

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Gwen Buckley
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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 secure unit is managed by a county council. It provides secure accommodation for up to five young people aged from 10 to 17 years old. All the young people accommodated are placed under Section 25 of the Children Act 1989. Those under 13 years must have the approval of the Secretary of State to be accommodated prior to admission.

Four young people were present at the time of the inspection and assisted by talking to the inspector as a group and individually. Their views on the care they receive were taken into account during the inspection and reflected in the reporting process.

The home is an old building with a fenced secure external hard-surfaced recreation play area and a small garden used for on-site mobility. It also has a secure car port and courtyard area for leisure and education use with hard and soft play areas. An internal fitness room is available and the living areas include an open-plan living, dining and kitchen area. Education is provided on site.

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 monitor progress against the recommendations made at the last inspection in July 2010. All of the key standards for the Every Child Matters outcome area of staying safe were also considered on this visit with the exception of staff recruitment. There is a stable staff group with no new staff recruited since the last inspection.

Young people are supported effectively by staff that have very positive professional relationships with them. The level of restraints are very low and young people feel safe at the home, are confident that staff will help them and want the best for them. There is effective management at the home, providing an outstanding level of practice and care under the staying safe outcome area. The overall rating of good from the last inspection is carried forward at this inspection.

There were no recommendations made as a result of this inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

Three recommendations were made following the previous inspection; all three have been addressed. A policy has been developed to enable young people, when assessed as safe, to manage and administer some of their own medication. Potential ligature points noted at the last inspection in young people's bedrooms have been

made safe and the home has implemented a formal system to remind placing authorities of their duty to provide pathway plans for young people who are entitled to them.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Effective staff deployment and observation of young people ensure the safety of the young people as well as allowing them to have private time on their own. Staff ensure that the privacy and dignity of young people are maintained. Staff are committed to promoting the rights of young people and have a very good understanding of the level of risk young people pose to themselves or others and take appropriate action to address this.

The complaints procedure is robust, transparent and easily accessible to young people, who have confidence that any complaints will be taken seriously. Young people are advised of their right to complain and information is made available to them at the time of admission including on how to access an independent advocate. Young people feel that any issues they have are usually dealt with before there is a need to use the complaint system. If a young person requires information in other formats or languages there are procedures in place to ensure this is provided in a way young people can understand.

There is an excellent level of independent support available to the young people in the home including advocates who visit weekly and they can talk too if they have concerns. All the young people at the home report they have very good relationships with their key workers and other staff including catering, support and administration staff.

Staff are aware of their duties and responsibilities to safeguard children and young people regarding allegations of both any current and historical abuse. They refer any safeguarding concerns or allegations appropriately to the local authority designated officer and the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Staff work effectively with other agencies to protect young people.

The home actively promotes the welfare of young people. The high level of staffing protects young people from bullying. Staff ensure that any issues relating to bullying are challenged immediately and young people are aware bullying is not tolerated, resulting in young people feeling safe and they do not identify bullying as an issue at the home.

No young people have been missing from the home or when out in the community since the last inspection. Detailed risk assessments are undertaken prior to young people being able to access the community. Staff are aware of detailed reporting procedures and action to take should a young person go missing.

Behaviour of young people is very well managed. There is a trusting relationship between staff and young people. This and the consistent high level of supervision enables staff to work with individual young people and guide them in a positive manner to understand and manage their own behaviour, health and emotional needs. Single separation records are well maintained and young people feel separation is used to keep them and others safe. Individual work done with the young people helps them to understand and manage their own behaviour, health and emotional needs.

The use of restraint in the home is very low. There have only been 12 restraints in the last six months. Restraint and sanction records are very well maintained and are effectively monitored by the manager and external Regulation 33 visitor. Restraint recording is transparent and robust, records show 'guiding hands' are recorded as restraints as well as incidents where young people have to be held to remove ligatures. Young people are actively encouraged to, and do, record their views and sign restraint and sanction records. Young people feel that restraints are only used to keep young people safe and sanctions are seldom used, but when they are, they are fair and provide them with more incentives to behave.

Young people live in a building that is secure and domestic in style. Excellent procedures, followed by staff, ensure the safety of young people. For example, procedures agreed with the local police ensure they have immediate and safe access to the building if there is an incident. The home is an old building with no en-suite facilities for young people and limited communal and private areas. Staff ensure they take immediate action to remedy any defects noted and any on going maintenance. The home is working with the Department for Education to progress an application for funding for a complete rebuild.

No new staff have been employed at the home since the last inspection. There is an experienced staff team who relate very well with the young people. Staff keep young people safe when they are away from the home in the care of escorts. All the people used as escorts have been appropriately checked and their identity confirmed before they let young people leave the building with them.

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.