

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC372617
Inspection date	10 February 2010
Inspector	Julian Parker
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	9 July 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 is a small children's home catering for one young person, aged 12 - 17 years. It is a two bed-roomed detached cottage-style property located in a rural setting. The layout of the home allows staff to quickly adjust the environment and the care being provided to respond to and meet the needs of the young people being accommodated.

Summary

This was an announced interim inspection. The visit concentrated on the Every Child Matters outcome areas for staying safe and organisation reflecting the current resident and staff changes occurring at the home. At the time of this visit one young person was living at the home who briefly contributed to the inspection process.

A the last key inspection the children's home was assessed as good. Following this inspection the overall judgement remains the same. This judgement will be reviewed at the home's next full inspection when all key National Minimum Standards will be re-assessed. No actions or recommendations are made by this visit.

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 it was required that improved arrangements were put in place to confirm that the home's manager received regular professional supervision. This has been effectively introduced. It was additionally recommended that children's individual case files included a copy of their Personal Education Plan. This recommendation has been acted upon that confirms that the organisation places importance on how children receive individualised education.

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 organisation's policies and practice help staff to ensure that the safety and welfare of young people living in the home is protected. Policies have been developed to comply with regulatory requirements and promote good practice in areas of child protection, including countering bullying, effective behaviour management, dealing with children who go missing from care and safeguarding. All staff have access to, and know the requirements of, the Local Safeguarding Children's Board including how to recognise signs of abuse. The company provides regular staff training to develop staff practice to assist them with the knowledge and skills they need to keep young people safe.

Staff base their management of behaviour on their comprehensive knowledge of individual young people and by constantly encouraging and praising acceptable behaviour. Young people help develop the house rules and in this way know the standards of behaviour expected from them. Improved relationships between the staff and young people are confirmed by good behaviour, the minimal need for the use of sanctions or behavioural controls and reduced

staffing levels. Staff know how to manage challenging behaviour because they receive regular training using an approved management methodology which includes the safe and minimal use of physical restraint. Any incidents arising are fully recorded and evaluated by the home's manager.

Staff demonstrate a respect for the young person's right to privacy by providing them with their own bedrooms, by protecting sensitive personal information and by being careful with how they communicate with other professionals. Young people are fully aware that staff discuss their care in meetings because they are invited to contribute any issues or thoughts they may have. Young people can make phone calls in private.

There are systems in place to monitor and maintain good standards of safety to ensure young people live in a home where their health is safeguarded. A range of risk assessments that broadly cover all aspects of safety, for example the risk from fire and environmental hazards, those emerging from behaviour and recreational activities including trips, have been produced. These are regularly reviewed and take into account daily routines and any changes affecting the home such as staffing levels or alterations in the home's daily routine. Young people play a compliant part by always responding to fire precautionary drills. These measures help to keep young people safe from harm.

Staff take seriously any issues or complaints young people may have. This is demonstrated by an absence of complaints being recorded as most concerns are effectively addressed long before they become a problem. Young people say that they know how to complain and who they can complain to, for example, by talking to independent advocates who visit the home.

The manager ensures that no new member of staff starts to work at the children's home until the necessary vetting checks have been completed and cleared. These arrangements help to ensure that those staff working at the home are suitable for their role. All visitors to the home are monitored because they are required to provide evidence of identity and sign a visitors' book. Staff personnel files were not accessed at this visit as they are centrally held at the provider's head office.

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 supported well by caring, competent and trained staff who know about each young person and are committed to providing safe, consistent care and positive outcomes. The manager supports the home's staff by selecting a team according to how they can best meet young people's needs and by encouraging their individual access to ongoing professional development. Staff members have attended all statutory training and additional courses provided by the company.

The Statement of Purpose for the home includes the required information outlined by schedule 1 of the Children's Home Regulations. This details information about the children's home and the service it provides.

Although subject to some ongoing changes, the day-to-day management of the home is good at supporting and promoting the needs of young people and staff. The home is sufficiently staffed to meet the changing needs of the young people being looked after. Staffing is flexible and adjusted to reflect the levels of supervision required by young people at differing times. The daily rota confirms that the staff complement is as detailed within the home's Statement of Purpose. All 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 arrangements for safe one-to-one work with young people is fully addressed by the home's monitored risk assessments to ensure ongoing individual safety at all times.

The home has established systems that confirm the operational efficiency and quality of care being provided. In-house monitoring remains effective and informs staff practice. External monthly scrutiny takes place through the use of an independent regulation 33 visitor. Feedback from individual young people is always sought as an important feature of this small home to reflect service user views.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The detail contained within young peoples plans, case files and daily recording documents confirms that all staff who have contact with the young people know of their particular needs, differences and difficulties. From this level of detail staff are enabled to develop their practice to fully support individual development that includes how to promote specific physical and cultural needs.

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 Children's 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.