

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Anne Bannister
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You can obtain copies of The Children Act 2004, Every Child Matters and The National Minimum Standards for Children's Services from: The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Crispins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: www.tso.co.uk/bookshop

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 children's home provides care for up to three children. The home provides crisis intervention placements for up to 28 days and also medium and longer stays. The home's location, design and size are in keeping with its purpose and function.

The home is close to the coast and is set in its own grounds. The ground floor has a fitted kitchen, dining room, lounge and one bedroom with en-suite facilities. Upstairs there are two further bedrooms and a bathroom. Outside there is a lawn area and a large garden. There is an additional two bedroom bungalow on site, which accommodates one young person, who is supported in living more independently .

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This unannounced interim inspection assessed the home's performance against the key national minimum standards (NMS) relevant to the Every Child Matters outcome area of staying safe. There were 3 young people at home during the course of the inspection. Two actions and two recommendations have been raised as a result of this inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were no actions and recommendations to be followed up following the previous 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.

Overall there are good arrangements in place to help to ensure that young people, the staff who work there, and all visitors to the home are kept safe. This includes the training of staff in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people, awareness of, and effective strategies to counter bullying and in positive care and control.

There are suitable policies and practices in relation to maintaining privacy and confidentiality. Staff practice creates a supportive and nurturing atmosphere in which young people feel safe and comfortable. Caring and consistent approaches to young people's needs are implemented by the staff team.

Staff are receptive to young people's concerns, and the home provides a comprehensive complaints procedure. This enables young people, or others on their behalf, to raise concerns about the quality of service. There have been two complaints made by young people since the last inspection. These were dealt with under safeguarding procedures. Recording of the response made to issues raised demonstrates that senior staff take young people's concerns seriously and act efficiently in dealing with them.

Since the last inspection there have been two safeguarding referrals. The young people accommodated are safeguarded by a comprehensive child protection policy with procedures in line with those of the Local Safeguarding Children Board. All staff have completed training that equips them with the skills and knowledge to identify and respond appropriately to allegations or suspicion of abuse. However, a chronology of the progress of referrals from start to closure is not maintained by the home. Records are instead exclusively recorded on young people's files. The home was, therefore, unable to fully evidence their practice in relation to these referrals as both young people have moved to alternate placements.

Young people are protected from bullying through staff vigilance. Staff have good knowledge of young people's needs and vulnerabilities. Adequate staffing levels mean that situations of potential bullying or negative interactions between young people can be quickly identified and dealt with. Young people spoken to confirm bullying is not an issue within the home.

16 incidents of absconding behaviour occurred since the last inspection. Suitable policies and procedures are in place that clearly detail what action staff should take if young people go missing. The guidelines take full account of the vulnerability of the young people and the urgency with which staff need to act. This includes a clear protocol for enlisting the assistance of the police and for notifying the relevant authorities. However, documentation maintained did not always indicate the reasons young people had given for leaving the home without permission.

This home has systems in place to notify Ofsted of any significant events. There have been two incidents requiring notification since the last inspection.

Individualised behaviour management plans are in place and physical intervention records include all the required details. Relevant people are informed and individual risk assessments are revised following any incident. On the occasions physical intervention is necessary records indicate that minimal intervention is used. Staff rely on their knowledge of the young people, and their skills in de-escalation to avoid incidents reaching this stage. When sanctions are given recording of their effectiveness in promoting positive changes in young people's behaviour is not well

developed. The assessment made tending mainly to indicate that the sanction has been satisfactorily completed.

All the required safety certificates are in place. Fire safety checks are undertaken at the required frequencies and are suitably recorded. A recent inspection by the fire officer has resulted in a judgement that the fire risk assessment of the building was inadequate. The fire officer requires that the Registered Manager review and update the risk assessment by the 27/10/2010. Systems are in place which indicate that fire drills occur in excess of the frequency stated in the national minimum standards. Risk assessments of the building have been updated. All gas and electrical appliances receive an annual check. Visitors are generally welcomed into the home once they have satisfied staff of their identity and the purpose of their visit and when they have signed the visitors' book.

Recruitment files previously examined indicate that the organisation operates appropriate recruitment procedures that meet with the requirements of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001. This shows that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that staff employed are suitable to work with young people.

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 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
17	written records are kept of any allegation of abuse or neglect, and the actions taken in response. In particular this relates to the need to ensure a chronology is maintained of referral, which details any action the Registered Manager may need to take following the closure of an investigation (Regulation 16.2d)	27/10/2010
26	ensure, after consultation with the fire authority, they take adequate precautions against the risk of fire (Regulation 31.1a)	27/10/2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure that records maintained when young people are missing from home adequately detail the reasons they have given for absconding, and any action taken in light of those reasons (NMS 19.6)
- ensure staff meetings address issues of control and agree practicable and acceptable means of responding to behaviour and control problems of both the current group of children and of individual children in light of their histories, any current problems and placement plans (NMS 22.6).