

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	21 April 2010
Inspector	Gwen Buckley
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	5 November 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

This is a local authority residential secure children's home for up to 16 young people of either sex. It is owned and managed by a local county council. The home is situated in a small village approximately 10 miles from the centre of a large city. At the time of the inspection, 12 places are allocated for use by the Youth Justice Board (YJB) and four for young people placed for welfare reasons. The home is operating to full capacity.

The home is subdivided into two units, each accommodating up to eight young people. There are a number of communal areas which include large and small lounge areas, dining areas, games room, gymnasium and a fitness suite. There are educational facilities within the home as well as family rooms, therapy rooms, various offices and conference rooms.

Secure outdoor space is available, one of which is a large area split into two sub-areas providing grassed and landscaped area beside a hard-standing court. There is also another large outside area for various ball games.

Staff on duty and young people participated in the inspection by talking to the inspectors. Their views contributed towards the inspection findings.

Summary

This announced interim inspection covered the Every Child Matters outcome 'staying safe'. The inspection also looked at the action taken in response to recommendations made at the previous inspection in November 2009 although recommendations made relating to the education provision were not reviewed during this inspection.

The issues raised at the last inspection have been suitably progressed and the management team is committed to improving the service further. Overall, the records maintained are good and support the safeguarding of young people's welfare.

Young people are provided with a good level of care and support and arrangements for mobility are managed well and used effectively. When assessed as safe, mobility arrangements enable young people to have time away from the home and access various events and facilities in the community. Young people feel safe and cared for. Their comments include 'I don't know what they could do better here' and 'it is like a big family'.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The recommendations made following the previous inspection have been met or sufficient progress made to address them. The quality assurance processes are being developed further to enable effective analysis of events in the home. The Registered Manager is involved in local safeguarding meetings and events. Policy and procedural guidance covering the admission process for young people have been reviewed amended and implemented. The weekly multi-disciplinary meetings ensure the needs of young people at risk of suicide and self-harm are reviewed and appropriate action taken.

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.

The three recommendations made following the last inspection have been met. A quality assurance and monitoring system is being developed and will provide the senior managers with very detailed information. This will assist senior managers to identify trends and patterns in any incidents of restraint, single separation and sanctions. The quality assurance information helps keep young people safe and enables practice development. The safeguarding policies are signed off by the Local Safeguarding Children Board. The Registered Manager a bi-monthly safeguarding forum which keeps him up-to-date with relevant developments on safeguarding children and young people.

Privacy and confidentiality is well managed. Good practice by staff at the home promotes young people's privacy and dignity. Information related to young people is confidentially and sensitively handled. Account is taken of any risk a young person may pose to themselves and others. Observations of these risks are well managed by the staff team. Young people feel they are treated with respect and report good relationships with staff. To help protect young people the Registered Manager has taken action to improve and update the policy and practice guidance relating to a young person's access to and use of the internet.

There is a good complaints system in use at the home. Restorative justice is used to resolve issues where possible and advocates are available to help young people if needed. Young people are informed on arrival that staff want to help with any issues they have, so they are encouraged to raise them as early as possible. The young people are confident that they can complain and if they did, they would be listened to. Young people receive effective support from the home's staff if they make a complaint about external agencies.

The high level of staffing and staff supervision protects young people from bullying. There is appropriate training in child protection and safeguarding, with recent updated refresher training provided or planned in the near future for all staff. The safety and welfare of the young people is promoted through constant staff supervision. Children are protected from bullying and feel safe. The anti bullying procedures in place help to protect young people. Appropriate action taken by staff with regard to any instance of bullying.

The home has clear procedures which are known to staff to advise them of actions to take if a young person absconds or escapes. Staff are clear about what to do and who to tell when there are other significant events at the home.

Innovative use of mobility, enables staff to meet the individual needs and specific interests of young people. When assessed as safe and agreement from relevant agencies obtained, young people receive effective support to access community events such as training with the Fire Department.

Behaviour of young people is well managed. The high level of supervision of young people enables staff to consistently work with and guide them in a positive manner. Young people enjoy good relationships with their key workers and other staff. They are helped to engage

and interact effectively with others in the home and in the local community, building their self-esteem and confidence. Staff work with young people to help them manage and modify their behaviour, addressing individual issues they may have and developing strategies to help them for example dealing with anger management.

The home is well maintained and offers young people a safe, secure and pleasant environment to live in. It is clean and bright with well-maintained gardens.

The fire department has been consulted about fire precautions and action is being taken to address areas identified for the Registered Manager to consider. The home undertakes fire drills on a monthly basis which is more frequently than required by national minimum standards. However, it was noted that the policy guidance does not reflect the need to carry out night-time drills or address their frequency. Young people are aware of risks associated with fire and regularly discuss fire prevention and drills in their home meetings. Young people feel confident they would know what to do in case of fire.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

At the last inspection a recommendation was made to ensure information available to young people was reviewed. The young people have been consulted on what they feel is important include in a DVD to be shown to young people on admission or in the transport bringing them to the home. Leaflets are provided at the time of admission explaining what is provided and how the home operates. Information about the home is produced in different languages when required. Translators are also used to assist young people and their families if needed on a young person's admission and throughout their time at the home.

At the last inspection the Registered Manager was asked to ensure that a comprehensive procedure to introduce young people to the home and school is in place. A good system is now in place that considers the individual circumstances of each young person when they are being admitted and undergoing induction to the home and school. Young people report that they are made welcome and key workers and other staff take the time to help them get to know the routines of the home and what is expected of them. A few young people stated that they could not think of what staff could do better to improve this.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The Registered Manager has taken appropriate action to deal with recommendations made for this outcome following the last inspection. The recording system used for maintenance of the building has been developed; an effective tracking system is now in place. Funding approval has been given for the installation of a new external camera system to improve perimeter safety and security and a potential noted ligature point noted was made safe.

The Registered Manager was asked to review the quality monitoring systems that show how the home operates on a day-to-day basis and the impact this has on young people. A working party was established and work is ongoing to further improve the quality monitoring system at the home. Electronic data base systems are being improved. Significant developments and improvements have been made to progress the development of the quality assurance system. Although not completed, sufficient progress has been made to address this recommendation.

The management and monitoring of potential risk of suicide and self-harm has been reviewed as recommended at the last inspection. A formal reviewing system is now in place at the weekly multi-disciplinary meetings. This ensures that the vulnerability of all the young people and those at risk of suicide and self-harm are monitored and their progress reviewed.

Good information is available about the home and how it operates. An executive summary of the Statement of Purpose is included in the parents/carers pack and informs them that a full copy is available on request. A welcome pack is provided for young people new to the home and staff support young people by going through key information with them. Young people report that staff help them settle in and explain the rules and day-to-day routine of the home in a friendly manner to make sure they understand everything. The home is developing a DVD in consultation with young people that will be shown to young people prior to or on arrival.

Good communication between staff in the home and external professionals ensure that relevant information about young people is shared. External professionals report on the effective communication by the home. This helps staff develop care plans and identify intervention work needed with young people.

Good training opportunities are available for staff. As a result young people are cared for by well-trained and supported staff. A very high proportion of staff have completed the National Vocational Qualification training Level 3. Arrangements are in place for the three staff without this to commence their training in the near future.

There is an effective system in place to ensure the external monitoring of the unit by the Regulation 33 visitor. These visits are conducted regularly and generally to a very high standard.

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):

- update the fire policy and procedure guidance to reflect the need for night-time drills and the expected frequency. (NMS 26.8)