

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Heather Chaplin
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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

The home is a large detached property situated about half a mile from a small village. It is in a semi-rural location but convenient for rail and motorway networks. There are education, sports and leisure facilities nearby, with easy access to open countryside, local attractions and the coast.

On the ground floor, there is a lounge, with a dining area and a conservatory. There is a kitchen and utility room with laundry facilities. A second lounge is used for recreation or relaxation.

On the first floor there are single bedrooms to accommodate up to three young people. There are facilities for staff sleeping in, and a staff office. The home has two bathrooms, each equipped with a bath and a shower. Outside, there are gardens all around the property, with a gravel parking area and space for activities or play.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This was an unannounced inspection. Three outcome areas were inspected and outcomes for each area are good. Together with the significant improvements made, this has resulted in an overall outcome of good.

One action, in relation to ventilation, has been repeated and there is one new recommendation in relation to accident recording. All the areas identified for further work at the last inspection have been at least partially addressed.

Improvements since the last inspection

Four actions were set at the last inspection. All related to the risk assessment completed on one young person, whose needs were particularly complex in terms of physical safety. This led the home to secure the young person within the premises and place inappropriate restrictions on them in terms of access to clothing, furniture in their room and poor levels of ventilation.

After the inspection, most of these areas were fully and rapidly addressed, in consultation with the placing authority. One action has been repeated, because the most severely restricted windows do not provide sufficient ventilation to meet regulation 31. A recommendation made at the last inspection concerning obtaining medical consent for homely remedies, has also been addressed.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people in this home are able to share in food preparation and menu planning. They enjoy a healthy, well-balanced diet to help promote proper development.

Some young people have medication-related appetite issues. Staff have worked hard to accommodate this and allow young people to take a snack to bed with them. Mealtimes have been adjusted to help establish a healthy pattern of eating. The Registered Manager explained that staff have been working in consultation with the GP to reduce the amount of medication which young people receive, to minimise this negative side-effect. This is working well and young people are beginning to enjoy their meals at appropriate times.

Health care needs are well recorded and although young people sometimes find it difficult to keep appointments, they are offered all the support that they need to remain healthy.

Controlled medicines in the home are appropriately kept in a locked safe within a secure cupboard. Administration is well recorded. However, the home is single staffed for much of the time and this means that it is impossible for two staff to sign the controlled drugs book. The home has now obtained the GP's authorisation to give homely remedies when required, which has addressed a previous recommendation made.

The accident book is generally well recorded but it did not include dates when accidents took place on the latest page. The Registered Manager remedied this during the inspection.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people in this home have their own private bedrooms. Both bedrooms and bathrooms have suitable locks which staff can release in an emergency. The Registered Manager says that staff wake young people sensitively, by knocking and calling.

Young people may make and receive phone calls in private, usually in the 'chill-out' room downstairs. Phone call monitoring is done in line with the local authority's placement and contact plans.

The home has an effective complaints procedure which incorporates Ofsted's contact details. The complaints log is well recorded, but there has been only one issue raised since the last inspection.

Child protection practice is informed by clear and detailed internal and external

procedures. All staff receive regularly updated training in child protection through induction and ongoing supervision. They have access to locally agreed safeguarding procedures online and on paper. All are aware of how to respond in the event of a disclosure. There has been one child protection enquiry since the last inspection, which was dealt with appropriately.

There is only one young person in the home at the moment. There are no bullying issues, although staff have responded well to unpleasant incidents where young people were accosted by strangers. There is a sound anti-bullying policy and staff work hard to raise young people's self esteem so that they are less likely to be targeted.

There have been no significant issues recently with young people going absent without authority. Staff work well with the local police to ensure the young people's prompt and safe return. Notifications to Ofsted have been received in a timely manner and contain good quality information.

The home has made good progress since the last inspection and previous issues with excessive security measures have been addressed; notably, the doors are no longer locked, except as a part of normal household routine at night. The present young person has not been subject to any physical interventions. The restraint log shows that three restraints took place, all involving the previous young person. These have been well recorded.

Sanctions are fair and reasonable. Staff identify a measure which has significance to the young person, for example, withdrawal of time playing with computer games.

The home has two bathrooms, both of which are clean and tidy. They provide good quality washing and bathing facilities for young people.

All safety equipment in the home is well maintained and regularly serviced. The house and fire risk assessments have been updated within the past month. Individual risk assessments for young people are very good. They provide all the necessary information to enable staff to look after children safely. Fire safety checks are done at the intervals recommended by the local fire and rescue service.

An action was set at the last inspection because windows in one young person's bedroom were locked. This is no longer the case. However, there is now a restrictor in place which allows the window to be opened with a gap for air amounting only to a negligible two centimetres. Windows in another young person's bedroom and on the landing open to approximately four centimetres. This level of ventilation is insufficient for young people's comfort and welfare, especially in summer.

Staff files were inspected in October 2010 at the company's head office. These were maintained to a high standard and contain all the necessary information to ensure safe recruitment and comply with Schedule 2 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001.

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 good.

The home is situated in a rural location, within easy reach of a large city and all amenities. There are very good road, rail and air links to facilitate visits from families and social workers. The home is surrounded by gardens and there is space for young people to play outdoors.

The communal rooms in the home provide good quality facilities for relaxation and meetings. There is a large kitchen, which is well planned. There is plenty of space for young people to participate in the cooking, but the floor surface is showing signs of wear in places. Otherwise, the communal rooms are attractively furnished and well designed.

Young people have their own bedrooms which provide comfortable and homely accommodation. They may personalise their rooms if they wish. The previous action set, concerning the limited amount of furniture in one young person's bedroom at the time, is no longer applicable because that young person has moved on. Young people in the home at the moment have plenty of furniture to meet their needs.

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
26	ensure that all parts of the children's home are adequately ventilated (Regulation 31 (2) (a))	15/04/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure that dates of any accidents and injuries are always recorded in the accident log. (NMS 12.3)