

Inspection report for Children's Home

Unique reference number	SC008270
Inspection date	08/12/2010
Inspector	Mark Ryder
Type of inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	10/02/2010
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2010

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

You can obtain copies of The Children Act 2004, Every Child Matters and The National Minimum Standards for Children's Services from: The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Crispins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: www.tso.co.uk/bookshop

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 care for two young people of either sex aged between 10 and under 17 years old, with no more than a four year age gap, who have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The property is a semi-detached house which is situated in a suburb of a city. It is within commutable distance of leisure and sports facilities, shops and a selection of mainstream schools. At the time of this inspection there were two young people in placement. Both contributed to this inspection.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

This is a full inspection in which all key standards were assessed. This is an outstanding service with some good aspects. Young people are provided with a very high standard of personalised care. Health needs, consultation with young people and ensuring their safety are all areas of outstanding provision. The staff team provide excellent care to young people who have experienced trauma in their lives. There are good outcomes in promoting education, individual support and the review of arrangements. Two recommendations and one action are made to further strengthen the good practice of this home. These refer to changes to the Statement of Purpose, recording meals provided and ensuring care plans have details on young people's backgrounds. Monitoring of how the home operates provides rigorous critical evaluation. Young people are provided with a service that not only meets their needs but raises individual opportunities and development.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were no actions or recommendations made at the last inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The health and well-being of young people is ensured through excellent provision within this home. Staff involve the young people in choosing and preparing meals. Meal times are social occasions where staff and young people sit together to discuss the day. Culturally diverse meals provide young people with suitable and varied diets.

The staff team ensure that the health needs of young people are constantly

addressed. Registration with the local General Practitioner (GP), dentist and opticians is arranged shortly after placements start. A local provision is available to young people that provides on-going support and guidance. This includes discussion regarding sexual health, alcohol use and the misuse of drugs. Young people have a choice of the gender of the GP they wish to see. This means that young people are fully involved in the arrangements of their health care.

Staff safely administer medication through robust recording and auditing practices. All staff receive suitable training on administration procedures. Consent by persons with parental responsibility for staff to administer medication and basic first aid is kept on each young person's file. Young people, if they are competent to do so, are able to self-administer their own medication.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Policy, procedures and competent well-trained staff ensure young people's safety needs are well met. Regular checks on fire safety, gas boiler maintenance and portable appliance testing promote the health and safety of young people, staff and visitors. The home has suitable public and employee liability.

Young people are safeguarded through a staff team that receives regular training on recognising and responding to child protection incidents. Details on the process of referring a safeguarding concern are available to all staff. The home's policy reflects the Local Safeguarding Children Board's procedures which can be accessed by all the staff team. A young person wrote 'the staff make me feel safe and build my confidence'.

Young people are aware of the complaints procedure and their rights regarding this. Complaints are, however, infrequent at this home. Young people say they have very little to complain about due to the high quality of care provided by the staff. The complaints procedures are discussed during young people's meetings. Therefore, young people feel confident that any complaint they make will be dealt with promptly.

Young people are protected from bullying behaviour and say that this is not a present concern at this home. Bullying is discussed openly with young people during resident meetings to ensure that they are aware of what to do if they feel concerned. Risk assessments consider the dynamics of how the young people in placement live together and what strategies are in place to reduce any potential tension. Matching the needs of young people prior to admission addresses how this can be managed.

Relationships between young people and staff are positive, friendly and good natured. This promotes a relaxed and supportive atmosphere. Young people present as feeling safe with staff and respond positively to living at this home. Staff receive training on safely managing challenging behaviour in a way that reduces the level of risk to both the young person and themselves. Recordings of physical intervention

and the use of sanctions are monitored regularly and discussed within the team to test how effective they are. However only a small number of staff ever use physical restraint. A particular strength of this home is the record that is kept to reflect good and socially accepted behaviour. Young people said they are always given lots of praise by staff.

Staff are aware of the missing from home procedures and exercise good childcare practice to prevent such a situation arising. However, the home has close links with the local police and is part of a regional protocol in the event of a young person going missing from the home.

Recruitment of staff is carried out in a safe way, consistent with the organisation's policy and procedures. The detailed checks carried out, and the vetting process of all staff prior to working with the young people, reduce the likelihood of inappropriate individuals being employed. Visitors to the home are asked to sign the visitors' book when they arrive and when they leave. This ensures suitable and effective safeguards are in place.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people receive individual support to meet their needs. Staff consult with young people to help, support and assist them. Support is also provided for young people on a regular basis through a local support group and individual advocates. Keyworking sessions and house meetings encourage young people to discuss any concerns or views about their care. Young people are able to talk about how they are feeling to members of the staff team.

Education is strongly promoted at this home. All young people engage in education and are provided with incentives to further support their attendance at school. A timetable of activities, that includes educational time, is recorded and kept up-to-date so that young people and staff are aware of the plan for the week. Individual education plans include targets and comments from young people. These are regularly reviewed.

Staff are aware of the potential for discrimination against the young people who live in residential child care. The staff encourage young people to be fully engaged within the local community through sport and recreational pursuits. The home's ethos is to respect each young person's individuality and to help them live as normal a life as possible.

Activities for the young people to pursue and enjoy are a regular part of placement. Young people are able to participate in a range of activities such as going to the gym, swimming, bowling and ice-skating. Young people are also able to have pets which they care for. A young person said 'I really like having a pet to look after'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people's needs and development are reviewed regularly. Meetings to review the arrangements for young people's placements are held within timescales and attended by both key workers and young people. Young people are consulted about their views of the care they receive and their future plans. Review minutes are on file and refer to specific action points to address any outstanding areas as well as plans to further develop young people's placements. Young people say that the review process is helpful and that they fully contribute to it. This is a particularly positive aspect of this service.

Care plans include all required details of a young person to ensure staff are able to support and care for them throughout their placement. The plans provide details on health, education and historical information. Plans are signed by social workers and key workers. Young people are able to read their plans and sign their agreement of the contents. Care plans reflect the cultural needs of young people although this is sometimes omitted from the index sheet on the placement plan. While individualised care is clearly evident in practice, the inconsistency of such recording could undermine this work.

Young people benefit from keeping in contact with family and friends. The staff promote contact with family and friends and ensure either transport is arranged or, for more independent young people, the funds for travel. Contact between parents and staff is positive and supportive.

Young people are able to voice their views and opinions about how the home is run. Staff encourage young people to express views about their care and future plans in a number of ways. The home has a relaxed and supportive atmosphere in which young people can talk to staff about their wishes and feelings at any time. Young people are positive about how staff respond to them and listen to their views. Key working sessions are held regularly and include a record of the areas discussed. This is particularly useful for young people and key workers to refer to during the course of the placement. Residents meetings are also held frequently where the group are able to discuss a range of suitable topics about living at this home. Young people said that this is a good system to share ideas and information.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

Young people learn essential skills to develop independence. The home provides support and encouragement for young people to develop their independent skills through a programme which identifies the skills required. Review meetings monitor whether pathway plans are required and what other resources are needed to help young people develop the skills needed for adulthood. A young person said ' I enjoy

cooking and the staff support me'. Review meetings refer to pathway planning and what is required to ensure a smooth transition when preparing to leave the home. Young people are fully involved in the decisions affecting their placements and plans for moving.

Young people feel safe living at this home. The design and layout of the accommodation provides young people with a home that meets their needs. The accommodation is suitably furnished and well maintained for the young people to live comfortably. Young people can personalise their rooms and are consulted about the colour scheme for the house. The décor and furnishings are of a good standard and paintings reflect a diversity of cultures. Young people say they like living at this house and feel comfortable and secure here.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The management and organisation of this service promotes a very high standard of care for young people. Staff provide a relaxed and competent level of care to young people, ensuring they are safe and their welfare promoted. Staff receive regular training to assist with the needs of the young people. Most staff are now qualified to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 3. Both formal and informal support is provided for staff. Supervisions are held monthly and are recorded. Staff express positive comments regarding the support and training received while working at this home. Informal discussions and team meetings between the Registered Manager and staff ensure that there is a good level of communication within the team.

The Statement of Purpose includes some information that does not accurately describe the operation and function of this home. This has the potential to be confusing to the reader. However, the overall content of this statement is reflective of practice. The young person's guide is written in a style suitable to be understood and is provided to all new residents. Young people confirmed that they had been provided with a copy on admission.

Staffing levels are suitable and are able to meet the needs of the young people accommodated. Rotas are completed in advance and reflect the experience and competence of staff on duty at any one time.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Young people are able to make personal choices about, for example, what food they like to eat and activities they would like to participate in. Staff are trained and competent in using a range of skills to engage with young people. Young people are encouraged to attend and fully participate in activities within the community.

Excellent managed case files contain all necessary information to support each young person's placement. Young people are able to access their records at their request.

Monitoring of the home is consistent and robust. Regular checks of the records highlight any trends or patterns emerging. For example, the use of sanctions and rewards within the home. Staff receive regular informal and formal supervision and annual appraisals which further promote the ongoing monitoring process.

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
1	ensure the overall aims and objectives, as recorded in the Statement of Purpose, accurately reflect the ethos and function of the home (Regulation 4.1)	14/01/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure a record of menus (as served) demonstrates provision of a suitable and varied diet (NMS10.3)
- ensure placement plans for each child set out clearly the assessed needs of young people including the cultural, religious, language and racial needs and how they will be met. (NMS 2.1)