

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Chris Scully
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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 that is part of a large organisation operated by a local authority. The home provides care for up to two young people aged between 10 to under 18 years on admission who have significant, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is a three bedroom semi-detached house, situated on a housing estate and the young people are able to access local leisure activities in the immediate neighbourhood. The home has transport to take the young people to those facilities that are a greater travelling distance away. The home provides each of the young people with an individual bedroom. To the rear of the building is an enclosed garden, which provides space for a range of activities. To the front of the building is a small garden with no off road parking facilities. Two young people are currently living at the home.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This was an unannounced interim inspection. One outcome area for young people was looked at during the inspection, which was staying safe. The other outcome areas were judged as good at the key inspection in June 2010. The inspection also considered the progress made with the recommendations raised at the previous inspection.

The continues to be a good service that meets most of the national minimum standards. Records show that young people enjoy living here and have a positive relationship with staff. Young people are cared for safely by a competent team of staff who work well together and are suitably experienced. Clear procedures are in place to safeguard children and protect them from harm.

The Registered Manager is required to consider one action in relation to notification and two recommendations pertaining to the sanction record and risk assessments.

Improvements since the last inspection

The Registered Manager was required to take steps to address the five good practice recommendations raised at the previous inspection. These related to the complaints record, the admission's log, young people's meeting and monitoring visits.

A clear procedure is in place for handling and recording all external complaints made to the home. There have been none since the last inspection. The Registered Manager ensures that the home's admission and discharge log clearly reflects when young people are admitted and discharged from the home. Records of young

people's meetings clearly indicate where they have been offered and when a young person has refused to attend. Procedures are now in place to ensure that the person carrying on the home but who does not manage on a day to day basis visits the home on a regular basis in line with the regulations. Steps have been taken to ensure any reports written by this person are factually accurate.

By addressing these issues the home has improved upon the recording systems and organisation of the home.

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 people's privacy is respected and information is confidentially handled. Records relating to young people are securely stored in the office. Young people enjoy a positive relationship with staff and engage in light hearted banter with them. Young people benefit from effective procedures for investigating complaints. They know how to make a complaint and who to speak to should they have any concerns. There have been no formal complaints since the last inspection. Although young people have decided that one member of staff should no longer do any cooking in the house. This is because they put mushrooms in the evening meal which is 'not nice!' Young people are able to make private calls on their mobile telephone or by using the house telephone.

Young people benefit from effective safeguarding arrangements. Staff are acutely aware of the young person's vulnerabilities and are vigilant in their observations of their behaviour. This means staff are responsive to the young person's needs and are able to protect them from harm. Staff have a secure understanding of the safeguarding procedures, which means they are able to respond quickly to a situation and secure the appropriate support for a young person. For example, following an incident staff sought appropriate medical attention for a young person and follow up support from the child and adolescents mental health team (CAHMS). This incident was effectively reported to most of the appropriate people with the exception of Ofsted. This oversight is a breach of regulation however the homes priority at the time was the health and well-being of the young person.

Bullying is not an issue for young people and they know that 'this is not acceptable'. However, staff are very aware of the potential for this and talk to the young people about how to keep themselves safe both in the home and community. There has been one incident involving the young people not returning home. Staff contacted the young person via their mobile telephone to ascertain their whereabouts and informed them that if they did not return by a set time the police would be informed.

This provides young people with the opportunity to return home by themselves, which they do. Clear protocols are in place with the placing authorities and police should a young person be missing from the home and staff are unable to contact them.

Young people benefit from a calm and consistent approach to behaviour management. This means young people are provided with time and effective support to work through their issues. This is supported by the detailed behaviour management plans, which outline young people's specific behaviours' and triggers. This means staff are able to provide each young person with individualised support. Young people are aware that if they engage in risky behaviour staff may need to physically intervene. All staff are trained to carry out physical interventions safely and with the minimal amount of intervention necessary. All such interventions are documented well. Young people are aware of the house rules and the possibility of receiving sanctions. All sanctions are recorded; however, the records do not show the effectiveness or impact of the sanction upon the young person's behaviour.

Health and safety matters are managed appropriately. General risk assessments enable staff to put appropriate plans into place to lessen or eliminate risks to young people. However, some individual risk assessments such as those relating to young people having cigarette lighters conflict with one another. For example one risk assessment states that due to the young person's history they must not have a cigarette lighter especially in their bedroom. The risk assessment states that if the young people is suspected of having one, a room search should be carried out. The next risk assessment in relation to the same young person smoking states they can have a lighter. This is contradictory and potentially places others in the home at risk. Fire, gas and electrical equipment are checked and young people take part in fire drills.

Secure procedures are in place to ensure all staff undertaken the necessary vetting check before they commence employment at the home. Information relating to staff is held securely in the office and in the organisations head office. All visitors to the home are monitored and are required to sign in the visitor's book. The home is appropriately secured and monitored to prevent unauthorised individuals gaining access to the premises. These procedures ensure young people are protected from potential harm.

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/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
20	should any of the events in column 1 of the table in schedule 5 takes place, the registered person shall without delay notify the persons indicated in respect of the event in column 2. In particular Ofsted is informed of any serious illness or accident sustained by a young person accommodated in the home (Regulation 30 (1))	06/04/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure the record of any sanction given to a young person details the effectiveness and any consequences of the sanction and young people are encourage to sign the record (NMS 22.10)
- ensure young people's individual risk assessments in relation to known and likely activities such as smoking are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure they remain current and in particular do not provide conflicting information. (NMS 26.2)