

Inspection report for Children's Home

Unique reference number	SC020171
Inspection date	16/03/2011
Inspector	Chris Scully
Type of inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	30/11/2010
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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 service is a children's home for boys and girls aged from 11 to under 18 years. Medium to long term care is offered for young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is situated close to leisure facilities and shops. There are regular bus and train services to nearby towns.

Each young person has their own bedroom situated on the first floor and there are two bathrooms and a games room. On the ground floor there is a lounge, dining room, kitchen, education room and two offices. There is a good size garden area to the side and back of the house and car parking at the front. Four young people live in this home.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This was an unannounced key inspection. All key standards in all outcome areas were assessed. Three young people gave their views on living here and their comments are included in the main body of the report. The inspection also considered how the home is managed, how staff are supported and the good practice recommendations made following the last inspection.

Young people are fully involved in their care planning and decision making process and feel confident about contributing their views to the running of the home. They enjoy positive relationships with staff, which help them to feel settled and safe in their care. Staff are consistent in their approach to young people and behaviour management is managed at the lowest level. This indicates that staff are successful in the positive way they work with young people.

Young people are cared for by a competent and experienced staff team who work well together and are supported by senior managers. Young people are encouraged to develop healthier lifestyles, pursue their individual interests and achieve to their individual potential. Staff are very proud of the young people's individual achievements.

The overall rating of the home is good. The manager is required to address two actions and five recommendations. Two of which have been reissued from the previous inspection relating to the insurance certificate and young people's privacy. The actions relate to the recording of medication and regulation 34 reports. The other recommendations relate to fire drills, complaints and young people's pocket money records.

Improvements since the last inspection

Four recommendations were raised at the last inspection. These related to young peoples wish for privacy, informing Ofsted of significant events, bullying risk assessments and the insurance certificate.

Due to recent events, the home has not yet considered allowing some young people to have a key to their bedrooms. The manager contacted the insurance company and has been assured that the generic insurance certificate does include this home. However, the certificate does not show the name and address of the home in line with the standards. As these recommendations have not been addressed they have been reissued at this inspection. However, they have minimal impact upon the care provided to young people.

The home ensures all significant events, such as calling the police to the home are reported to Ofsted. The generic risk assessments in relation to bullying have been revised and now clearly show the times and scenarios for the potential for bullying to occur; for example, when a new young person comes to live at the home. This has enhanced the safety and well-being of young people.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Menus reflect that young people are provided with a well balanced and healthy diet which includes plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables. Young people state they are actively involved in compiling the menus and including their favourite dishes, such as meatballs and corned beef hash. Young people have regular opportunities to cook and bake with staff and are accomplished at baking chocolate cakes. Meal times are lively, social occasions with staff and young people sitting together in the dining room. Staff complete food training as part of their core training. Staff provide food support and encourage young people to take regular exercise, such as football and horse riding.

Detailed health care plans are in place for young people. The plans incorporate information about any existing health conditions young people may have as well as identifying their support needs in relation to physical, emotional and sexual health. All young people are registered with the appropriate health care practitioners, such as dentist and therapists. One young person has chosen to remain with their current general practitioner rather than transferring to the one used by the home. Staff are supportive of this decision.

Records of medication administered to young people are generally well maintained. However, the recording of non-prescribed medication is not sufficiently robust. It is not always made clear as to what the actual dosage of medication was administered and how some medication has been disposed of. Also one entry in the controlled drug book states the medication was not given when the young person refused the medication and was recorded on the daily log. All medication is safely

stored in the locked cabinet in the office.

Staff have completed training in first aid and the administration of medication and are well equipped to manage young people's health care needs and deal with any emergencies.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Members of staff are pleasant and friendly towards all young people living in the home. This results in young people feeling relaxed and comfortable in their presence. There are sufficient bathrooms and toilets to meet the needs of the young people. All young people have their own bedroom which they are able to personalise with posters of the favourite football team or characters. Staff respect young people's privacy and ensure they knock before entering their bedrooms. Personal information relating to each young person is stored securely to prevent unauthorised access. Staff ensure all conversation relating to the young people cannot be over heard, which effectively promotes confidentiality. Young people are able to make personal telephone calls in private, although this is dependant upon their placement plan. All young people living at the home are treated with dignity and respect.

Clear policies and procedures are in place for the investigation of any complaints. Although, the policy does not contain information as to how to contact Ofsted should a complainant wish to take the concern further. This has a minimal impact upon young people as they have access to this information in the young person's guide. Young people are aware of the process and are confident to raise any concerns with staff. For example enquiring as to why the young people's telephone had not been repaired. The young person received a detail letter explaining the delay and received reassurances that they matter was in hand. Young people state they are happy here and know who to talk to if they are concerned or worried about anything.

Young people at the home are protected from exploitation and abuse. Staff have a very good understanding of the action to take should they have a concern about a young people's welfare or well-being. All staff have undertaken training in child protection and have a very good understanding of the young people's individual needs. This means they quickly detect any changes in the young person's behaviour and are able to offer appropriate support. Senior management responded quickly in response to recent allegations and took effective action to protect young people.

Clear policies and procedures are in place to counteract any incidents of bullying. This is not an issue for young people at this time. Staff are very aware of the potential for this and ensure young people are appropriately supervised at all times. They recognise the times, such as when a new young person arrives for this to occur and instigate appropriate risk assessments to minimise the risk of this occurring. There are clear procedures in place should a young person go missing. There have been a few incidents of young people going missing since the last inspection. Staff responded quickly to these incidents resulting in them locating the young person

quickly and encouraging them to return home. They ensure all appropriate persons are informed of such events and speak to young people about the dangers that they place themselves in by going missing. Key worker sessions with young people help them create strategies to help them cope with difficult situations. For example, asking staff to go for a walk with them to work through their feelings.

Staff are knowledgeable about the causes of different behaviours and are understanding of the factors in young people's past lives that lead them to act out in a destructive or harmful manner. Clearly defined behaviour management plans and risk assessments enable staff to counteract some of their behaviours and look for more constructive outlets for the young person's anger. Restraint is sometimes necessary and staff are trained to do so safely. Staff feel the recent introduction of Team-Teach has had a positive impact on the way they handle challenging behaviours, which promotes a more positive outcome for the young person. Staff promote socially acceptable behaviour by offering ongoing support and encouragement to young people. Young people are aware of the house rules and think that they are 'ok'. They are aware that there may be consequences to their actions, such as going to bed early. Records of restraint and sanctions are recorded well.

There are good systems in place to ensure young people, staff and visitors to the home are kept safe and free from hazards. This is because staff take positive day-to-day steps to keep everyone safe from risks in the environment and when doing activities. For example, any one driving a company vehicle must attend a driving assessment and hold a full driving licence. Fire drills are held on a monthly basis; however staff have not conducted one of an evening in the last 12 months which does not meet the standard. Young people have a secure understanding of what to do, should the fire alarm sound. They confidently explain to visitors what they would do and where they need to meet and this includes what to do of an evening.

Recruitment records show that young people are cared for by adults who have been selected through a secure recruitment process. For example, no one commences work at the home until a satisfactory Criminal Records Bureau check has been received. Staff effectively monitor visitors to the home to ensure young people are protected from harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The progress of each young person is regularly monitored. Young people living at the home receive individual help and support quickly when they need it or request it. Each young person has a key worker with whom they have regular meetings. The outcomes of these meetings are shared with other members of staff in order to ensure essential information is shared and young people receive consistently good levels of care and support. Currently all four young people receive education within the home. This is supported by their individual outdoor education programmes.

Young people receive good levels of support from staff. This enables them to feel safe and secure in the home and make good progress. Young people are very proud of their achievements and are keen to share these with other member's of staff; for example, coming to the office to show them their certificates for completing their geography module. Young people's individual needs, and likes are taken into careful consideration when planning for their education. Staff effectively tap into this information and use their interests, such as football to explore mathematical problems. All young people have personal education plans which are updated on a regular basis to ensure it continually meets the young person's needs.

Young people enjoy the opportunities to experience new activities through their outdoor education. This provides team building opportunities and develops a sense of trust between the young people and staff as they take responsibility for one another. These activities also provide real opportunities for young people to gain credits towards larger awards, which promotes their ongoing learning and life opportunities. One young person is enjoying a stable management course fuelled by their love of horses. Although, they do state that the downside is mucking out the horses as 'it's disgusting'.

Young people are actively encouraged to pursue their particular interests and engage in leisure activities. For example, developing their football skills and joining a local football team. Others have achieved their bronze Duke of Edinburgh award through cadets. Opportunities are created for young people to extend their interests in cookery. Staff effectively support young people in the sourcing of recipes and ingredients. This has resulted in young people producing some wonderful meals, such as lasagne. These experiences enable the young people to develop a range of life skills while gaining credits for larger awards. Staff are very proud of the young people's achievements and ensure their certificates are held safely for them.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people living at the home are appropriately placed. Meetings are held prior to admission to finalise the placement arrangement which provides a greater chance of success. Each young person has their own placement plan, which outlines their needs and how they will be met. In order to help ensure that their needs are met, staff undertake individual risk assessments of each young person and devise more detailed care plans on admission.

Young people's needs and development are regularly reviewed and young people are able contribute to their review. Young people can choose to be present at the review or for their key worker to speak on their behalf. Review reports are available on the young people's file and the contents are discussed with the young person. This means young people are fully informed about the decisions made about them. Young people state they are happy and settled at the home. Contact with family and friends are discussed at planning meetings prior to admission and are regularly reviewed. Where appropriate young people are encourage and supported to maintain regular

contact with their family. This is achieved through face-to-face contact and via the telephone.

Admissions to the home are carefully planned and are tailored to the individuals needs. This allows young people to move into the home in a sensitive and planned manner. Staff work hard to ensure to make young people feel welcome and to understand what it will be like to live here. Young people are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence how the home is run. Young people are encouraged to raise issues which affect their lives, such as how they spend their leisure time. As a result young people know they are listened to and their views are respected.

Young people enjoy a very positive relationship with the staff based upon honesty and respect. They are comfortable to approach staff for a back massage and engage in friendly banter with them regarding the football scores. Staff have clear and professional boundaries with young people consistent with good childcare.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

The daily life of the home ensures that young people are able to develop the knowledge and skills which will help them prepare for adult hood. For example, young people are encouraged to keep their own rooms clean and tidy, plan menus, and do their own laundry. At the time of inspection no young people were on pathway plans.

Young people are able to express their individuality in how they dress and have suitable personal allowances including money for clothes, telephone credit and toiletries. For example, young people are particularly proud of their new artistic hairstyle and staff are seeking a specialised salon for one young person to have their hair done in line with their cultural identity. They are able to choose how to spend their allowances with support and guidance from staff; for example saving money in their bank account to purchase a guitar. Young people receive pocket money on a weekly basis. However, the record is unclear as to how much each young person has in their 'jar' and does not record when monies are taken out by the young people. This oversight does not directly impact upon the young people.

Young people live in a warm, homely environment which is satisfactorily maintained. There is some damage in young people's bedroom and mould patches in the bathrooms. However, these are due to be addressed by the maintenance person and staff. Staff are going to work with the young people to repair the damage in their rooms and to help re-decorate. There is plenty of space for young people which means they are able to spend time alone if they so wish.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home has a clear Statement of Purpose which sets out the aims of the home and how it will operate. Young people also receive a children's guide which gives them useful information including advice about how to seek external support if necessary. The Registered Manager has not been available since November 2010 and has subsequently left the organisation. The home has been managed successfully in the interim period by the assistant manager and senior managers. This has maintained the smooth running of the home and has not had a detrimental effect upon the care provided to young people.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The home recognises the differing needs of the young people and provides individualised support to reflect these differing needs. This is supported by the effective implementation of the key worker system which helps ensure young people's needs are met. Policy, training and care practice helps young people to know that their individual needs on the basis of race, ethnicity, sexuality, gender, age and religion are valued. Staff are able to meet young people's needs in everyday life while they reside in the home.

Young people receive good levels of supervision and support because staffing rotas are well organised and the home is appropriately staffed. This means young people receive the support they need for activities, visits and appointments. Young people are cared for by a competent staff team who have a range of skills and experience. The home has a good programme for staff training and professional development. Not all staff hold an appropriate qualification although there are systems in place for staff to gain a qualification. Clear systems are in place for staff to update their training and undertake refresher courses. Appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure staff that have missed refresher courses are booked on to the next available course.

The home has systems in place to review the quality of care provided, however these have lapsed in the last few months. Senior managers acknowledge this shortfall and are in the process of reinstating regulation 34 reports. Having said that, the assistant manager has reviewed some documentation on a monthly basis to ensure all required information is in place. Resulting in the home actively chasing missing looked after children documentation for one young person. Regulation 33 visits are completed on a monthly basis and the assistant manager and staff are proactive in addressing any shortfalls identified.

The needs of the young people are recorded to reflect their individuality and provide a clear picture of their needs. Young people files comply with schedule 3 and contain all the relevant information. Young people are able to access this information within the home if they request it.

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
13	ensure there are suitable arrangements for the recording, handling, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of any medication received into the children's home in particular non-prescribed medication (Regulation 21 (1))	30/03/2011
34	reinstate and maintain a system for monitoring the matters set out in schedule 6 at appropriate intervals and supply Ofsted with a report in respect of any review conducted. (Regulation 34 (1) (2))	30/03/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure that individual young people's wish for privacy and confidentiality is consistent with good parenting and the need to protect the child, in particular regarding the practical details of the way children's rooms are entered (NMS 9.1)
- ensure the written complaints policy contains details on how they may contact Ofsted (NMS 16.5)
- ensure at least four fire drills including the evacuation of staff and children take place in a 12 month period in particular some of the fire drills are held at night (NMS 26.8)
- improve upon the recording of young people's pocket money, in particular the record makes clear the total amount being held in safekeeping, identifies when young people have taken out some of their monies and they sign the records (NMS 11.8)
- ensure that certificates of insurance specify the name and address of the particular home. (NMS 26.9)