

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Michelle Spruce
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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 home provides therapeutic care, accommodation with education and outdoor activities for up to eight young people aged 10 to 17 years old. The home is situated in a rural location but within easy reach of essential services and amenities. There is also easy access to major towns and cities.

Summary

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

This is an interim unannounced inspection. The inspection focused on the key national minimum standards in relation to the outcome area staying safe. Four young people were present during the inspection.

The staff are dedicated and committed to ensuring young people are safe and protected from harm. Safeguarding is a priority and staff endeavour to support young people in keeping themselves safe. The systems in place ensure that concerns are raised, taken seriously and acted on, as a result young people are protected from potential risk of harm or abuse.

There has been considerable changes made to support the safety of young people who use the internet. Systems in place are robust and provide security and confidence that young people can safely access networking sites without the potential risk of harm or abuse.

The Registered Manager monitors the home to ensure the safety of the environment, however, there are some shortfalls in certain areas which has resulted in recommendations.

Out of the two actions and one recommendation set at the last inspection, all have been achieved.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection two actions and one recommendation was made. The manager has taken measures to improve the monitoring of the recruitment system. There are now areas to record gaps in employment and verbal references are recorded and dated. Action has been taken to notify the appropriate bodies of events within the home and notifications are now received on time.

The one recommendation set has been met and all young people have written

consents held on file for the administration of first aid and non-prescribed medication.

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's privacy is respected and information confidentially handled. Young people have keys to their own bedrooms and staff always knock before entering. There is a phone to make private calls in areas that conversations are not overheard. Staff complete room searches to protect young people from illicit or dangerous items hazard to health. Young people say they understand why and when room searches are necessary and are present during the procedure. However, records of room searches are not held centrally and it is not clear that all the required information is recorded. This does not meet the national minimum standards. Staff know how to handle sensitive information and all records are kept confidential in a secure locked location. As a result confidential information is protected.

There is a complaints system in the home that protects young people. Young people say that complaints are taken seriously and they are happy with the outcomes. The home provides access to external advocates and young people know who to contact when raising concerns. Staff support young people with the formal and informal complaints procedure. There is a process where grumbles can be raised directly in meetings or by completing a form which allows young people's voice to be heard.

The home protects young people from bullying and has a clear anti-bullying policy. The policy covers a range of ways that bullying may present which includes cyber-bullying. Measures are taken to reduce the potential risks as a result young people feel safe. Staff listen to concerns of a minor nature and act as mediators to resolve issues. Young people say that bullying is not a problem in the home, there are 'often disagreements' but they are 'quickly sorted out'.

The home has procedures in place to protect young people and keep them safe from harm or abuse. Staff are knowledgeable in them; however, not all staff are trained in safeguarding and are not up to date with current changes in legislation. This may result in delays in reporting concerns and could potentially put young people at risk. Where there are concerns, the home follows the process in place to reduce the risk of harm to young people and actively involve outside agencies which ensures young people's safety. The Registered Manager has worked hard to ensure that internet safety is evaluated. As a result staff have undergone training to assist and monitor the safe use of the internet for young people. This keeps young people safe.

The relationships between staff and young people are good and staff positively support in assisting young people to develop socially acceptable behaviour. Young people's risk assessments clearly identify when and why physical intervention is to be used. However, it is not always clear and detailed in the records why the intervention is used. Sanctions are fair and proportionate and there is always an opportunity to 'earn back' privileges that are lost when sanctions are imposed. This provides the balance of positive feedback in supporting positive achievements.

The home has good systems in place that protect and support young people absent without authority. Staff support young people on their return and well checks are done to establish their well being. Young people say they 'feel safe' and staff are kind and support them. The number of missing episodes has reduced, young people say this is a result of changes made to agree free time which is gained with positive behaviour. As a result young people feel valued and listened to. Young people's safety is protected with an alarm monitoring device connected to bedroom doors. This is to let staff know when young people have entered or exited. The manager ensures that this protects young people who may go missing, however, there is no consent or record to show that young people or the placing authority have agreed with the action taken to protect young people.

There are measures in place to monitor the health and safety of the home and regular tests of the fire alarms and systems take place. Young people know the fire procedure and say that fire drills are completed both during the day and night. Risk assessments for activities are detailed and comprehensive and promote the safety of young people. There are some shortfalls by the Registered Manager in the reviewing of risk assessments and the overseeing of their effectiveness. This has the potential to put young people at risk. Individual young people's risk assessments has not been updated with current information and the homes general and fire risk assessment are out of date. There is no evidence to show that electrical installations are tested within the timescales given in line with the national minimum standards. However, all gas services and electrical equipment testing has been completed. There are some minor hazards that pose a potential risk in relation to the carpet and bedroom furniture.

The manager has taken measures to improve the monitoring of the recruitment system. All staff have up-to-date enhanced Criminal Records Bureau checks. Gaps in employment and references are verified and explored. This keeps young people safe from the potential risk of harm and abuse.

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
26	ensure that monitoring devices for the surveillance of young people used in the home are agreed, this is in particular relation to the young people's placing authority and placement plan. (Regulation 22(a)(b))	15/04/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure all searches are documented showing the time and date and the reason for the search, noting what if anything is found, who carried out the search and who was present at the time and all records to be signed by all those present (NMS 9.8)
- ensure that training is provided for all staff, including ancillary staff, this is in particular relation to the prevention of abuse, recognition of abuse and dealing with disclosures or suspicion of abuse (NMS 17.8)

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- ensure that risk assessments are carried out, recorded in writing and regularly reviewed, this is in particular relation to young people's risk assessments and the home general risk assessments (NMS 26.2)
 - ensure that positive steps are taken to keep young people, staff and visitors safe from the risk of hazards, this is in particular relation to the carpet and bedroom furniture(NMS 26.1)
 - ensure that electrical installations are checked at least every three years (NMS 26.4)
 - ensure that there is a record kept of restraint, this is in particular relation to details of the behaviour requiring the restraint and the nature of the restraint used. (NMS 22.9)