

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	10 February 2010
Inspector	Julian Parker
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	27 October 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 that looks after one young person, aged between 10 and 18 years. It is a two-storey, detached property, in a rural setting. The nature of the home allows staff to adjust the environment and the care provided to meet the specific needs of the children and young people accommodated. The priority for staff is to 'provide a safe, warm, nurturing and empowering environment to afford children and young people the care and control to which they are entitled at this stage in their life'. At the time of this visit one young person was living at the home who briefly contributed to the inspection process.

Summary

This was an announced interim inspection. The visit concentrated on the Every Child Matters outcome areas for staying safe with some scrutiny of positive contribution and organisation reflecting the needs of the current resident and staff changes occurring at the home.

At 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.

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 recommended that children's individual case files include a copy of their personal education plan. This recommendation has been acted upon to confirm 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 children living in the home are 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 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 children safe.

Staff base their management of behaviour on their comprehensive knowledge of individual children and by positively encouraging acceptable behaviour. Children know the house rules and the standards of behaviour expected from them. Good relationships between the staff and children are confirmed by good behaviour and the minimal need for the use of sanctions or behavioural controls. Staff know how to manage children's 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 children's right to privacy by providing them with their own en-suite equipped bedrooms, by protecting sensitive personal information and by being careful with how they communicate about children with other professionals. Children know that staff discuss their care in meetings because they are invited to contribute any issues or thoughts they may have. Children can make phone calls in private.

The home has systems in place to monitor and maintain good standards of safety that ensure children live in a home where their health and safety is protected. 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. Risk assessments 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. Children living in the home play a compliant part by always responding to fire precautionary drills, even for false alarms. The way in which the testing of fire alarms is recorded does not presently confirm that the home is fully complying with the requirement to keep children safe.

Staff take seriously any issues or complaints children may have. This is demonstrated by an absence of complaints being recorded because most concerns are effectively addressed long before they become a problem. Areas where children may feel aggrieved, such as after a sanction, are well recorded and always include opportunity for children's views to be noted. Children confirm that they know how to complain and who they can complain to. Children can also make their views heard through 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. 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 due to them being held at the provider's head office

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

The education of children is promoted by the production of personal education plans that identify how individual learning needs are addressed by the provider's school and the home.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Wherever appropriate, children are fully supported to maintain meaningful contact with their families. Staff provide practical support, for example by arranging supervised visits. Placement plans and supportive case file records make explicit the authorised arrangements for contact between children, family members, friends and other professional workers such as social workers.

Carefully considered plans are made whenever children are scheduled to move on from the home as a feature of their care plan. Children are fully consulted and supported through a gradual and planned process that enables them to experience a positive transition. This process

always includes several visits to the new placement to sensitively assess the practicality and suitability of the move.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Young people are well supported 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 individual access to ongoing professional development. Staff members have attended all statutory training and additional courses provided by the company.

The home's Statement of Purpose includes the information outlined by Schedule 1 of the Children's Home Regulations 2001. This details accurate information about the children's home and its service.

The home is sufficiently staffed. The daily rota confirms 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 that remain subject to constant review to ensure individual safety at all times.

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

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The detail contained within the children's 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 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

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

- ensure that regular fire precautionary drills are recorded. (national minimum standard 26.8)