

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	5 March 2010
Inspector	Heather Chaplin
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	29 April 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 provides accommodation for up to two young people of either sex, aged between 10 and 17 years, who may have emotional or behavioural difficulties. It is a detached property set in a rural location. On the ground floor there is a large lounge, kitchen, laundry facilities and a shower room with toilet. On the first floor there are two individual bedrooms, an office with sleeping in facilities, a second staff sleeping-in room and the young people's bathroom.

There is a garden to the front and rear of the house. Young people at the home have access to private car transport, and the home is within easy reach of several towns, where there are good facilities for sports and other activities.

The company provides education through contracted services from another private provider, who operates a small specialist school approximately 20 miles away.

Summary

This was a very positive unannounced inspection, during which standards under four outcome areas were assessed. Outcomes under 'enjoying and achieving' and 'making a positive contribution' were not judged on this occasion.

The home has addressed all previous inspection issues and no new recommendations have been made. There were no young people present during this inspection.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Three recommendations were made at the last inspection. At that time, the home did not have a controlled drugs book, but has since obtained one and is using it appropriately. The home did not have access to the locally agreed child protection procedures, but these are now available in paper copy in the staff office. Young people did not have access to a computer in the home to help them with their education. Some young people now have computer access at home. One young person does not wish to have a computer but does, however, have access to a computer in school.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people enjoy a generally healthy diet, although as they approach independence, it is more difficult for staff to control their food intake and so their choice of foods is not always well-balanced. Staff prepare good quality meals in the evenings and limit less healthy options as far as possible. There is always fresh fruit available in the home.

Staff record health care needs very well, and all medical consent forms are in place, signed by a person with parental responsibility. Young people are encouraged to take up routine dental and optical checks, and some very good work has been done to encourage those who are reluctant to attend dental appointments. Young people receive individual therapy if they wish to do so. Sexual and dietary health needs are addressed well.

Medicines are recorded when received into the home and they are stored appropriately. Controlled drug administration is now recorded in a controlled drugs book. Any medicines no longer required are disposed of through the local pharmacy. There is a complete audit trail of medicines entering and leaving the home.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people have their own bedrooms, one of which has a lockable door. The door on the other room has been removed and replaced by a curtain. This has been done for safety reasons, and is covered by a risk assessment and consent from the placing authority. The home has an alarm system to help staff detect movement around the house at night.

The home keeps an effective record of complaints, and these are fairly investigated. Any learning points arising from complaints are absorbed into day-to-day practice.

The practice manager is the designated person who advises staff on child protection issues. She has undertaken relevant training for this role. All members of staff receive child protection training on induction and annually thereafter. The home now has a copy of the local child protection procedures available to guide staff in the event of any disclosure. The practice manager has good working relationships with the Local Safeguarding Children Board and can seek advice from them when necessary.

There are no current issues regarding bullying in the home. Any incidents are responded to quickly. Bullying is specifically addressed during one-to-one sessions with young people, and also at school.

Two absences without authority have occurred recently, but they were of short duration. Young people returned of their own volition. Staff advocate for any young people who are disadvantaged in relation to others in terms of allocation of free time, because this can lead to frustration and consequently, unplanned absences. The local police are supportive if young people do go missing.

Since the last inspection, no notifications have been received in respect of this home, and none have been necessary.

The restraint log was not in the home because it had been taken to head office for training purposes. It was seen during the key inspection and was found to be well-recorded. The practice manager explained that there had been several restraints since the last inspection. The method of recording is robust with a detailed account of each restraint. Sanctions are fair and are moderated if the young person shows an improvement in their behaviour.

The home has ample bathroom and toilet facilities, in excess of the standard. Young people have access to a bathroom and a shower room, one of which is shared with staff.

The home is well-supported by effective fire and premises risk assessments. Individual risk assessments on young people are also good and provide staff with all the necessary information to help keep them safe. The fire log shows that fire safety checks are conducted very frequently, for example, smoke detectors are tested daily. The home's vehicles also receive regular checks. Electrical equipment and alarm systems are also tested annually to ensure safe operation.

Staff files were not inspected on this occasion. They met Schedule 2 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001, when they were last inspected in April 2009.

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.

Both young people are approaching independence and have a suitable programme in place to support this process. One young person has free time to encourage him to act sensibly when outside immediate staff supervision. Staff are working towards achieving this for the other young person.

The home is in an attractive rural situation but is within easy reach of several towns so that young people can access shopping and leisure activities. The house is spacious with two bedrooms for young people and pleasant, relaxing communal rooms. There is a garden which is suitable for some activities. One bedroom shows signs of significant deliberate destruction, but the home will replace the damaged flooring and furniture as behaviour improves. The other young person's bedroom is of a good standard and has been personalised to suit their needs.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home's Statement of Purpose shows that the company has a strongly-stated commitment to equality and diversity. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Since the last inspection, staff training in diversity issues has been introduced.

The Statement of Purpose was previously inspected and was found to meet all the requirements of Schedule 1 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001. It was not inspected on this occasion.

Six members of staff now hold National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 3 in the care of children and young people, or have an equivalent qualification. This is a good achievement. The home is well-staffed, with two people on duty at all times.

Staff receive an effective induction, with good quality training which covers all their basic requirements. For example, food hygiene, physical intervention, manual handling and first aid are taught.

The practice manager completes monthly Regulation 33 visits to the home. These are detailed and provide an effective management tool for further improvement. The reports record whether or not any young people were seen during the visit.

The manager completes regular management monitoring checks of the home's records and logs. Every three months, the home sends a survey to parents, social workers and young people as part of their monitoring process. This is very good practice.

There is currently no permanent manager in place, and the home is overseen by the practice manager. However, a new manager has been appointed and he is currently going through the registration application process. The proposed manager holds NVQ at level 3. He will embark on Leadership and Management once his probationary period is complete.

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

There are no recommendations.