

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Chris Scully
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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

This home provides care and accommodation for two young people aged from 10 to 17 years, who have emotional or behavioural difficulties. The company also have their own independent school.

The registered school provides the young people at the home with an individual weekly programme of activities and a substantial amount of this timetable is devoted to educational input.

The home is a large detached property, located within easy walking distance from the local centre and all its domestic and leisure facilities. The home provides transport for the young people to access nearby towns, which are within easy travelling distance. There are parking facilities to the side of the house and in a nearby car park.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

This visit was an interim inspection and was unannounced. One outcome area for young people was looked at during this inspection, which was staying safe. Three members of staff and three young people spoke to the inspector during the inspection.

The home continues to be an outstanding service that meets the national minimum standards. There are some omissions within the records of room searches and restraints. Records and discussions with young people show that they enjoy living here and feel cared for.

Young people are cared for by a committed and skilled group of staff who give high regard to keeping young people safe. A strong emphasis is placed upon meeting young people's needs and helping them to deal with their problems.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable as no actions or recommendations were raised at the previous inspection.

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.

Staff ensure young people feel valued and that their privacy and dignity are maintained. For example, all bedrooms are single occupancy and are highly personalised with young people's art work. Young people take advantage of the opportunity to have small pets, such as hamsters and care for them in their room. The spacious accommodation provides space where young people can relax and spend time alone when they wish. Staff are very respectful of young people's privacy, which is in line with good parenting and the need to protect them. For example, one young person has chosen not to have a lockable unit in their bedroom nor lock their bedroom door. Staff discuss keeping their belongings safe and provide alternatives, such as the option of locking valuable possessions in the office. However, the recording of searches of young people's belongings does not meet the standards. This is because it does not contain the full name of the young person, staff carrying out the search are not signing the record and young people are not signing the record. Effective systems are in place to maintain confidentiality, such as staff closing the office door when talking to professionals when young people are present. All confidential information is held securely in the office.

Young people know how to complain. They are aware of the 'moans and groans' book, complaints procedure and how to take the complaint further if they are not happy with the outcome. Young people state everything is 'ok' and they have everything they need. Young people's concerns are listened to, taken seriously and are always addressed by staff. Clear feedback is provided to the young person and they are able to comment upon the outcome. Young people's meetings provide additional avenues for young people to raise issues, such as discussing the disparity between two homes regarding the times they had to be home at new year. This open forum enables staff to explain the reasoning behind this and provides opportunities to discuss keeping young people safe. These effective processes mean young people feel valued and know that they are listened to.

The home gives high priority to protecting young people from harm. This is supported by the excellent relationship staff have with young people. Resulting in young people who are confident to discuss any issues with staff. Clear policies, procedures and access to regular training results in staff who are very aware of their roles and responsibilities to promote young people's welfare and do so diligently. For example, liaising with other professionals when agreeing how much 'free time' young people have each week and ensuring they know the whereabouts of young people at all times. Good relationships with other professionals and agencies effectively support young people's safety and well-being. For example, they are able to explore

and develop strategies for keeping themselves safe when outside the home.

Bullying is not an issue for young people. Staff are aware of isolated incidents of bullying and provide very good levels of supervision to minimise the potential for this. Discussions with key workers successfully enable young people to contemplate these issues. For example, how their behaviour impacts upon others and how to minimise their risk of being bullied. Young people are assisted in developing socially acceptable behaviour through positive reinforcement of good behaviour. This is enhanced by the use of positive consequences, such as a young person not having to do the dishes as a reward for their good behaviour the previous day. This use of meaningful rewards significantly enhances young people's self-esteem.

Clear, safe boundaries which are understood by young people help them to develop a sense of right and wrong. Young people are fully aware of the consequences of inappropriate behaviour. For example, staff effectively handled an incident whereby a young person racially abused a member of staff. The ensuing discussions with the young person enabled them to consider the implications of their behaviour and how this may impact upon their safety if used outside of the home. A consequences book is in place and contains all required information. The excellent rapport staff have with young people means they are able to effectively diffuse potentially difficult situations. Resulting in the minimal use of any physical intervention. Two records of physical interventions have been recorded since the last inspection, of these on one occasion it is unclear as to the duration of the restraint. Although, this is a shortfall in regulations it has no direct impact on young people's welfare. This has been identified by the Registered Manager through internal monitoring systems and is being addressed at the forthcoming staff meeting.

Young people live in a safe environment as health and safety matters are managed well, for example, action is taken to minimise risk such as a broken window pane. General and individual risk assessments enable staff to put appropriate plans into place to lessen or eliminate risks to young people. Risk assessments are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure they are updated and remain current. Fire, gas and electrical equipments are checked and young people take part in fire evacuation procedures to keep them safe in an emergency. Staff talk to young people about the need to take part in these drills to ensure they are fully aware of the evacuation procedures both day and night.

Staff place strong emphasis on encouraging young people not to go missing by encouraging them to keep themselves safe. For example, agreeing that they can be away from the home at set times providing staff are aware of their whereabouts and agreeing times to be home. This is in line with good parenting. Detailed risk assessments and comprehensive procedures, such as trying to contact the young person via mobile telephone, going out to look for them and contacting the appropriate agencies means swift action is taken should a young person go missing.

Secure procedures means all the necessary checks are carried out to ensure staff are suitable before they commence employment at the home. Information relating to staff is held securely in the office. All visitors to the home are monitored, which

includes carrying out appropriate identity checks and completing the visitor's book. These procedures ensure young people are protected from potential risks.

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 dedicated bound and numbered record of restraint clearly identifies the duration of the restraint(NMS 22.9)
- ensure the record of room searches shows the time and date and reason for the search, noting if anything was found, who carried out the search and who was present at the time. Such records should be signed by all those present including the young person and the manager authorising the search. (NMS 9.8)