

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	19 August 2010
Inspector	Bill Drumm
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	26 January 2010
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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 registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three young people of either sex, aged between 8 and 17 years old, who may be experiencing a range of social, emotional and behavioural problems.

The home is a terraced cottage with an enclosed rear garden. The ground floor comprises of a kitchen/dining room, lounge, another room used as the manager's office and a single toilet. On the first floor, there are four bedrooms and bathing facilities. Three bedrooms are used by young people the other bedroom is used as a staff sleep in room. Each young person has their own single bedroom.

The home is close to local shops. Bus routes are nearby if young people wish to visit the larger towns in the area with their larger shops and leisure facilities.

There are two young people currently living in this home. One young person was present during the inspection, although they did not contribute directly to the inspection process.

Summary

This was an unannounced interim inspection of the home. The outcomes for young people in the areas of making a positive contribution and staying safe were inspected and found to be good. There was one action made at the previous inspection, which has been met. Young people receive high levels of help and support from a committed staff team. Care planning arrangements are good and young people are consulted about the care they receive. The home's records are maintained to a good standard and all information relating to young people is kept safe and secure. The home is well managed and the outcomes for young people are good.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection the home's manager has improved the care planning process for the young people living there. Each young person now has an up-to-date care plan in place, which is reviewed regularly with them.

In addition, the manager has made sure that all members of staff have received training in the home's complaints process. The vetting process now includes the provision of suitable character references. A lone working risk assessment has also been written.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Each young person has their own bedroom and young people are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms in a style of their own choice. Young people are also encouraged to keep their rooms clean and tidy. The home has policies and procedures in place which explain what action

members of staff should take when it is necessary to search a young person's bedroom. The room search records comply with national minimum standards. Twenty six room searches have been carried out since the last inspection and all relate to keeping young people safe from harm. Details of all room searches are fully recorded. Personal information relating to each young person is stored securely to prevent unauthorised access. Young people are able to make personal telephone calls in private. The privacy of young people is respected.

There are policies and procedures in place for dealing with complaints in an effective and timely manner. There have been no complaints made since the last inspection. The young people's guide provides clear information to young people about the complaints process. All members of staff have received training in the complaints process. Any concerns a young person may have about living at the home will be fully addressed.

Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures are available in the home and members of staff have received training in child protection and safeguarding. There have been no child protection referrals made since the last inspection. Young people living at the home are protected from exploitation or abuse.

The home has policies and procedures in place with regard to countering bullying. There have been no incidents of bullying since the last inspection. The young people's guide to the home includes information for young people about what action they should take if they feel they are being targeted by bullies. Information about independent agencies that can help young people, if they feel they are being bullied, is available within the home. The manager of the home carries out a countering bullying risk assessment of the times, places and circumstances when bullying might occur. In addition, all members of staff have received training in countering bullying. However, the procedures do not fully explain the frequency or circumstances under which the countering bullying risk assessments should be reviewed. Young people are generally protected from bullying.

There have been a number of occasions since the last inspection when a young person has been absent from the home without authority. Written records show that young people are responded to positively on their return to the home. Efforts are made to help young people understand the risks they could face by being absent. However, the home's policies and procedures for dealing with the absence of a young person from the home do not indicate, what action members of staff should take if a young person runs away because of alleged abuse within the home. Policies and procedures also do not ensure that a young person is seen by someone independent of the home once they return. Young people may not therefore be fully protected.

The home has clear policies and procedures in place, to guide members of staff with regard to the appropriate measures they can adopt in helping young people to develop socially acceptable behaviour. Measures adopted are based on mutual respect and a positive working relationship between staff and young people. The consequences of unacceptable behaviour are made clear to young people in the young people's guide to the home, key worker meetings and house meetings. Written records of any sanctions or restraint used are retained within a separate bound and numbered book used specifically for that purpose. Where possible, members of staff prefer to use less punitive measures such as patience, negotiation and reasoning to help young people develop socially acceptable behaviour.

Young people, members of staff and visitors are protected from fire and other hazards within the home. There are good systems in place to ensure that the home is kept safe and free from hazards. Fire drills are carried out at regular intervals, which includes those carried out at night. Young people live in a home that provides them with physical safety and security.

The home has a committed staff team and there are good recruitment and selection processes in place. Safety checks are carried out to ensure the suitability of each applicant. Each member of staff has provided references from previous employers or those that know them. Visitors to the home are asked to clearly identify themselves on their arrival and to sign the visitors' book. Young people are protected from being exposed to potential abusers.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Meetings are held prior to the admission of a young person to the home, which helps to ensure all essential information is available and that the placement has the greatest chance of success. Each young person has their own placement plan, which outlines what their needs are and how they will be met. The home's manager and members of staff undertake individual risk assessments of each young person and devise more detailed care plans following admission. This helps to ensure that individual needs are both fully identified and met. Young people living at the home are appropriately placed.

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 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):

- review the home's procedures for undertaking a countering bullying risk assessment (NMS 18.5)
- review the home's procedures for a child being absent without authority to ensure they fully comply with national minimum standards. (NMS 19.4 & 19.5)