

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	3 March 2010
Inspector	Jane Rushby
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	28 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

Beacons Farmhouse is a two-storey home set in a rural location, close to a market town. The home provides longer-term care to young people of both genders aged between 10 and 18 years. Admission to the home can be on an emergency or a planned basis. The home provides a service for young people who are in need of care and support with emotional and behavioural needs.

The home is a farmhouse and ground floor accommodation comprising of a lounge, kitchen, dining room, utility room, staff sleeping-in room and office. On the first floor are four bedrooms and two bathrooms. There is a garden and extensive open spaces around. Car parking is to the front of the building.

Summary

At this unannounced interim inspection, all key standards in staying safe were inspected. This is an inadequate service. There are shortfalls in recruitment and safeguarding processes. Young people who go missing are not adequately protected by risk assessment arrangements. Young people do feel cared for at the home and recognise they have been supported to make positive changes to their behaviour. There are four actions and two recommendations arising from this inspection. Three young people are living at the home and all of them participated in the inspection.

The overall quality rating is inadequate.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the previous visit the registered person was asked to ensure that staff receive regular supervision. This recommendation has been carried out in full.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

Young people benefit from effective arrangements to ensure their privacy. Records are securely stored in the office and staff receive training relating to privacy and confidentiality during induction. A young person said, 'My room is my room, staff ask to come in'. Where minor breaches of confidentiality have taken place these have been appropriately addressed with staff.

Young people benefit from a thorough process for recording and investigating complaints, which they feel is carried out in practice. There has been one complaint received at the home from a young person. This has been thoroughly investigated with a positive outcome. Young people can record grumbles in a book kept in a communal room which is read daily by staff who respond in writing. This process is monitored by the manager on a weekly basis. A young person said, 'I would talk to staff, they listen'.

There are shortfalls in the management of safeguarding at this home. Staff receive training in child protection and appropriate processes are in place for responding to allegations or disclosures of abuse. There have been several instances where child protection concerns have been appropriately reported and young people do feel safe and well cared for at the home. However, an incident involving an allegation regarding a staff member was not notified to Ofsted and no written recording in respect of this incident was available at the home during the visit.

Young people benefit from the encouragement of acceptable behaviour. They acknowledge that they have been supported to make improvements to their behaviour. One said, 'Rules are fair, I respect their rules because they're just to help us out'. Staff are confident about responding constructively to challenging behaviours and there are reasonable sanctions in place. Where physical interventions are used these are appropriate and details are thoroughly recorded.

Young people do not identify bullying as a concern at the home. A young person said 'I've not seen any bullying'. Where there have been concerns expressed by young people about others' behaviour, this has been addressed immediately.

Where young people go missing, this is reported according to company procedures. Where young people face potential risk while missing from the home, there has been insufficient liaison with placing authorities to identify the level of risk in order to manage this safely.

Young people benefit from regular fire drills and tests and are familiar with evacuation procedures. The fire risk assessment has not been updated for over a year. A risk assessment process is in place for individual young people and specific activities, however, although these have been reviewed, detailed information about risks arising from particular activities and events has not been effectively identified and analysed to inform robust risk assessments. As a consequence of this, staff do not always have the full information necessary to keep young people safe.

Visitors to the home are vetted to ensure the safety of young people. There are shortfalls in the recruitment process. In respect of two staff members recruited during the past year there was insufficient information obtained to demonstrate that they had been safely recruited.

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 inadequate.

Following the previous visit the registered person was asked to ensure that staff receive regular supervision. This has been carried out in full. Supervisions have been held at the required frequency and where this has not been possible the reasons have been clearly recorded. However,

shortfalls identified under staying safe in this report represent significant breaches of regulations and a deficit in safeguarding children's welfare which results in an inadequate judgement for this outcome.

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
17	ensure that written records be kept of any allegation of abuse or neglect, and of the action taken in response (Regulation 16 (2) (d))	30 April 2010
17	shall without delay notify events listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 5, in particular where there is a serious complaint about persons working at the home (Regulation 30 (1))	30 April 2010
26	ensure that any activities in which children participate are so far as reasonably practicable free from avoidable risks (Regulation 23 (b))	30 April 2010
27	ensure that full and satisfactory information is available in relation to persons employed at the home in respect of all matters identified under Schedule 2. (Regulation 26 (3) (d) (i))	30 April 2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure that action is taken to obtain information about the whereabouts of a missing child and to try to ensure the safety and welfare of that child (national minimum standard 19.2)
- ensure that risk assessments are regularly reviewed, in particular in respect of young people's known and likely activities and the fire risk assessment (national minimum standard 26/2)