

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Julian Parker
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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 small children's home is registered to provide care for up to two young people of either gender, aged between 10 and 17 years. The home's location is within easy reach of the local main town centre and convenient for access to nearby leisure and company educational facilities, while being discretely situated away from neighbouring properties. The home offers spacious accommodation in a four-bedroom detached property where each young person has their own room. The home has lounge space, a large kitchen/dining room, bathrooms on each floor and a staff office. A large garden and detached garage that houses leisure equipment provides additional functional space that enhances the property's suitability as a children's home.

Summary

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

The purpose of this unannounced interim inspection was to follow up on recommendations made at the last inspection and to assess key standards under the outcome area of staying safe. The recommendations made at the last inspection are commented on in the improvement section of this report.

The home has seen changes to its occupancy and management since the last inspection.

Safeguarding systems are in place that promote the wellbeing of the young people living at the home. Compliant, safe behaviour is encouraged and managed positively. Established young people have generally responded positively to familiar staffing and the rewards and incentives used in the home which support them to develop their social skills. However, some young people's non-compliant behaviours, such as that during unauthorised absence put them at risk of harm. Pathway plans are not in place to identify how young people are being effectively prepared for independence.

The home environment is being well maintained and established systems are in place to ensure appropriate health and safety checks are carried out.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the registered provider was required to ensure that young people are provided with a transition plan that is consistent with the placing authorities pathway plan. This has not been confirmed by this inspection and remains an ongoing action requiring young people to effectively prepared for their independence.

The provider was also asked to ensure that some water damage to the property was repaired. This has been completed satisfactorily.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The right to privacy for young people is demonstrated, practically by the provision of individual bedrooms and their own bathroom. Sensitive personal information about young people is retained securely on confidential case files and protected through staff training about how to communicate with other professionals. Young people can make phone calls in private.

Concerns or complaints made by young people are taken seriously by care staff. Concerns are generally addressed before they become a complaint leading to an absence of formal complaints being generated by residents in the home. There is a clear complaints policy and the registered provider's procedures are effective. How young people can make their formal concerns known is summarised in their guide to the home. Young people are provided with access to an independent advocate should they require outside help or support to air concerns. Any issues arising about the home itself are addressed by the home's manager, even if this concerns other young people.

The safety and welfare of young people living at the home is promoted by the registered person's policies. These comply with regulatory requirements and generally promote good practice in areas of child protection that include countering bullying, effective behaviour management and safeguarding children. Care staff have access to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board procedures and their training informs them how to recognise and report concerns about practice or suspicion of abuse. Training records were not available for scrutiny on this inspection to confirm whether all staff have received up-to-date training in safeguarding or behaviour management.

Staff use active encouragement of acceptable behaviour, by providing consistent expectations and by praising positive behaviour as their model for the management of behaviour. Young people understand what the expected standards of behaviour are. Generally they are cooperative as evidenced by an absence in the use of physical restraint by staff. Staff are trained in management of challenging behaviour which includes the safe use of physical restraint using an approved methodology. The views and opinions of young people are sought as being important to all aspects of this process to improve the transparency and inform the effectiveness of staff

practice. Behaviour management records invite comment from young people however the opportunity is seldom used.

The home is presently recording the specific conflicts between the freedoms and responsibility associated with preparing young people for independence while complying with the home's expected behaviour management, safety and timekeeping requirements. Protocols for reporting young people as absent without authority are seriously stretched by some residents. Upon return from such absences young people are not always being afforded the opportunity to debrief to a person independent of the home. This could undermine their personal safety and how they learn to take responsibility for their own behaviour.

The home makes explicit its awareness of potential dangers to young people by producing a range of risk assessments for all aspects of safety in the living environment, for example, the risk from fire and hazards, or from young people's behaviour including those during recreational and non-authorised activities. To remain effective these assessments are reviewed regularly and take into account daily tasks and any changes affecting the home such as staffing levels, changes of resident or emerging behaviours that give heightened concerns.

Young people presently living in the home take fire safety seriously and play a compliant part in responding to regular fire precautionary drills. The home has vigilant procedures in place for monitoring all visitors to the home. No unauthorised person can access the building or have unsupervised access to the young people living there. Staff files were not accessible during this visit.

There has been a change of manager since the last inspection. An application for registration is yet to be processed by the regulator to confirm the long term organisational stability of the home.

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
19	ensure that on all occasions young people, on their return from unauthorised absence, are offered to discuss the reasons for their absence with a person independent of the home (Regulation 30;NMS 19.4)	18/04/2011
6	ensure that young people are provided with a transition plan that is consistent with the placing authorities pathway plan. (Regulation 12;NMS 6.2)	18/04/2011