

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Russell Shackford
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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 service is a children's home. It provides three long-term placements for young people aged between 10 years and 17 years. The accommodation consists of three single bedrooms and spacious communal areas for eating, studying and relaxing. The home is in a village approximately three miles from the town centre. It is close to shops, leisure facilities and public transport.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This was an unannounced interim inspection to check on key standards and related regulations under the Every Child Matters outcome group of staying safe. It also looked at the progress made on recommendations previously set.

This is a good service. Children's privacy is well respected in all aspects and complaints are well handled. Good safeguarding policies and practice around child protection, bullying, missing from care and 'e' safety promote and protect children's welfare. There is a good, constructive approach to behaviour management. Staff demonstrate a good awareness of the risks to the children during their known and likely activities. Good quality written risk assessments are particularly well acted upon and provide clear detail of the action required to minimise the identified risks and comprehensively promote children's safety. Good policies and procedures help to protect children's physical safety in the event of a fire at the home. Staff recruitment checks are satisfactory. All staff are trained in appropriate safety subjects including fire safety, complaints, child protection and physical restraint.

Improvements since the last inspection

It was recommended that the registered person ensure that a minimum ratio of 80% of all care staff complete a National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People. Staff confirm that they receive time and support to complete the qualification. Newly recruited staff who do not hold the qualification are registered on the course after completion of their probationary period. However, the target remains unmet.

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.

Staff show good appreciation of the importance of children's privacy and describe a number of ways in which children's privacy is respected. They always knock on doors before entering. Children can have a key for their bedroom to help them feel that they control that private space. Details about children's care is recorded and stored appropriately to maintain good levels of confidentiality. Children and staff have access to a private telephone. Therefore privacy is well respected in all aspects.

The children know how to make a complaint because the staff have explained what to do and there is information in the children's guide about how to complain. Children receive regular visits from the children's rights officer, complaints officer and an advocacy service. Details of external agencies and contact numbers are displayed clearly in the home. The complaints records contain the required details. All staff have received training on complaints to ensure that they know what to do if a person complains about the service. There are very few complaints about the service. Therefore complaints are handled well.

The provider has a good safeguarding procedure for staff to follow in the event of any allegation or suspicion of abuse. This includes a 'Red Flag' system which is used to ensure that the appropriate level of importance and response is given to serious matters. The manager and staff have received child protection training. Staff demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of the safeguarding procedures to promote and protect the children's safety. The staff take a robust, proactive approach to keeping the children safe, working well with other agencies concerned with the protection of children. Staff describe a range of strategies used during some of the very good work done with children about staying safe in the home and in the community. Anti-bullying training is provided to all staff and the staff collaborate with other agencies to support children. There is good written guidance for staff to follow in the event of a child being missing. This is supported by recorded risk assessments for staff to follow. All significant events at the home have been notified to the relevant authorities including Ofsted. Therefore, the welfare of children is well promoted, they are protected from abuse and bullying and an appropriate response is made to any allegation or suspicion of abuse.

The sanctions policy is effective, promoting the use of praise, encouragement and de-escalation of behaviours. Staff confirm that their training helps them to manage the behaviour of the children. They are also supported through the use of individual behaviour support plans which describe individualised approaches to behaviour management. Sanctions are relevant and reflect the age and understanding of the children. They are reviewed regularly for effectiveness. Physical restraint is rarely used to manage behaviour. Staff are trained in the provider's policy and authorised techniques. The training is designed and delivered in a manner that ensures that as much as possible, incidents are managed without the use of physical intervention. Therefore, children are assisted to develop socially acceptable behaviour through the

encouragement of good behaviour and through constructive staff responses to any inappropriate behaviour.

Staff are knowledgeable about the risks to individual children. There is good evidence of the strategies identified to minimise risks being implemented and recorded. Good risk assessments are recorded to enable staff to know what action to take to minimise the risk to each child during their known and likely activities. Written risk assessments relating to children being absent without authority have also been completed.

All staff working at the home have received up-to-date fire safety training to assist them in minimising the risks to children in the event of a fire at the home. The fire safety check records are well ordered and information is easy to retrieve. The records are up to date. All staff and children have been involved in a fire drill to ensure that they are aware of the procedure to be followed in case of fire in the home. Therefore, children's physical safety from fire in the home is protected.

All staff have been appropriately recruited and they have undergone suitable Criminal Records Bureau checks to ensure that they are suitable to work with children.

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?

Recommendations

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

- ensure a minimum ratio of 80% of all care staff complete a National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People. (NMS 29)