

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC372613
Inspection date	23 July 2009
Inspector	Julian Parker
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	3 March 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

The provider operates small children's homes that generally provide for economy and mutual support. These are usually two-bedded homes coupled with a satellite single-bedded unit. Although both homes may be overseen by a single manager, they operate independently with dedicated staff teams and a competent deputy manager who is usually NVQ Level 4 qualified. This children's home is registered to look after up to two young people, of either sex, between the ages of 10 to seventeen years. Only one young person was resident during this visit. The home is located in a large former farmhouse style property in a semi-rural setting. The layout of the home allows staff to adjust the environment and the care provided to meet the needs of the young people accommodated.

Summary

This unannounced, interim inspection of the children's home, looks at all of the key National Minimum Standards other than the staff recruitment process within the Staying Safe and Management outcome areas and actions and recommendations arising from the last inspection.

The home is judged as good. Young people receive individualised care that is consistently applied within a safely maintained environment. Although there has been a change of occupancy, staff at the home make every effort to engage with young people and understand how to deal effectively with difficult behaviour.

The organisation of working practices is strong and the home functions well. The manager provides effective direction and leadership to the staff team and stresses the importance of effective recording. This ensures that staff are clear about individual roles and responsibilities and provide consistent care for the young people being looked after. This inspection has not identified any required actions or recommendations.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the registered person was required to ensure that young people knew what could be expected from the home by providing a Children's Guide. The redrafted guide has now been provided for all new admissions.

The inspection recommended that young people being prepared for independence had access to a Pathway Plan that indicated what help they would be given. This process has been implemented. The way in which children are consulted has been improved by holding weekly Young People's Meetings. Young people have been provided with access to a person independent of the home, every time they go missing without permission, further confirming how the home promotes their safety.

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.

The welfare and safety of young people is promoted within the home by staff following established company policies. These have been developed to fully comply with regulatory requirements and good practice in areas including: child protection and countering bullying, managing behaviour effectively and safeguarding children. The home's Registered Manager has helped develop local procedures for children who go missing from care. Staff have access to and know the requirements of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board's guidance which includes how to recognise signs of abuse. The company provides regular staff development and training to ensure that staff know how to look after young people safely.

Staff at the home base their management of behaviour on a sound knowledge of young people and by the encouragement of acceptable behaviour. Young people are made aware of the standards of behaviour expected from them. These are discussed regularly to ensure young people know the relationship between compliance and the home's activities and routines. Staff always treat young people with positive regard and this is confirmed by the home's infrequent use of sanctions or behavioural controls and staffing. Staff receive regular training in managing behaviour which includes the safe use of physical restraint. This training is refreshed annually and all reported incidents are evaluated by the home's manager.

Staff practically demonstrate their respect for young people's right to privacy and confidentiality. This is achieved by providing young people with their own bedrooms, by guarding all personal information and by communicating professionally with other stakeholders.

Staff awareness of potential dangers to young people is enhanced by the compilation of risk assessments that cover all aspects of safety in the living environment, for example, the risk from fire, environmental hazards and those risks that emerge from challenging behaviour and recreational activities. Risk assessments are reviewed regularly and consider all changes affecting the home, such as staffing levels or alterations to the home's routine. Young people respond sensibly to fire precautionary drills with staff encouragement.

Any concerns or complaints young people may have are taken seriously by staff at the home. The home has a clear and effective complaint procedure summarised in the revised young persons guide. Young people are made aware of how to complain and who they can complain to. To date, no complaints have been made by the present resident. Young people are provided with access to an independent advocacy service that promotes their right to be heard both with complaints and following an unauthorised absence from the home.

To safeguard young people there are effective systems for the monitoring of all visitors to the home. No stranger is allowed access to the home without an appointment or supervisory measures being in place. The company's recruitment and selection process as described by the manager confirms that no staff start working with young people before all necessary suitability checks have been completed. Staff personnel files have not been examined during this visit.

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.

Young people are well supported by competent, trained staff who know about them and are committed to providing safe, consistent care. The experienced and qualified Registered Manager supports her staff by selecting her team according to how they can meet the young people's needs and by encouraging staff access to professional development. Staff have attended all statutory training and additional courses.

The home's Statement of Purpose includes the information outlined by schedule 1 of the Children's Home Regulations. Both the Statement of Purpose and the amended Children's Guide provide accurate information about what services the company and the children's home provide.

The home is sufficiently staffed with the daily rota confirming that the complement is as detailed within the home's Statement of Purpose. All staffing shortfalls are covered by in-house staff or by known staff from other company homes, thereby reducing any potential for disruption to routine or the level of support being provided. The arrangement for safe one-to-one work with young people is fully addressed by the home's risk assessments, but remain subject to constant staff review to ensure individual safety at all times. Staff develop their practice by reference to the company's comprehensive policies, procedures and guidance that are supported by training opportunities.

The home has established monitoring processes confirming the operational efficiency and quality of care being provided. In-house monitoring is good. External monthly monitoring takes place through the use of a regulation 33 visitor. Feedback from young people contributes to this process and helps to inform the homes practice. An annual development plan succinctly outlines future development.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The particular level of detail contained within the young people's plans, case files and daily recording documents confirms that staff know of young people's particular differences and difficulties. From this level of detail they can develop their practice to fully support individual developmental and cultural needs.

The home is well organised. Young people's case files are securely stored and arranged in a manner that is accessible to all the staff. Young people know the contents of their files and that they may request access to them. They are always encouraged to contribute their thoughts and comments through many of the homes individualised report formats.

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

There are no recommendations.