

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Liz Daniels
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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 run by the local authority. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four young people, who have suffered disruption in their lives and display difficult behaviour as a result.

It is a detached property set in a corner plot, in a residential part of the town. There is car parking for several vehicles to the front of the property and a large garden to the side and rear. The home has four single bedrooms and a sleep-in room for staff. A dining room, study and lounge all provide communal space and a conservatory provides an additional recreational area. In addition, there is a well-fitted kitchen and utility room as well as two bathrooms and a shower room.

There are currently three young people living in the home, two of whom were present for all or part of the inspection.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

This unannounced interim inspection was the second visit to the setting for the year April 2010 to March 2011. The service was judged as outstanding at the key inspection, undertaken in November 2010. The aim of this inspection was to inspect those standards that ensure young people are safe.

The home's manager continues to lead a knowledgeable and enthusiastic staff team in caring for young people. She is also responsible for another home in a nearby town but has a competent, experienced deputy who takes operational day-to-day responsibility for the home. Excellent measures continue to keep young people safe. In addition, as found at the last inspection, staff ensure young people's health needs are well met. They also work hard to provide a homely environment where there are opportunities for young people to learn skills which will help them work towards independence and leaving care.

Improvements since the last inspection

No actions or recommendations were made at the last inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Staff respect young people's privacy and are careful to maintain confidentiality when discussing them or handling information about them. Comprehensive policies guide them in their considerations when room searching, entering young people's bedrooms or sharing personal information about them. Wherever possible, a mixed staff group is on duty, enabling sensitivity to any gender issues. Young people can use their own mobile telephone or the home's cordless telephone to make calls in a private area of the home.

Staff recognise the importance of young people raising concerns and ensure they are supported to do so. Formal or external complaints are investigated thoroughly through the local authority complaints process. Equally, there are informal forums within the home which provide opportunities for young people to raise any queries. The complaints procedure is well publicised and young people believe they are listened to, that their concerns are taken seriously, investigated and acted upon. Records confirm that satisfactory outcomes for the complainant are achieved before an issue is considered to be resolved. Complaints as well as complements are monitored as part of the home's quality assurance, enabling the manager to identify any trends or themes as well as audit against the home's complaints policy.

Staff are trained in child protection whereby they recognise safeguarding concerns; any allegations are discussed appropriately with the relevant professionals. Staff work closely with other agencies, rather than in isolation, when developing strategies to protect those young people they have identified as vulnerable. The local safeguarding procedures are readily available for staff to reference and senior managers are 'on-call' to provide additional support for them. Sound recruitment procedures require that all staff have an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau disclosure before employment, to protect young people.

Staff are alert as to what constitutes bullying and promote that it is unacceptable. They recognise those young people likely to bully, as well as those who are vulnerable. Comprehensive risk assessments are undertaken to underpin activities and determine the number of staff required to keep young people safe. When there are signs of intimidating behaviour, staff intervene promptly to de-escalate situations. Overall, young people do not raise bullying as a concern within the home.

Similarly, staff are responsive when young people become absent without permission. The police are involved when necessary and every effort is made to protect young people by reducing the risks for them. In the event, excellent records

are kept as events unfold and staff respond positively to young people when they return. Whenever possible they also meet with their social worker or a representative from an independent advocacy service. Excellent monitoring enables the manager to identify trends for each young person; these are then explored during key working sessions, as well as staff meetings, to inform risk assessments.

Staff are trained in behaviour management techniques. They consistently encourage and praise socially- acceptable behaviour and the extensive reward system continues to be well received by young people. However, when necessary, suitable sanctions are used and well recorded. Staff encourage young people to discuss incidents during a key worker session and comment on how they feel. Young people are clear they know there are consequences to unacceptable behaviour and overall believe staff are very fair. The bound books for recording sanctions and physical interventions are reviewed frequently as part of the home's quality assurance. No physical intervention has been needed since the last inspection.

Excellent measures continue to maintain the safety and security of young people. Staff complete risk assessments and take the necessary steps to protect against the risk of fire and other hazards. Regular checks of fire equipment continue and quarterly fire drills are undertaken, throughout the 24 hour period. All staff have been included in these within the last year and are also trained in fire safety.

There are robust recruitment processes and these, with the vetting of visitors, are all aimed at protecting young people. Evidence of identification is required for visitors and they are well supervised while on site. Similarly, staff are recruited through a structured and well-organised process that is well managed through the local authority, in conjunction with senior staff.

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.