

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC008484
Inspection date	19 March 2010
Inspector	Sarah Oldham
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	27 August 2009
--------------------------------	----------------

© 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 Cripins, 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 outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

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 children's home is owned and managed by the responsible individual. It is a detached house situated in the suburbs close to a large town, with links to public transport and community facilities. The ground floor has a lounge, with satellite television, a kitchen and dining room combined, a bedroom, bathroom and toilet facilities, and an office. The second floor comprises of bedrooms, bathroom, and toilet facilities. There is space for car parking on the home's driveway.

Five young people currently live in the home. All of whom were present during different times of the inspection and were able to speak with the inspector about their experiences of living at the home.

Summary

At this unannounced full inspection, all key standards were inspected. Overall this is a good service. The young people's welfare is supported effectively. There are good relationships between staff and young people and also between young people and their peers. Menus are planned with young people who are able to choose meals with guidance and support from staff to promote healthy diets. Activities are also encouraged and supported to ensure that young people have the opportunity to promote healthy lifestyles and be involved in community based activities. The home works closely with a range of outside agencies in order to promote and meet the range of young people's needs. Staff are supported well by the manager of the home and most paperwork in place is clearly recorded. However, some minor shortfalls were identified in recording procedures regarding medication and ensuring that pages within record books were clearly numbered. This is in relation to the physical intervention record book.

Young people say that they are happy and feel supported by staff at the home.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection the home had a number of requirements and recommendations made to improve the practices at the home to achieve positive outcomes for young people. These related to promoting the health care needs of the young people effectively and ensuring that practices, supported by policies and procedures, promote the safety and well-being of the young people. The home has worked hard to ensure that these actions and recommendations have been addressed. Most of the staff have undertaken first aid training. This ensures that there is always a member of staff on duty that has the necessary first aid training. Senior staff responsible for the administration of medication have undertaken medication training. Health care plans are in place for all young people. This enables staff to be aware of and to respond to health care issues. Young people say that they are involved in the planning of menus and confirm that there is always a choice of food available. The home has purchased a hands-free phone. This enables young people to make a telephone call in private. Where there are any restrictions on contact, these are known and followed appropriately. The home has further developed individual risk assessments for all young people identifying any areas of potential risk and the procedure to follow to reduce this risk.

All staff receive supervision. This is recorded and demonstrates that staff receive supervision on a regular basis. Copies of supervision records are maintained on individual staff files. The complaints procedure has been reviewed and the home maintains a clear record of any complaints made, the response and the outcome. Young people say that they are aware of what to do if they have a concern or complaint. They are also aware of the contact number for independent bodies, including Ofsted.

The home has reviewed the fire assembly point in discussion with the fire officer, confirming that this is the most appropriate place to gather in the event of a fire.

Staff training in National Vocational Qualification at Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People is ongoing.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people's dietary needs are met. The home has updated its menus in consultation with young people and these reflect a balanced and nutritious menu. Young people say that they like the meals at the home and that there is plenty to eat. Staff have received training through the 'Safe food better business' guidance as part of their induction and ongoing development.

Children and young people's health care needs are clearly identified and met. All young people are registered with a doctor, dentist and optician and details are maintained of individual health care needs. This is to promote individual health for the young people in accordance with their placement plans and individual health care plans. Where there is an identified need for additional health care services, the home is active in securing these. Annual health care reviews are undertaken and records of these are maintained.

The home has procedures in place to ensure that medication is administered and recorded by staff who have received training to do so. Medication is stored within a lockable cabinet. However, controlled medication, although locked in the medication cabinet, is not stored within an internal lockable cabinet. The home is currently looking at appropriate storage for this in accordance with appropriate legislation. Written consent has been obtained for the administration of appropriate non-prescribed medication and the treatment of first aid. When young people have had medication administered, this is recorded and signed by staff administering the medication. However, at the time of the inspection a duplicated medication sheet for one young person had been placed on another young person's file. This was discussed with the manager at the time of the inspection. Staff have undertaken first aid training to further promote the health care needs of the young people in an emergency.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people say that their privacy is respected. All documentation is stored securely within the office. This ensures that confidential information is maintained appropriately and young people are confident in the systems in place for maintaining confidentiality. Young people without access to a mobile phone are able to access a portable phone. This enables them to make phone calls in private. If there are any restrictions in place regarding contact, these are recorded and known to staff to enable the home to respond to these appropriately. The home

has a complaints policy in place and young people say that they are confident that any complaint that they have will be appropriately addressed.

Staff are aware of the possibility of bullying taking place and remain vigilant to ensure that any incidence of this is responded to appropriately. Within children and young people's meetings, this is discussed and children say that they know what to do if they feel that they are being bullied and are confident that this will be responded to effectively by staff.

All staff have received training regarding safeguarding and child protection. This is undertaken during induction with a further safeguarding course undertaken. Staff are clear of the procedures to follow and have access to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board policy and procedure. Senior staff have also undertaken additional safeguarding training.

When young people abscond, staff know what to do and follow agreed procedures. Records maintained show clear behaviour patterns for individual young people. Additional risk procedures are in place to enable staff to have the appropriate information to manage this risk appropriately for all young people living at the home.

The home encourages and supports young people to develop socially acceptable behaviours. This is through planned activities, incentives and rewards, and responses to inappropriate behaviour. Staff have received training in behaviour management and physical intervention. Records are maintained of any sanctions or physical interventions. The home has improved the recording of these to ensure that they are detailed and reflect clearly the incident. This enables the home to effectively monitor these incidences. However, the physical intervention book is not consistently paginated. This could impact on the current monitoring systems in place for each young person.

Young people, staff and visitors are safe from the risk of fire. Regular checks of the fire equipment, smoke detectors and alarm are carried out and signed for to show they are in good working order. Young people take part in routine fire drills and know how to evacuate the home safely and in a timely manner. However, the home has not undertaken a fire drill at night in the past twelve months to ensure that young people know what to do at this time. At the last inspection, some young people raised a concern about the fire assembly point not being a the right place. To address this the home have consulted with the fire officer who has confirmed that the assembly point is the appropriate place to assemble in the event of a fire and this has been explained to the young people.

The recruitment and selection process for new staff to the home ensures that all staff have the necessary checks undertaken prior to commencement of employment. These include the completion of an application form with any gaps in employment addressed. References are in place and staff do not commence duty until an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau disclosure has been received. All visitors to the home are required to sign a visitors book and identification is sought. This ensures that the home takes the necessary steps to safeguard the young people from being exposed to undesirable persons.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are encouraged and supported to enjoy a wide range of activities and to achieve. Staff work hard to build confidence with young people. A key worker system is in place and

regular key working sessions are taking place. These are recorded and reflect the achievements and ongoing individual needs of the young people. Staff work confidently with the young people and have established a positive and open rapport. Young people feel supported as a group and have access to people independent of the home for support. Young people clearly benefit and make good progress as a result of the effective level of individual support they receive, from committed staff and independent persons, all of which is supported by the management team.

Young people are supported to attend education. Staff are fully committed to promoting the educational needs of the young people and have developed excellent links with schools. Personal educational plans for the young people are in place and these contain up to date information about individual educational support. Staff attend parents evenings and participate in school social activities. This ensures that the educational needs and achievements of the young people are positively promoted and celebrated.

Young people are encouraged to take part in local community groups, including the scouts and sports clubs. This ensures that young people are enabled to participate in a range of activities to broaden their interests and to increase their social circle. The home ensures that appropriate funds are in place to take part in leisure activities and holidays.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All young people have an individual placement plan. This outlines the care and support that they require to meet their individual needs. The plan is produced in conjunction with the placing authority's placement plan, discussion with the young people, and where appropriate, parents and guardians. Cultural, religious and behavioural needs are identified and met. A key working system ensures that these plans are implemented. All staff are aware of the individual needs of the young people and the support required to meet those needs. Young people say that they feel that they are supported well by staff at the home. Placement plans are kept under review and any changes are clearly documented and responded to. There are good opportunities for the young people to be consulted on at all times regarding the care and support that they receive. This includes individual key worker sessions, young people's meetings and access to an independent visitor.

Young people are supported to maintain contact with their families so that they are able to sustain important relationships, and family and friends are welcomed into the home. Policies and procedures are followed, in relation to any admissions or discharges to and from the home. Consideration is given to any likely impact this may have on young people or the resident group. Introductory visits are routinely carried out for new admissions.

Regular children and young person's meetings take place to ensure that the wishes and views of young people are gained. This enables the manager and the staff to address any issues raised and to respond appropriately. Young people say that they feel they are listened to.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people are supported with planning for independence. They are able to be involved in planning, shopping and cooking their own meals, and are provided with good support to develop all their skills to promote their independence.

Young people live in a home that provides a homely environment with a good standard of décor and furnishings. Following an extension to the ground floor and the replacement of fire doors throughout the home, an ongoing programme of decorating is in place. The extension has been fully decorated and the hallway, stairs and landing are due to be redecorated in the next few months. Young people are involved in choosing the décor for the home. All young people have their own bedrooms that they are supported to personalise. Their rooms are lockable and they have a key. This enables young people to be able to secure their personal possessions. However, in an emergency the locks can be overridden to promote the safety and well being of the young people. There are appropriate toilet and bathroom facilities in place for the number of children and young people at the home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home has a Statement of Purpose that details the aims and objectives of the home, facilities and staffing, and how the home intends to meet the needs of the young people living there. This document is kept under review and made available to placing social workers, parents/guardians and staff. Young people are provided with a guide to the home that provides information about the home and what it will be like living there. Young people said that the young people's guide was an accurate reflection of the home.

Staff receive induction training that provides an overview of care practices. In addition there is an ongoing training programme in place. This enables staff to build on their knowledge and skills. There are sufficient staff to provide young people with continuity of care and to meet their needs. Staffing rotas are flexible and allow for extra staffing at key times, such as, mealtimes, activities and bedtime. Most staff are qualified to a minimum level of National Vocational Qualification at Level 3, or equivalent, with some staff currently undertaking this qualification. Suitable arrangements are in place for qualified and experienced staff to deputise in the manager's absence.

Monitoring of the home is undertaken by the manager who is also the owner of the home.

The home's promotion of equality and diversity is good. The home operates in a way which recognises the uniqueness of individual young people. Care and support is specifically tailored to reflect this.

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 meets the Care Standards Act 2000, The Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
----------	--------	----------

Recommendations

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

- ensure that medication records kept for all medication administered within the home is recorded within the correct young person's file (NMS 13.2)
- ensure that prescribed medication is kept securely, this is in particular reference to controlled medication (NMS 13.10)
- ensure that the record of restraint book is clearly paginated in accordance with NMS 22.9
- ensure that at least four fire drills, including evacuation of staff and children from the building and fire drills held at night, take place in a 12-month period and are recorded (NMS 26.8)