

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

ADULT AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES CABINET MEMBER

OFSTED INSPECTIONS OF NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE CHILDREN HOMES

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1. To inform the Cabinet Member of the outcomes of the recent Ofsted inspections of three North Lincolnshire Children's Homes.

2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 All Children's Homes are subject to annual inspections carried out by Ofsted inspectors. Since the previous children's home inspections reported to the Cabinet Member Ofsted have revised their Children's Home inspection processes and a new inspection framework was implemented in April 2011. These inspections were all carried out under the new framework.
- 2.2 This report is to inform the Cabinet Member of the inspections of the three 'mainstream' Children's Homes. A fourth Children's Home provides a specialist respite care service to children and young people who have a disability and a report has been previously provided to the Cabinet Member detailing its recent 'outstanding' inspection which was also under the new framework.
- 2.3 Inspections are carried out under the statutory responsibilities given by the Care Standards Act 2000, and against the Outcomes for Children set within the Children Act 2004 and National Minimum Standards for Children's Homes, also revised April 2011.
- 2.4 As under the previous framework, each home has two inspections per year; they are now described as a 'full' inspection and an interim' inspection, both are unannounced.
- 2.5 Inspectors gather evidence from a variety of sources, including a range of relevant professionals, children and staff within the homes and through the scrutiny of relevant documentation. Inspectors prioritise the gathering of views from children as a primary focus of the inspection.
- 2.6 The full inspection is carried out once a year, is held over two days and focuses in depth on the home and the outcomes for the children living there, the inspector makes their judgment under the following headings:
- Overall effectiveness
 - Outcomes for children and young people

- Quality of care
- Safeguarding children and young people
- Leadership and management
- Equality and diversity

Under each of these headings the home is judged to be:

- Outstanding
- Good
- Satisfactory
- Inadequate

2.7 Inspectors can make judgments as to whether requirements or recommendations are needed. A requirement is a mandatory action. A recommendation is a suggestion to improve current practice.

2.8 In addition to the full inspection, one interim inspection per year is also carried out. This inspection focuses on progress in improving quality of care and outcomes for children and young people since the most recent full inspection. This includes consideration of progress made in addressing any requirements or recommendations made at the previous inspection. The judgment is made on a three-point scale:

- Good progress;
- Satisfactory progress;
- Inadequate progress.

3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

3.1 The three 'mainstream' homes were inspected during July and August 2011 all were unannounced 'full' inspections. Two homes were judged to be 'Good' (with one of these being 'Outstanding' in Leadership and Management) and the other home judged to be 'Satisfactory'. At the time of the inspection this home was looking after some young people aged 16 and over who were making clear life choices regarding their situations and were part of complex care and planning processes. Although outcomes were seen as less positive for these young people, the inspector did recognise the difficult balance the staff faced in negotiating, caring for and supporting these young people to make their own positive choices. The inspector required that the homes leadership and management make changes to ensure positive outcomes for these older young people.

3.2 Comments by the inspectors in all the homes said that children felt happy with the care provided, were able to communicate with staff and express their wishes and feelings. Inspectors reported that there are strategies to minimise risk and children are safeguarded as much as is possible by staff in the homes. A number of areas of good practice were highlighted including relationships with children, promoting their educational attainment, clear planning and support to young people and skilled, trained staff. Comments from all the homes included:

- Young people are cared for in line with their very detailed and highly individualised care plans which ensure that their individual needs are met.
- Young people are involved in the running of the home and some individuals are part of the 'in care council' group which meets with the assistant director and ensures the views of young people in care are ascertained. Young people confirm that staff listen to them. Staff are highly committed to ensure that they deliver a nurturing approach to the care of the young people. This care is ongoing long after the young people move into independence.

Young people are protected by staff's adherence to safeguarding policies and procedures and young people confirm that they feel safe.

- This is a well managed home with a well established staff team who are committed to providing an excellent standard of care to the young people.
- There are comprehensive monitoring systems in place to ensure that the home runs efficiently and promotes the well being of young people. The views of young people are sought and they are involved in decisions that affect the running of the home.
- Staff have consistently attended training events that are relevant to their roles and ensures that young people are cared for by well experienced and focused staff.
- Young people receive good quality care from a committed and caring staff team. Young people's rights to access complaints, be safe and speak to independent people are fully promoted. Staff are knowledgeable about protecting young people from harm and talk to them about how to keep themselves safe. Young people speak positively about the support they receive from the staff team, this support has ensured that they have achieved in their education and has secured further education placements.

3.3 Two of the homes had no requirements; the third has an action plan in place to ensure the requirements are fully addressed.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

4.1 These Inspections are final. All requirements and recommendations for further improvements that were made have already been fully actioned. The ongoing practice in the homes continues to be monitored and reviewed through Regulatory visits to the homes, the Children's Homes' 'Fit Managers' meetings and Corporate Parenting visits to the homes by elected members.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

5.1 Financial

None

5.2 Staffing

An improvement plan has been put into place to ensure the leadership and management of the home meets the challenges required by the inspector.

5.3 Property

Minor repairs to the home were instigated and are now complete.

5.4 IT

None

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, ENVIRONMENTAL, DIVERSITY, SECTION 17 – CRIME AND DISORDER, RISK AND OTHER)

6.1 Each home completes a Statement of Purpose that ensures it takes consideration of the child's individual needs and national standards for effective practice.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION

7.1 Observation of the children in the homes and how they relate to their carers plays an important role in the inspection process. The young people spoken by the inspectors said that – as in previous inspections - they feel safe in the home, are happy with the care they receive and are able to express their views and any concerns.

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 That the Adult and Children's Services Cabinet Member notes the outcome of the latest inspection of the children's homes.

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

Ofsted Inspection Reports on the 3 Children's Homes in North Lincolnshire undertaken during July and August 2011