

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Fiona Millns
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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 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

The children's home is run by a local authority. It is registered to accommodate up to six young people, from 12 years to 17 years old, of either gender. The home provides care and accommodation to young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties on a long-term basis. It is located in a residential area and provides good access to public transport, shops, healthcare, education and leisure facilities.

It is a detached property with eight bedrooms. The house has a fitted kitchen, laundry room, dining room and a lounge which runs from the front to the rear of the home. There is a conservatory which has been built on to the property. There are six bedrooms upstairs, five of these are for young people the other one is for staff. There are two bathrooms upstairs. Downstairs, there are two more bedrooms, one for a young person and the other for a member of staff. To the rear of the house there is a well proportioned garden that is suitable for young people to use.

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. It assessed the key national minimum standards (NMS) associated with how young people are enabled to stay safe.

The inspection also assessed whether the registered persons had met the two requirements and one recommendation made at the previous inspection on 27 September 2010. These were about the record of measures of control, pathway planning and discouraging young people from smoking.

At the time of the inspection, six young people were living in the children's home and some of them spoke to the inspector about the care they receive.

Arrangements for the promotion of safety are good. Effective procedures are in place to ensure young people are safe and staff are very good at raising concerns with the local safeguarding team.

There are effective behaviour management policies in place based upon promoting positive behaviour.

Young people have appropriate information on their rights to complain and have regular access to the 'rights to rights' workers. Any concerns raised by young people are taken seriously and addressed appropriately.

The premises are maintained in a safe condition and there are robust maintenance

processes within the home.

There are some shortfalls identified at this inspection with regard to the recording of restraint, access to an independent person after a period of unauthorised absence, risk assessment for bullying in relation to the premises and access to a medical practitioner following physical intervention.

Improvements since the last inspection

The registered persons were asked to make some improvements at the last inspection. They were asked to ensure that young people, where required, have pathway plans and that smoking is actively discouraged. These matters have been addressed.

Young people are prepared and supported towards independence. Staff and young people have worked with the leaving care workers to identify needs and develop pathways plans.

Young people are discouraged from smoking .Young people are given access to the smoking cessation worker; issues and strategies are identified in care plans. Sanctions are imposed when young people smoke on the premises.

The registered persons were also asked at the last inspection to maintain an accurate and up-to-date record of measures of control used, as set out in Regulation 17. This matter has not yet been addressed and a statutory requirement is raised in this report.

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.

Young people's privacy and confidentiality is respected well. Records and documents are stored securely within the office and on the electronic database. Young people have their own rooms which they can lock. Bathrooms and toilets can be locked to provide privacy. Young people have access to a portable phone and have their own mobile phones that can be used in private. Guidance is provided for staff and young people on when it may be necessary to search a young person's possessions.

Procedures are in place about complaints and on admission all young people are given with a 'welcome pack' and have regular visits from the 'rights 2 rights' worker. Information and complaint forms are freely available in the home. Procedures are in suitable formats making them easily accessible and understandable to young people

Young people stated they know how to complain if they ever need to. Staff are trained in the home's procedures and know how to support young people. The home keeps clear and up-to-date records of any issues raised. Young people have support from an advocacy service if they require it.

Staff are well trained in child protection procedures and are proactive in their work to ensure that young people are protected. Staff use local knowledge and information to ensure prompt action from multi-agency partners to protect young people. The Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures and the home's own child protection procedures are accessible and staff understand these procedures and know what action to take to safeguard a young people should they suspect an incident of abuse has occurred. Staff are trained in child protection. Young people feel that the staff are good at helping them to keep safe.

There is very clear information and policies on bullying. The home has a zero tolerance of bullying. Young people discuss bullying in their meetings and in key worker sessions. Individual risk assessments identify action to be taken to reduce or eliminate risks to young people. However, there is no risk assessment in place to identify to staff where and when bullying may occur so and can ensure these areas and times are monitored more closely.

Unauthorised absences from the home are high. This has resulted in a multi-agency meeting to consider further strategies. Absences are being managed through individual risk assessments. There are good protocols with the local police force to protect the young people. There is an up-to-date record in place in relation to any absence that occurs. The record contains most required details. However, it does not show someone independent of the home visiting young people to consider the reasons for the absence as set out in the statutory guidance for local authorities on children missing from care.

Young people and staff have good relationships. There are effective behaviour management policies in place based upon promoting positive behaviour. Individual risk assessments are completed that underpin staff practice. Staff are trained in physical intervention including de-escalation strategies should they be needed to keep young people safe. The restraint record identifies two physical restraints since the last inspection. The recording format does not meet the Children's Homes Regulations 2001. Currently additional information is recorded on incident forms. The records do not have details of young people being offered an examination from a registered nurse or medical practitioner following the physical intervention. A record is in place for any sanctions imposed. All matters are recorded, along with young people's comments or signature. Young people said that the sanctions used are fair. Rewards are used frequently to encourage positive behaviour.

Risk assessments of young people's likely and known activities are in place, and are regularly reviewed. Generic and fire risk assessments are in place. Health and safety matters in the home are well managed. For example, maintenance takes place of electrical appliances, the gas boiler and fire equipment. Fire tests and drills are carried out regularly. They include all staff and young people so they all know what

to do to keep safe. The home has achieved the five star award from the environmental health officer with regard to food safety standards in the home.

No new staff have been recruited since the last inspection. There are policies and procedures in place for the safe recruitment of new staff to ensure they are the right people to work with children and 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
22	maintain an accurate and up to date record of measures of control used, as set out in Regulation 17 (Regulation 17 (4)).	10/02/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure that procedures for identifying the action to be taken when a young person is absent without authority cover the action to be taken on the young person's return; specifically young people are seen by an independent person on their return to the home to consider the reasons for absence (NMS 19.2)
- ensure that where there has been a physical intervention, the young people is examined by a registered nurse or medical practitioner (NMS 22.13)
- carry out recorded risk assessments of the times, places and circumstances in which the risk of bullying is greatest (NMS18.5).