

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Maire Atherton
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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 operated and managed by a national organisation and provides accommodation for children and young people attending an associated residential special school.

The home provides care and accommodation for up to six young people aged nine to 17 years who have emotional, behavioural and educational difficulties. It is located in an urban area with good access to local community facilities.

There were five young people in the home over the course of the inspection, two of whom spoke with the inspector.

Summary

The overall quality rating is inadequate - notice of action to improve.

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

The focus of this unannounced inspection was to follow up the actions and recommendations made following the last inspection. The key standards in staying safe were evaluated alongside some standards from being healthy and economic well-being.

The children and young people benefit from consistent care from a well led, stable and committed staff team. The staff work hard to promote the health and well-being of children and young people in some difficult and challenging circumstances. The individual behaviour support plans in place provide staff with a framework to work with the children and young people; this includes the use of physical interventions. Children are clear that such interventions are used to keep them safe.

The manager and team are working hard to address the actions and recommendations. As progress has been made towards meeting most of them these have not been repeated, but the overall rating has not been amended as some have not been fully met at the time of the visit. Five actions and one recommendation are made in this report. These relate to medication, premises and records that are to be maintained.

Improvements since the last inspection

The last report made eight actions and 12 recommendations. One action and two recommendations concerned medication and consents. Since the last inspection the home has changed pharmacists and introduced a new medication system. The pharmacist is booked to deliver staff full training in this new system. In the period between the introduction of the system and the scheduled training staff have made

some errors; this is further discussed in the being healthy outcome of this report. Signed parental consent for medical treatment is now available in the home and a signature chart for drug administration has been produced to provide a clear audit trail.

Two actions and one recommendation concerned safeguarding and child protection procedures. The manager has obtained both the local authority and company procedures. His work has identified that the company procedures are out of date. Work is underway to remedy this and staff training is planned when the new procedures are released. In the meantime staff are familiar with the action to take should they have a safeguarding concern.

Four actions and two recommendations were made about records. Two complaints books have been established, one to record in-house complaints and another for external complaints. A register has been developed that contains the information outlined in the regulation. The manager has devised a robust system of monthly monitoring and takes action to address identified shortfalls. The manager has obtained the children's records but the information is not complete in each case, details of the legal status of a young person, for example, and information is held in different offices and files in the home so the information is not easily accessible. An age-appropriate children's guide has been developed. Individual risk assessments relating to each child are available and this is further discussed in the safeguarding section of this report.

One action and six recommendations related to premises issues. Those fire doors assessed as needing to be open have been fitted with approved hold-open devices that close in the event of the fire alarm sounding. The manager has ensured that fire drills are undertaken and a record of these is maintained. The fire risk assessment has not been updated and this recommendation is repeated. The garden wall at the rear of the property has been taken down, trees removed and the wall rebuilt. The combination of this work and the weather over the winter means that the garden has not been maintained to a good standard and work on this is planned. The maintenance team have assessed the toilet areas and are searching for hand basins to fit the small space available. A current insurance certificate is on display in the office.

The manager has requested funds in order to provide young people with a computer and internet access in the home. In the meantime support for young people's education is achieved by staff accompanying young people to a local internet café as the need arises.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff pay good attention to promoting the health of children and young people. Food is prepared using fresh ingredients with the likes, dislikes and idiosyncrasies of children and young people taken into account. Staff identify health issues and

concerns, and follow up as required with medical practitioners.

The procedure for delivering medication for administration at school and on home visits is not in accordance with guidelines issued by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society. The record of administration does not show that all medication has been given at the right time and the information about changes to medication is not readily available. The manager regularly audits the records and investigates any discrepancies; some but not all records of investigation are available.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

Staff have due regard for, and promote, the privacy of the children and young people placed, taking steps to ensure that private conversations cannot be overheard and knocking on bedroom doors, for example. The closed circuit television in use in the home does not compromise the privacy of young people but it is not clear that there is placing authority consent and there is no reference to this in the plans for children as required by regulation.

Children and young people know how to complain and have used the procedure. When complaints are about one of their peers children are unsure about how effective the complaints process is, as little seems to change. Staff have to respond to such complaints with due regard to confidentiality. The complaints record is maintained but the full record of investigation is not available for all complaints.

The manager has completed local authority safeguarding training and is now the child protection nominated person in the home. Staff are aware of this change and most of the team have signed to say they are aware of the local authority and company safeguarding procedures. Staff are aware of their responsibilities and know what to do should they have any concerns, arising from their own observations or what children may share with them.

Staff are attuned to the moods and behaviour of children and young people and have a good awareness of the group dynamics. Bullying is not tolerated in the home and staff deal effectively with any such instances. Staff are vigilant in their supervision of children and young people in order to minimise incidents of bullying and unauthorised absence. Plans show that staff should bar the exit of vulnerable children attempting to absent themselves without permission should other measures fail.

Staff are keen to promote behaviour management through the use of incentives and rewards. Children are given clear information about the rules of the home and the consequences for breaking them. The children think the sanctions used are fair. There are detailed behaviour support plans in place. Staff are trained in a recognised behaviour management method. Since the last inspection there has been a significant increase in the frequency and severity of challenging behaviour and the use of physical intervention. Staff have a good understanding of why this increase

occurred and recent changes to the group have resulted in a reduction of the number of incidents. Children say 'staff only use holds to keep us safe'. Incident forms are available in the home and there is also an electronic record which enables the manager to interrogate the data to identify emerging trends.

Children's welfare is promoted by a sound approach to health and safety in the home. Routine tests and servicing are undertaken as required. There is a clear system in place for notifying the maintenance team of areas that need attention. The timescale for response is varied; a cracked window pane in a bedroom reported a week ago remains unrepaired. One of the hold-open devices on a bedroom door is damaged.

Recruitment records were not seen on this visit.

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 satisfactory.

The accommodation has suffered considerable wear and tear. One bedroom has been completely repaired and refurbished, including new furniture and soft furnishings, in readiness for the arrival of a new admission. The carpets in the hall, stairs and landing are badly marked, and the sofas in the main lounge are in need of repair or replacement. The kitchen is used as a thoroughfare and some cupboards, work surfaces and the oven are damaged in some way. There are large windows in the house; staff do not know whether or not these windows are safety glass, and children like to sit on the windowsills, potentially compromising their safety.

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
13	ensure there are suitable arrangements in place for the management of all aspects of medication (Regulation 21 (1))	30/04/2011
35	obtain and maintain within the home the information specified in Schedule 3 in respect of each child and ensure staff are aware of information on a need-to-know basis (Schedule 3 Regulation 28 (1))	31/05/2011
9	ensure that electronic or mechanical monitoring devices for the surveillance of children are used in accordance with the regulation, in particular provide evidence of placing authority consent to the use of closed circuit television and include this in the placement plan for each child (Regulation 22)	31/05/2011
16	ensure the record of complaints is maintained in accordance with regulations (Regulation 24(5))	30/04/2011
24	maintain the accommodation to a good standard and address issues promptly; in particular address the shortfalls identified in the report, including the cracked window and hold-open device. In addition assess the large windows to determine if they pose a potential risk; in particular ascertain if they are fitted with safety glass. (Regulation 31 (2)(e) and 23(c))	30/04/2011

Recommendations

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

- review and update the fire risk assessment. (NMS 26.2)