

Inspection report for Children's Home

Unique reference number	SC028174
Inspection date	02/02/2011
Inspector	Deirdra Keating
Type of inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	08/06/2010
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2011

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

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 and accommodation for up to three young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties, aged between 10 and 17 years and is owned by a private company.

The home is a detached property with a garden and car park. It is situated in a rural area within reach of nearby towns and local amenities. The ground floor has; a lounge, dining room, utility room and kitchen. Each young person has their own bedroom, and separate facilities are provided for staff, together with an office.

Two young people currently live in the home of who were both present during the inspection.

Summary

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

This unannounced interim inspection looked at staying safe, economic well-being and the progress the setting has made with the recommendations made at the last inspection. These related to; monitoring, staff meetings and documentation. The provision has taken some appropriate action to solve previous requirements. Being healthy, enjoying and achieving, positive contribution, and organisation were not looked at during this inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

The Registered Manager was asked to ensure that sanction records included children's views and that monitoring visits of the home provided more opportunities for staff and young people to discuss matters privately. Young people and staff now have more opportunities to speak with the independent monitoring visitor privately. These steps help ensure that young people can express their views about the home and this helps keep them safe. The requirement regarding the sanction record has not been addressed and requires further improvement.

The registered manager was also asked to ensure that staff meetings had a clear agenda and focus. This has been documented in the minutes. These evidence discussions about current practice issues and the home's written policies. These steps help staff focus on best practice and meeting individual needs.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people are cared for in a home that provides adequate physical safety and security. The home is free from hazards and all safety checks meet the requirements. These include regular safety checks and checks to the fire prevention equipment. In addition fire drills are carried out regularly with young people. This ensures that young people are protected from hazards in the home and know what to do in the event of a fire. The home is secure and visitors to the home are asked for identification and monitored. New staff are carefully recruited and undertake immediate enhanced Criminal Record Bureau checks prior to commencing employment. Written references and gaps in past employment are checked carefully to ensure that any issues are highlighted. This ensures that young people are cared for by safe staff that have been carefully checked for their suitability, experience and skill.

The welfare and safety of young people is promoted by the written child protection procedures that provide clear guidance for staff to follow while on shift. These are explained in further detail in child protection training which all staff complete as part of their induction programme. This gives staff a basic understanding of the procedures to follow in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) requirements. Notifications to relevant authorities are generally made by the manager and monitored by the registered individual. However, following a recent child protection investigation at the home Ofsted were not notified, although all other procedures were followed. This was an isolated incident, although, it could potentially impact on young people's welfare and safety. The protocol for young people missing from the home is carried out in accordance with individual plans to reflect the individual needs of the young person. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and ensure that these protocols are always followed. Staff monitor young people on return to ensure they are healthy and well. Discussions following young people's return include warning them about potential dangers and relevant safety issues. This helps keep young people as safe as possible while missing from the home.

Staff generally respect young people's privacy. Individual case files are stored securely and room keys are issued but not always used. Young people say that they can leave doors unlocked and their belongings are safe. Room safes are provided by the home for smaller valuable items. Staff are careful about discussing sensitive information regarding young people and sometimes invite young people into the office for more privacy. Young people have a separate phone line for their sole use in a small area under the stairs. This provides enough privacy, although it is also used

for storage. Helpful numbers are displayed above the phone so that young people can access external people if they have a concern. The organisation responds appropriately to complaints. Young people are supported to make internal complaints and records show that young people have received appropriate responses. Young people report that they are happy with the way in which the home handles complaints. In addition there has been an external complaint which the provider did investigate resulting in no further action.

Young people are encouraged to manage their emotions and behaviour and treat one another with respect. Staff try to promote socially acceptable behaviour using strategies that are tailored to help young people achieve realistic targets of acceptable behaviour. The young people and staff at the home have encountered a very difficult period of time where behaviour has been challenging and some household items have been broken. This has left young people without some furniture items. Young people say that staff are fair and sanctions are generally related to behaviours and meaningful. However, young people's views are not recorded as part of the sanction record as required. This could make monitoring difficult and potentially impact on young people's quality of care. There have been few instances of bullying at the home. Staff take bullying very seriously and take immediate action if bullying is alleged or suspected. For example, young people are separated and staff ratios changed to support each young person and keep them safe. Staff can take time out from the home with young people and give them personal space and one to one support on a barge boat that belonging to the organisation. Young people say that staff deal with all issues fairly and act straight away and that this helps them continue to feel safe at the home.

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 satisfactory.

Several aspects of the home's environment, furnishings and decor were looked at during this inspection following observations on arrival at the home. This was regarding cleanliness and quality of the accommodation and domestic furnishings. On the day of inspection there was no table or chairs in the dining room. This was the result of an incident at the home a week earlier in which the furniture had been damaged. The manager had partly addressed this and taken some steps in planning

to refurnish the dining room. However, the room was empty with the exception of a broken dresser in the corner. This does not promote a homely environment or good mealtime structure for young people.

The Registered Manager is committed to improving the décor in the home. Soft furnishings and lamps had been previously purchased and were added during the inspection as part of a planned improvement to the environment. However, the standard of the home generally including the; hall, stairwell, bathroom and ground floor communal rooms are in a poor state of decoration and cleanliness. This means that some young people spend time in areas that are not maintained or cleaned to an adequate standard. Young people have their own bedrooms and have basically personalised these with their own belongings, possessions and choice of paint. Bedrooms are generally furnished adequately and one was in the process of being freshly decorated.

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	notify in accordance with Regulation 30 of the instigation and outcome of any child protection enquires involving a child accommodated in the children's home (Regulation 16 (2) (c))	09/02/2011
24	ensure that home is kept clean, reasonably decorated and maintained (Regulation 31 (2) (e))	02/03/2011
23	ensure that all parts of the children's home used by children are suitably furnished and equipped; this is in reference to the dining room. (Regulation 31 (2) (C))	09/02/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure that when disciplinary measures or restraint are used, children are encouraged to write or have their views recorded and sign their names against them, in the records kept by the home. (NMS 22.14)