

Inspection report for children's home

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| Inspector | Gwen Buckley / Christopher Garrett |
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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

This is a registered children's home approved by the Secretary of State to provide secure accommodation and care for up to 16 girls and young women, from 10 years of age to 17 years, who are subject to a court order on 'welfare' grounds in accordance with Section 25 of the Children Act 1989. Children aged 10 to 12 years may only be placed subject to approval of the Secretary of State.

The unit comprises four individual living units with formal education provided on site in a dedicated school area. The school is undergoing a major rebuild which is funded by the Department for Children Schools and Families and this has meant an external courtyard is not accessible to the young women at the moment. Internal and external on-site leisure facilities are available including a gymnasium and fitness suite and two external courtyard areas.

Summary

This is an unannounced interim inspection which covers developments made against the recommendations made following the last inspection and the Every Child Matters outcome group 'Staying Safe' was inspected.

The views of the young women were sought and taken into account during this inspection; they assisted by talking with inspectors individually and in small groups.

The atmosphere in the centre is generally positive with a few individual young women presenting very challenging behaviour. Young women report positive relationships with staff; they feel safe and action is taken by staff to prevent bullying.

Although action has been taken to address the previous recommendations, further work is needed to address each one.

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 time of the last inspection of which two relate to activities. Staff are not consistently seeking and recording the leisure interests of young women in their care plans and there is no robust planning for late evening activities to ensure young women have activities to occupy them that they are interested in.

The third recommendation was to ensure the sanction recording system is appropriate. New sanction books have been designed, printed and ordered although the books have not yet been received. The binding of the sanctions books which have been ordered is the same as that used for the new restraint books. However, this is not satisfactory as the pages are beginning to come loose in the new books. This recommendation is carried forward.

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.

Young women's records are stored appropriately to protect their confidentiality and staff understand the importance of confidentiality and sharing information with others. Privacy is generally respected which can be difficult in a secure environment with the need to ensure the safety of the young women. Young women understand and accept the need for night time observations. Some young women have contact restrictions in place which require the care staff to monitor their telephone calls. The manner in which the supervision of phone calls is organised and carried out does not ensure that their privacy is always respected.

Good systems are in place to ensure young women receive a prompt response to their complaints. They can use the home's internal complaint system or use an independent person who will take complaints forward for them. Their views differ on the effectiveness of the complaints system, some saying it works and others saying they have not used it as they do not think it works. Complaint forms are not readily available in the home without asking staff for them. Good relationships are evident between some young women and staff and individual's compliment staff for listening and helping them.

Staff are confident and clear about actions to take following any child protection incident or allegation and their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding. They are aware of the procedure in place for notifications that link with the local safeguarding board, the Local Authority's Designated Officer (LADO) and Ofsted.

Good anti-bullying systems are in place protect young women. Both care and teaching staff take responsibility for ensuring everyone is aware of bullying and the effects this has on individuals. Young women are confident staff will take action to keep them safe from bullying in line with their individual needs.

Systems are in place to monitor routinely incidents in the home and these enable practice to be reviewed. A very good level of management scrutiny of all incidents and records is in place and covers restraints, sanctions and single separations. This monitoring looks at care planning issues for young women and identifies any practice development needed. The registered manager signs all incident records and makes comments on any follow up action required.

New restraint record books have recently been introduced and the pages are beginning to come loose. New sanction records books have been ordered to enable the home to maintain sanction records in bound numbered books as required, but they have not yet been received and the old books are still being used.

Young women at risk of self-harm or suicide are closely monitored and supported by the staff; their physical safety and security are given very high priority. CCTV cameras are used to good effect to review incidents involving restraints in communal areas. The home identifies, through risk assessment, the risks a young person poses to themselves and others, both in the school and living areas. Reducing the risk by removing potentially hazardous materials in communal areas means that young women not at risk live in an environment that inhibits normal life experiences. One young person stated 'it is very frustrating when the pages of the magazine you are reading fall out because the staples have been removed and pencils can't be left on the table for even a moment'.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Young women received individual support and they each have at least two named key workers and a case manager identified to work with them. The manager also plans that each young woman will have a member of the teaching staff identified to work with them and progress their educational needs in the home and when planning for their transition. Young women say they have a member of staff they can approach for support and they enjoy their key work sessions.

Care and education staff work together to ensure education continues when young women are unable to attend school. When risk assessments show it is unsafe for a young woman to attend school, they are given work to be done which is managed in the living units by care staff. There is a clear extended learning and enrichment plan in place after school and young women are involved in the weekly evaluation of this.

Young women are encouraged to discuss the running of the home, through a unit representative on the young women's council and directly in unit meetings. Changes they have suggested, and which have been subsequently agreed to by management, relate to more age appropriate activities being provided and extended time for activities they specifically like such as karaoke. However, although they exert influence in planning activities they report being bored some nights as things do not happen or they have to go to their room while others take part in an activity they do not want to do. The evening activity programme planning is not effective to ensure young women receive a choice from a range of activities and that there are sufficient staff willing and enable to deliver leisure activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Each of the young women has a care plan which identifies their individual needs and how these are to be met. The care plans identify the roles and responsibilities of the care staff and other professionals and agencies involved in helping to meet the young women's needs. Care plans are organised to cover each of the Every Child Matters outcome groups and also to address specifically the young women's cultural requirements. Some areas of the plans lack detail; sections relating to leisure and interests reflect a lack of consultation with the young women and therefore are not individualised or able to influence the planning of the evening activities offered by the home.

There are arrangements in place which ensure that the young women are able to maintain contact with their families and significant others although young women feel if they were closer to home their family would visit more often. Contact details are recorded in the young women's care plans. Information on how this is managed is readily available and ensures that all staff are aware of the individual arrangements in place.

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 |
|----------|---|-----------------|
| 15 | ensure young women in the home are provided with, and encouraged to pursue, appropriate leisure activities. (Regulation 18) | 30 October 2009 |

Recommendations

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

- ensure the unit's sanction and restraint recording system is appropriately maintained in bound numbered books and the managers sign these records (NMS 22)
- ensure arrangements in place for the monitoring of telephone calls (when required) enable appropriate levels of privacy (NMS 9)
- ensure that placement plans provide detailed information in relation to young women's identified leisure interests (NMS 2)
- ensure young women know how, and feel happy to, complain if they are unhappy with any aspect of living in the home. This relates to ensuring that the young women have ready access to complaint forms without needing to ask staff. (NMS 16)