

Inspection report for Children's Home

Unique reference number	SC023746
Inspection date	05/10/2010
Inspector	Mark Blesky
Type of inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	22/12/2009
--------------------------------	------------

© 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 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

This is a children's home for three boys aged between 12 and under 18 years. It is a detached house in a residential area in a seaside town. There are local parks and the beach is nearby. Local transport is within walking distance and community resources and activities are within easy reach.

Summary

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

At this unannounced full inspection, all key standards were inspected. Achieving economic well-being was not inspected. This is a satisfactory service in most respects with some good features. Young people benefit by a close and fruitful relationship with staff members. Staff members are caring and competent and understand the needs of the young people.

Care planning and review is particularly well managed and staff ensure that more individual and diverse needs are met. Young people are provided with opportunities to express their views and staff promote young people's rights.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were no actions at the last random inspection in December 2009. One recommendation was made at the last inspection and this will be revisited at the next inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

All young people are provided with nutritious and healthy meals planned and prepared in consultation with the young people. Young people are supported by staff in choosing healthy options and gaining understanding of healthy living. All staff members undertake healthy living training to provide them with the knowledge to encourage and support young people to make appropriate choices.

Young people are supported in maintaining their health by generally well planned healthcare support. All young people are registered with core medical services, which include the doctor, dentist, and optician as soon as they move into the home.

Each young person has a dedicated file to ensure health monitoring is maintained.

Files contain comprehensive information on historic, current, and future health interventions.

Although healthcare planning is generally comprehensive and well managed, it was noted that an oversight had left a young person without adequate 'parental' medical consent. It was further noted that the current monitoring systems had failed to identify this.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people's privacy and confidentiality is respected by staff and procedures and practice demonstrate that staff place value in this area. Staff demonstrate particular sensitivity addressing more personal matters such as washing and dressing. Staff members will not enter a young person's bedroom without first knocking and awaiting invitation. Each young person has lockable space and is able to keep personal possessions and keepsakes secure.

If a young person wishes to make a complaint, they are well supported by robust and rigorous procedures. All young people are supported to raise any matter that is of concern to them. Any complaint that is made is generally well managed and the young person is kept informed throughout the whole process. It was noted that one complaint record failed to detail the person that was subject to the complaint, which does not support robust procedures.

A dedicated child protection and safeguarding officer is responsible for all matters of this nature. Any concern for safeguarding is promptly addressed and systems in place demonstrate rigorous and effective practices. All staff undertake mandatory safeguarding training, with regular refresher training to ensure that they are competent in this important area.

Anti-bullying procedures and practices are in place to minimise the likelihood of bullying. Any incidents of suspected bullying are separated, from the more common, minor disagreements to ensure these matters are addressed effectively. Bullying is uncommon in this home and young people say that staff act quickly to address any matters of dispute between them.

Young people, that are absent without authority, are protected by established searching, reporting and recovery procedures. All episodes of absence are supported by out of hours and on call support to provide extra staffing and guidance. Detailed records are maintained to examine why the absences have occurred and to support actions to counter further episodes. All young people are also provided with individual and specific risk assessments regarding being absent from the home. Risk assessments detail the more specific and diverse needs of the young people and the consideration of vulnerability.

When young people act in a less positive manner, the home deploys agreed

behaviour management strategies to address this. Staff members typically seek to engage with the young person and negotiate improved behaviour. If this is unsuccessful, staff may use sanctions to encourage behaviour that is more acceptable. Systems of control are not overly punitive and young people benefit from close and effective support from staff.

Fire risk assessment and health and safety are well managed and the home maintains regular fire evacuation drills. Risk assessment is generally well managed and assessments are detailed and comprehensive. Assessment seeks to consider the more diverse and individual nature of risk taking and minimise the likelihood of danger. It was noted that a contact activity where risks may have been presented, had not been addressed and it appears that this may have been an oversight in an otherwise effective system.

All visitors to the home are effectively supervised. All visitors must identify themselves and sign in, and no visitor is allowed unsupervised access to the home. All staff members are checked through established recruitment and effective employment practices. No staff member is able to work with the young people unsupervised until all necessary checks have been undertaken.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people benefit from one-to-one key working sessions with a staff member which provides individual support. Key working sessions provide a good opportunity for a young person to express their views and consider their progress. These sessions also provide the staff member time to engage with the young person and offer personal and practical support. Sessions are generally well planned and fruitful.

Staff members support the young people's education and each young person undertakes an assessment of their educational needs. Young people have a dedicated education file, which details their assessments, progress, and future plans. Planning in this area is generally well managed, however, it was noted that one young person's current and future plans are rather muddled and unclear.

All young people are offered opportunities to identify a particular hobby, interest, or activity. Staff will support and finance any reasonable request for a young person to partake in an activity. The staff also arrange and plan group structured activities with the young people which include, swimming, cinema, and other similar family type pursuits.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Care planning and placement planning is well maintained in this home. Each young person has a dedicated placement plan, which has been developed in accordance

with the placing authorities plan. In addition all young people have a 24 hour management plan. This is an extremely comprehensive and detailed plan, which specifically identifies the individual and more diverse needs of the young people. Planning in this area is very strong and particularly insightful.

Young people have a review of their care plan in accordance with statutory timescales. This is another area where staff work hard to provide support to this important process. Each young person has a comprehensive review report prepared by staff. This report details relevant and salient elements of the young person's progress and is an extremely well prepared document.

The home does not generally take emergency placements. However, there is adequate guidance for staff and understanding to ensure episodes of this nature are effectively managed. When there are plans for a young person to move from the home the staff and manager meet formally to plan this in a sensitive manner.

All young people attend regular house meetings and all meetings are minuted. Meetings provide all young people with an opportunity to express collective views regarding the home and the way that it is managed. Young people say that they can raise any matter and the staff will listen and consider any view that they may express.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Not Judged

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Young people are well supported to express their personal views and make choices. Both procedures and practice in the home evidence an awareness of the need to consider young people's diversity and individuality. Care planning provides a rich source of evidence to support this.

The home has a written Statement of Purpose and a children's guide which accurately describe what the home sets out to do for children accommodated and the manner in which care is provided. The Statement of Purpose details services provided and how young people's needs will be met. The Statement of Purpose and children's guide are regularly reviewed in accordance with the annual review and updated to meet the changing needs of the young people.

All staff are supported by established supervision and appraisal systems. Staff receive regular support in accordance with their roles and duties and each staff member is further supported by a supervision contract. It was, however, noted that examples sampled at the inspection demonstrated case discussions but there was

little evidence of the supervision of practice and development.

All staff undertake both mandatory training and regular refresher training to ensure that they are competent to meet the needs of the young people. There are seven staff working in the home, five have completed their National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) in Caring for Children and Young People at level 3. The home have almost reached the required 80% of staff trained to NVQ at level 3 and training has been scheduled to achieve this goal.

There are sufficient numbers of suitably experienced staff on duty all the time to meet the needs of the young people. Out of hours and on call services are established and can provide appropriate support in more urgent situations.

The home is visited once a month and inspected by an independent person who then prepares a report on the performance of the home. The manager takes appropriate action to address any shortfalls in practice. In addition, the manager carries out regular checks of the home to ensure it meets the aims of the home's Statement of Purpose. Action is taken by the manager to address any areas that require improvement or review.

Each young person is supported by detailed case files, which address historic, current, and future care planning. Files are well organised, comprehensive and kept securely. It was noted that the home's procedures manual was not up to date and wrongly signposts to documents not currently in use. In addition, guidance regarding notifications was also somewhat dated, although there was no evidence to suggest that notifications had not been made appropriately.

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 risk assessments are carried out, recorded in writing, and regularly reviewed (National Minimum Standards 26.2)
- ensure regular review is carried out of the records of complaints by children or concerning the welfare of children, to check satisfactory operation of the complaints procedure (National Minimum Standards 16.7)
- ensure education or placement plans explicitly address young people's education and whether the child's needs will be met by attending a particular educational establishment (National Minimum Standards 14.4)
- ensure a minimum of 80% of staff members are qualified to National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People or equivalent (National Minimum Standards 29.5)
- ensure that staff are provided with written guidance on the home's procedures

and practice. This is kept up to date, is accessible, and where applicable is available on the policy areas detailed in Appendix 1. (National Minimum Standards 28.8)