

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspection date	03/03/2011
Inspector	Anna Williams / Heather Chaplin
Type of inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	16/11/2010
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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

This home is a children's home for children and young people aged between nine and 17 years. It is operated by a national independent children's services provider. The home is situated in a residential area close to a seaside town. There is easy access to larger centres which can provide extensive sports and leisure activities.

The home is registered to accommodate children and young people who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. In particular, they may have a history of trauma, abuse or family breakdown. Short to medium term placements may be offered. Several staff hold qualifications in counselling and the home is supported by consultancy from a registered psychotherapist.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This is an unannounced random inspection. The focus of this inspection is the judging of the key standards relating to the outcome group staying safe.

This inspection reviews the progress the provider has made with three recommendations resulting from the previous inspection.

One recommendation is raised resulting from this inspection visit.

One young person was at home during the inspection and took part by commenting on their care.

The welfare of young people is effectively promoted within the home. Procedures in place ensure they are safeguarded from harm. Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of safeguarding issues and know how to implement the home's procedures.

Young people are able to raise concerns or complaints and have them addressed appropriately. Young people feel safe and well cared for in the home.

Staff receive appropriate training and guidance and are subject to thorough vetting procedures before they start working at the home.

Improvements since the last inspection

Three recommendations were made at the last inspection. The first related to ensuring that young people can lock their bedroom doors if they wish to unless there

is a risk assessment in place supporting the absence of a door lock. There is now a risk assessment in place which details reasons to support the absence of a lock on the bedroom door. However, a young person has recently raised a complaint about the absence of a lock and wishes to have one fitted for reasons of privacy and this has been agreed.

A second recommendation related to ensuring that young people of both genders receive equal allowances for personal requisites and this has been changed to be equal amounts within the home's allowance policy.

A third recommendation was around the consideration of reviewing the format of the Regulation 33 reports to provide qualitative information on the home's strengths and areas for further development. The Regulation 33 reports now contain more detailed narrative about the home and its progress.

All three recommendations have been met.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Young people's privacy is protected. Staff ensure that confidential records are kept in locked cabinets with restricted access. Young people confirm that staff respect their privacy and they are able to contact friends and family by telephone in private.

Young people are able to raise a concern or make a complaint. The young people's complaints log has two entries since the last inspection. One complaint has been resolved appropriately, and the other complaint is more recent and suitable action is being taken. Young people confirm that they feel able to talk to staff and know how to make a complaint.

Young people benefit from the organisation's robust safeguarding policy and procedures. Staff have a good understanding of the procedures to be followed and receive annual training. Staff work positively with young people to reduce the occurrence of behaviours that may place them more at risk. Discussions with young people show they are aware of what action to take if they have any concerns and they feel safe.

Bullying is taken seriously, with behaviour management plans in place that provide guidance to staff. Staff promote an atmosphere of support and respect that is used to ensure the potential of bullying behaviour is reduced in the home.

Written policies and procedures are in place for managing incidents if young people are absent without authority. They detail clearly the action to be taken and specific people to notify. Incidents of young people absent without authority are very low.

Young people benefit from an environment where there are clear boundaries and expectations for behaviour. Staff are working hard to re-engage young people into education and recognise the importance of developing positive relationships based on trust. Link worker one-to-one sessions provide ongoing opportunities to discuss behaviour related issues. Staff attend behaviour management training which provides them with skills to de-escalate and manage incidents of challenging behaviour. Behaviour management arrangements are well-established, however, the sanctions log is not being effectively monitored by current management systems.

Young people live in a home that provides good physical safety and security. Environmental risk management strategies contribute to keeping young people safe around the home. Supervised and unsupervised activities take into account the safety of young people at all times with risk assessments in place. Fire drills are undertaken with both staff and young people and there is regular testing of the fire alarms and emergency lighting.

The organisation has a thorough recruitment process that ensures all necessary checks are completed prior to a member of staff starting work. Staff are aware of their responsibilities to monitor and manage visitors to the home to ensure young people are kept safe.

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 that the registered person records any comment on the appropriateness of individual uses of sanctions, together with any subsequent action, and signs against each entry to confirm the monitoring has taken place. (NMS 22.11)