

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC362965
Inspection date	17 February 2010
Inspector	Christopher Garrett
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	14 May 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 single placement children's home run for children and young people aged between nine and 18 years. It is one of several children's homes owned by a national child care agency. It is situated in a residential area close to a seaside town. Placements at the home are for children and young people who have been assessed as needing extra 'time-out' on a structured basis. The home is registered to accommodate children and young people who have emotional and behavioural difficulties and have a history of trauma, abuse or family breakdown. The home provides short to medium term care to allow for the identification of planned placements or to prepare young people for a move to independence. A registered psychotherapist works closely with staff to advise and assist the ongoing assessment programme. A therapeutic environment is tailored to meet the needs of the individual. Young people are enabled to access a wide range of recreational and cultural activities.

Summary

The purpose of this visit was to complete an announced random inspection. During the inspection the key national minimum standards for Children's Homes relating to the staying safe outcome were assessed.

The overall judgement is based on findings of the previous key inspection. No further evidence has been collected to suggest that this should be amended.

The home is committed to providing safety and security to young people. Staff are given training which ensure they are able to effectively manage a range of anti-social and dangerous behaviours. The young people are given clear guidance on what behaviour is expected from them, and achieve this with the support and encouragement of the staff.

At the time of the inspection one young person was living in the home and was present during the inspection.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

No shortfalls in meeting regulations or standards were identified during the last inspection.

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.

The home maintains excellent standards of practice and takes positive steps that ensure that whoever is living there are safe, protected from harm and their welfare is promoted.

Staff show a very high regard for the privacy of young people and for maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality. For example, young people living at the home have their own bedroom and staff do not enter

this (except in emergencies), without their permission. There are occasions that staff need to search a young person's bedroom to ensure and maintain their welfare and safety. These are conducted in a sensitive manner and with the full knowledge of the young person.

The home has developed an effective complaints procedure for young people, parents, carers and other stakeholders to raise significant issues. However, there is an expectation amongst the care staff, which is borne out in practice, that any issues or concerns can be dealt with informally. There is evidence that young people who stay at the home have confidence in talking to and sharing concerns with the staff. The home has a system for recording formal complaints and the action that has been taken. Formal complaints are rare and none have been recently logged.

The home has developed robust procedures to respond to occasions that young people are absent from the home without authority. Individual protocols are drawn up in consultation with the placing authority and the local emergency services. These are fully understood by the staff and consistently applied to help ensure appropriate, timely responses to any incidents. Young people are offered emotional and practical support on return to the home. They have opportunities to discuss and explore the reasons why they left the home. However, this arrangement does not include routine access to someone independent of the home.

The home has established procedures in place to ensure that the welfare of young people living at the home is promoted and they are protected from abuse. The home ensures that all of its staff have the knowledge, understanding and skills required to respond to incidents of abuse. Regular training is provided to the whole staff team on child protection and safeguarding awareness. Staff are fully aware of the procedures that are in place and demonstrate a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities in responding to an allegation or suspicion of abuse.

The home follows the company's procedures for the recruitment and vetting of staff. The procedures are well established and cover all of the requirements of the national minimum standards. The company ensures that all staff have an appropriate criminal record bureau check undertaken before they are allowed to take up their employment. The company's vetting and recruitment processes effectively contribute to the safeguarding of the young people and help to ensure that they are not exposed to potential abusers.

The management of the behaviour of young people who stay at the home is excellent. Young people are made aware of the standard of behaviour that is expected of them. Routines and boundaries are strictly adhered to. The staff produce outstanding behaviour management plans for young people who stay at the home. These identify anti-social, high risk and dangerous behaviours and record the strategies agreed by the care team to manage these. Plans are regularly reviewed and are contributed to by the company's psychotherapist. All staff are familiar with the plans and this ensures that these are consistently applied. Staff are given training and develop skills and knowledge that helps them to understand, manage and respond to the young people's behaviour. This includes attachment theory and positive handling which covers the use of de-escalation techniques and physical intervention. Care staff use their training effectively. There are no recent recording of restraints and sanctions are rarely used.

There are well established procedures in place which ensure that whoever is living at the home, staff and visitors are safe from fire. Systems are in place for the regular checking and servicing

of fire safety and detection equipment. Evacuations are routinely undertaken. All staff receive training in fire awareness. A fire risk assessment is in place. However it is unclear whether this addresses the requirements of current fire legislation.

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?

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):

- arrange for young people who go missing without authority to have access to a person independent of the home to discuss the reasons for their absence (NMS 19)
- ensure that the home's fire risk assessment meets the requirements of current legislation. (NMS.26)