

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	8 March 2010
Inspector	Heather Chaplin
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	16 June 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 home is a large detached property situated about half a mile from a small village, in a semi-rural location but convenient for rail and motorway networks. There are education, sports and leisure facilities nearby.

On the ground floor, there is a lounge with a conservatory facing the rear garden. There is a separate dining room, a kitchen and utility room with laundry facilities, and a bathroom with a toilet and shower. There is also a room used for recreation, equipped with a pool table.

On the first floor there is a bathroom with toilet, bath and shower facilities, and single bedrooms to accommodate up to three young people. There are facilities for staff sleeping in, and a staff office.

Outside, there are gardens all around the property, with a gravel parking area and space to play.

Summary

This was a positive inspection which was announced with short notice. Notice was given so that the prospective Registered Manager could be interviewed. One young person is in placement and he was absent without authority, so no young people could be seen on this occasion.

Although there is currently no Registered Manager in place, the home has an acting manager. She is ably supported by the Registered Manager designate, and both are well supported by the home's senior managers.

The home is operated effectively to provide good outcomes for children. One recommendation has been made concerning the prospective Registered Manager's qualifications.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

There were three recommendations made at the last key inspection, which took place on 16 June 2009. The first concerned the need to risk-assess any young person who administers their own medication. This is no longer applicable to this home, but the inspector was advised that a risk assessment was drawn up following the last inspection for the young person in placement at that time.

The home was asked to ensure that all visitors sign the visitors' book. The inspector was told that this is always done. Senior managers' visits are recorded in the home's diary.

The third recommendation concerned the need to have a valid medical consent form on file for each young person, to ensure that there are no delays in obtaining emergency medical care. This is now in place.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Staff work hard to ensure that young people receive a healthy, well balanced diet. Meals are varied and interesting. There are clear instructions to staff about how to substitute foods if young people do not wish to eat a particular dish. The guidance ensures that radical changes are not made to the overall balance of the diet.

Staff ensure that young people receive advice about the risks of smoking, taking illegal drugs and inappropriate relationships. The home liaises well with the local doctors' surgery. Sexual health needs are addressed very well.

There is currently no medication in use in the home, but medication administration sheets are available to use when required. The home has a controlled drugs book. This is well recorded, but because there have been times when there has been only one member of staff on duty, the book cannot realistically be double-signed. Any medicines kept in the home are safely stored.

The acting manager confirmed that staff have completed their first aid and medicines administration training.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people have their own lockable bedrooms, and all locks in the home can be released externally in an emergency. Access to telephones may be supervised due to specific circumstances.

The home's complaints book shows that young people feel comfortable in raising concerns. Generally, these are well-recorded, and there was just one minor oversight where no outcome was recorded. This was raised with the Registered Manager designate. Senior managers monitor any complaints during Regulation 33 visits to the home.

There have been no recent child protection referrals. All staff are trained in child protection as a part of their induction, and the Registered Manager designate has attended an internal refresher course. The home has a copy of the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures in the office and also has access to updated procedures on the internet.

There have been no incidents of bullying at the home. The home is well-staffed and monitored. Young people do go absent without authority from time to time. These incidents are very well recorded. Staff often go out in search of the young person, and were doing this at the time of the inspection. No notifications have been received since the last inspection.

The home's restraint log is well recorded. All staff receive thorough induction training in restraint, and refresher training annually. Details of individual restraints are particularly well recorded.

The home has two bathrooms, which provide plenty of bath, shower and toilet facilities. Staff and young people share both bathrooms. There are also en suite facilities in one of the staff bedrooms.

Staff conduct regular fire drills at least every three months. The fire log is well recorded, with fire safety checks completed weekly. The home has an effective fire risk assessment. Risk

assessments on young people are of a very good standard. Clear strategies include a useful list of what the company terms 'absolute no-no's' on the wall. There is also a detailed risk assessment on the premises.

The home's Registered Manager designate does not have overall responsibility for staff recruitment, although she takes an active part in the process. The inspector visited the company's head office on 18 June 2009 to see staff files for all the children's homes in the group. Staff files were very well ordered and contained all the information detailed in Schedule 2 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001. These files will be reviewed again after April 2010.

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.

The home has a clear Statement of Purpose. This regularly updated document is in accordance with all the requirements of Schedule 1 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001.

Supervision records were not seen on this occasion, but the acting manager said that she supervises all staff on a monthly basis. There are four staff in the home, with two on shift at any one time. Two staff hold National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 3. Another member of staff is half way through the award, and the fourth member of staff has recently registered to start.

The Registered Manager designate and the acting manager monitor the home's paperwork every four days, and there is clear evidence of this process taking place. They meet at least once a week to review the operation of the home. Monthly checks are also completed.

The Registered Manager designate holds NVQ at level 3 and an internal qualification from a previous employer who is no longer available to consult about its status. This qualification appears to cover the same areas of work as NVQ at level 4 in Management; for example, legislation, supervising staff, monitoring standards and recruitment, but further clarification is needed before it can be assumed to be equivalent.

The Registered Manager designate does not yet hold NVQ at level 4 in the Care of Children and Young People.

The home's files are in good order and the quality of the paperwork overall is excellent.

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

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

- ensure that the manager of the home obtains NVQ at level 4 in the Care of Children and Young People and clarifies the status of her management qualification in relation to this standard (NMS 34).