

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Malcolm Stannard
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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 secure children's centre is situated on the outskirts of a city. It is managed by the Children and Young People's Directorate of the local authority. It is a detached two storey building situated in its own secure compound.

The centre is registered as a children's home and is approved by the Secretary of State to provide secure care and accommodation for up to eight young people of both genders from 10 to 17 years of age.

At the time of inspection there were seven young people resident at the centre, four of these contributed to the inspection. The resources available at the centre for young people's use include a sports hall, outdoor courtyard area, aerobics suite and a kitchen to help develop life skills.

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 September 2010. All of the key standards in the staying safe outcome were also looked at during this inspection. Strengths include the good appropriate relationships in place between staff and young people and the encouragement given to display positive behaviour. An area for development is the frequency of formal support and supervision of staff.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection in September 2010, management at the centre were asked to consider five recommendations. Three related to formal education provision at the centre and were not assessed on this visit as education was not inspected. Two recommendations were made relating to the welfare provision at the unit and one of these has been addressed.

A recommendation was made that menu records should demonstrate that a suitable, varied and nutritious diet has been provided. This recommendation has been met. Weekly menus, which are displayed in the dining room, have symbols next to the meals which identify healthy choices or those suitable for vegetarians. A diary record is kept of every meal supplied which ensures there is less repetition and the right balance of food is provided.

Management at the centre were also asked to ensure that the frequency of formal supervision meets the requirements of the national minimum standard. There has

been some improvement in the frequency and amount of formal supervision for staff. However, not all staff receive supervision on a regular basis, there is no explanation for missing sessions in the records and when a supervisor is not available the role is not undertaken by another team leader. This recommendation is not met and is repeated.

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 dignity are addressed fully. Staff always knock on young people's bedroom doors to let young people know they are there before entering. Young people are able to make phone calls in private. All confidential information is securely stored and a written procedure is in place to guide staff in relation to appropriate sharing of any information.

There is a complaints system which is effective in enabling young people to raise concerns. Investigation of a complaint and the response to a young person is carried out quickly. The satisfaction or otherwise of the young person with the outcome is recorded and they are told how they can take the matter further if they wish. There have been very few complaints made since the last inspection. Concerns are raised by young people; however, the staff team is good at addressing issues immediately, meaning young people have resolution without the need to access the formal complaints procedure. An independent advocate visits the centre and all young people are able to see him; this provides a further opportunity to raise any issues. The arrangements in place enable young people to confidently complain about any aspect of the centre.

Child protection procedures remain effective and robust. There is a good relationship in place with the local authority's safeguarding representative. Referrals are made appropriately following published procedures and guidance. Managers at the centre are transparent in their dealings with local child protection services and all incidents are reviewed to identify any practice or development issues. All staff receive training in safeguarding and refresher courses for individual staff are undertaken every two years. Young people are given information regarding bullying and cover this subject in sessions with staff. The centre operates a zero tolerance approach. Young people's welfare is protected by the procedures and practice.

Staff at the centre work hard to ensure that interactions with young people are positive. They are good at engaging with young people and promote appropriate expectations of behaviour. There is an incentive scheme which is understood by young people and allows them to achieve rewards for positive behaviour and

attainment.

All staff have undertaken restorative justice training which equips them with the knowledge to focus on alternative methods of resolving conflicts or inappropriate behaviour. While the use of formal sanctions remains low, there has been no discernable drop in the number given to young people since the last inspection. While there is some evidence of the use of resolution and reparation techniques, staff are not always considering the use of an alternative prior to issuing a sanction.

Single separation is used appropriately and young people are not locked in their rooms inappropriately. The centre's staff occasionally use individual behaviour management plans to address particularly challenging behaviour shown by young people. This can involve young people spending time in their rooms. However, the bedroom doors are not locked and each young person is free to leave their room.

All staff members are appropriately trained in physical intervention techniques. However, these are used only as a last resort and their use is extremely low. Yearly refresher training is undertaken and this includes a focus on the use of diversion and diffusion methods. There are good quality individual risk assessments in place for young people and these include any information regarding any known medical conditions which should be taken into account should physical intervention be required.

Appropriate records are held of all use of behaviour management techniques. These include details of events prior to any intervention, the actions taken and consequences. Auditing of the records is undertaken by senior managers at the centre as well as external managers and any areas for development of practice are identified and communicated to individual staff. Good management data is produced by the centre's internal quality assurance system which enables any trends or patterns of behaviour and practice to be seen. Overall any type of behaviour management intervention is used sparingly.

There are good security, health and safety procedures in place to ensure young people are protected from harm. All systems are regularly tested and security checks are completed consistently across the whole site. Staff receive regular training in safety and security and are made aware of any changes in procedure. Fire drills are undertaken at varying times to ensure that all staff know what to do in the case of a fire. An up-to-date fire risk assessment is available. Good practice ensures that positive steps are taken to keep young people, staff and visitors safe.

There have been no new staff commencing employment at the centre since the last inspection and no recruitment files were seen on this visit. At the last inspection it was found that vetting procedures and practice were robust. Any visitors to the centre are also checked and monitored appropriately to ensure young people are safe.

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 the frequency of formal supervision for staff meets with the requirements of the standard. (NMS 28.2)