All visitors to the home are strictly monitored and required to sign in and out of the building.

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 home have responded appropriately to the recommendation made at the last inspection and staff have commenced on their National Vocational Qualification in Caring for Children and Young People.

As this was the only aspect of organisation assessed during this inspection, the judgement remains the same as the judgement made at the previous key inspection.

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 significant events are reported to the appropriate authorities (NMS 20)
- create a central bound and numbered book for the recording of restraints. (NMS 22)