

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC384018
Inspection date	26 January 2010
Inspector	Jackie Graves
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	9 June 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 setting is a large five bedroom modern detached house on a new housing estate. It is near to shops and other amenities, including a primary and secondary school, and has good transport links.

The ground floor has a large lounge with satellite television, a large dining room, a kitchen with modern appliances and a small utility area used as a laundry. There is a ground floor room, used as an office, with shelving and lockable storage.

Attached to the house is a room converted from a double garage space into a study/indoor play area. The garden is mainly laid to lawn and is an adequate space for outdoor play and sports activities. There is parking for two cars in the drive and an additional two spaces in front of the home.

Summary

This unannounced interim inspection looked at the key standards under staying safe and one standard under economic wellbeing.

At the last inspection, two actions and two recommendations were made. These were around documentation, the safety of the premises and monitoring the service. The progress the home has made in meeting the actions and recommendations, made at the last inspection, is also assessed.

Individual outcomes and the overall quality rating made at the last inspection were not reviewed on this occasion, so remain unchanged.

The home continues to provide a good level of care. Young people feel staff keep them safe and form friendly relationships with them. Staff are positive about their contribution to the care and well-being of residents. Most checks are carried out on staff to ensure their suitability. The service is well monitored to ensure the quality of care continuously improves.

Young people experience minimal risks to their welfare, health and safety, but not all risk assessments and testing of equipment are carried out. The behaviour management system is well regarded by young people who like the opportunities to achieve rewards. Some aspects of behaviour management are not sufficiently recorded.

As a result of this inspection two actions and two recommendations are made.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The home was asked to ensure aspects of fire safety were improved. There are now clear records of fire drills which show who was involved and how the evacuation progressed. Records of checks of emergency equipment are now clear, which helps to make the premises safer for all people using the building.

The registered person has ensured that all required information is available on young people's files so there is a clear record of their history and progress.

The manager has established a system for regularly monitoring the service and reporting on this, to improve the quality of care.

The registered person was asked to use a process of risk assessment to identify and reduce risk on some aspects of the premises. Written risk assessments are not yet in place to evidence this, although steps have been taken to improve some aspects of safety, such as ensuring the supply of hot water is at a safe temperature. An action relating to carrying out risk assessments is made as a result of this inspection.

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 people's privacy is respected. They benefit from having their own bedrooms and this personal space is respected by staff and other residents. There are places to meet privately with visitors within the home. Staff are clear about keeping personal information about young people confidential and make sure written records are stored securely.

Bullying is not an issue in the home. Young people are confident that bullying would not be tolerated and staff would offer support should this be an issue for them at school or elsewhere. Residents are looked after by staff who are trained in protecting children and are clear about their responsibilities regarding safeguarding.

Young people know they can make a complaint if they wish to. They have information about other people and organisations they may contact should they not wish to approach the home's own staff. They are protected by the home's procedures for reporting missing persons. Staff have a good understanding of notifying the relevant authorities when young people do not return when expected. They check on the welfare of young people when they do return to the home.

There is a careful system for checking visitors into the home and ensuring their close supervision whilst on the premises. All staff are subject to recruitment checks to ensure they are suitable to work with young people. Such checks are mostly thorough but further checks would ensure a more robust process.

The home makes sure the premises are safe, for example, with checks of gas and the electrical installation, but tests of portable appliances have not been carried out.

Fire safety is addressed through regular checks of equipment and alarms and by involving residents in fire drills, so they know how to react in an emergency. The home chooses not to display fire signs as it wishes to provide a homely, domestic environment for young people. However, risk assessments on this decision and the written agreement of the fire authority are not available. Some other risk assessments in relation to the home's premises are not in place, to ensure risk is minimised for residents.

Staff manage the resident's behaviour through an effective system of sanctions and rewards, which young people consider to be fair. They like the opportunities to 'earn' extra treats or pocket money as rewards for achieving acceptable behaviour.

Records are kept of any sanctions which are applied, such as the loss of a game or an activity. Reasons for giving a sanction are not always made clear, which makes it difficult to check if a sanction is fair and proportionate. The home provides training for staff in de-escalation techniques and restraint, but it is not clear if this training is consistent with government guidance. Restraint is not used frequently. When young people are restrained, this is recorded, but not directly, as a permanent record in a bound book.

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.

There are sufficient bathing and toilet facilities to meet the needs of young people and their privacy is respected when using them. Individual storage for toiletries is provided in young people's rooms. However, arrangements for storage and hand drying within bathrooms does not always promote good hygiene.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The Registered Manager has established a system for monitoring what goes on in the home to ensure the quality of the care continues to improve.

Individual case files are kept for each young person which contain the necessary information. These provide a comprehensive record of their history and progress. Staff are clear about retaining the confidentiality of this information and who may access files.

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 Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
26	ensure all parts of the home to which children have access are so far as practicable, free from hazards to their safety. This relates to portable appliance testing and conducting risk assessments in relation to the premises (Regulation 23)	28 February 2010
27	make sure recruitment checks cover all aspects of the schedule and regulations. (Schedule 2, Regulations 16,26,27)	28 February 2010

Recommendations

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

- provide separate storage for toothbrushes, an individual means of hand drying and a hygienic way of dispensing toilet paper (NMS 25)
- ensure records of restraint are directly recorded in a bound and numbered book, that training in restraint is in line with any government guidance and that reasons for sanctions are clearly recorded. (NMS 22)