

Inspection report for Children's Home

Unique reference number	SC025712
Inspection date	23/03/2011
Inspector	Mark Kersh
Type of inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	29/10/2010
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2011

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 home is registered to take two young people of either sex between the ages of six to 17 years, on a medium to long-term basis. It is based in a residential area, close to schools, public transport and other amenities. The home has three bedrooms, with one being used as an office and sleeping-in room for staff. On the ground floor there is a lounge, diner, kitchen and downstairs cloakroom.

Summary

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

This was an unannounced full key inspection during which all key national minimum standards were assessed. One young person currently lives in this home.

The home provides a satisfactory standard of care with some good features. The home ensures that young people's health, care planning, leisure and education needs are effectively met and that there are appropriate systems in place, to ensure young people live in a safe environment and that they are protected from abuse.

Some shortfalls have been found in relation to records, such as restraints, the health booklet, behaviour management plans, staffing consistency and monitoring the home's performance.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable, the home has had no children on roll for some considerable time.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people are actively encouraged to eat healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs. Staff consult with young people about their preferences and food allergies. These are taken into account when menus are developed. Young people are able to participate with the planning, preparation and cooking of meals and they are able to prepare their own snacks and drinks in between mealtimes. Staff speak to young people about the benefits of healthy eating. Staff record the actual meals that young people consume so that their eating habits can be monitored. Fresh fruit is freely available for young people. Suitable dining areas are available for young people and staff to dine together.

Young people's good health is promoted and appropriate services are provided to meet their identified health needs. Young people are registered and supported to attend their routine health appointments with doctors, dentists and opticians and where needed, they receive additional support, through the involvement of specialised services. Information in relation to young people's health is within their placement plan, however, a health care booklet detailing specific medical or other health interventions which may be required, is not completed.

Young people have their medication administered safely. Medication records are regularly monitored and these demonstrate that safe medication procedures are followed. There are clear arrangements in place for the safe administration of prescribed and non-prescribed medication, including medical consent for staff to attend to young people's health needs. Staff are trained in the safe use of medication and in the safe administration of first aid.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people's privacy is respected and their information is confidentially handled. Young people do not share rooms. Staff talk to young people on a regular basis about respecting each other's personal space. Young people are able to use a telephone in private. Staff use work practices that respect young people's privacy and confidentiality. The staff are aware that in any event in which room searches are carried out, all such searches must be fully recorded and documentation available for this meets requirements.

The home has a complaints procedure through which concerns about care can be raised both informally and formally. Young people are informed of the various ways that they can make a complaint and they are provided with relevant contact numbers of agencies they can make a complaint directly to, if they wish. No complaints have been made by young people. Some local residents' concerns are appropriately documented and all have been resolved satisfactorily. There has been no formal complaints made.

There has been no safeguarding concerns or referrals made relating to the home. There are suitable child protection policies and procedures in place. All staff have received relevant child protection training and they are aware of actions to take, in response to any allegations or suspicions of abuse. These actions show that the home takes appropriate measures, to ensure young people are protected from abuse. Bullying is not an issue for young people at the home. The home has appropriate policies in place, to address any issues of bullying and they have carried out risk assessments on times and places bullying may be most likely.

The home has a procedure for reporting young people who are absent without permission, including reporting the absence to the police. Overall young people comply with the expectations of the home and return at an agreed time. Staff demonstrate well their understanding to report significant events to other relevant

agencies.

Young people are supported to develop socially acceptable behaviour. All staff are trained in an approved behaviour management theory and practice. There is a clear emphasis on promoting positive incentives to motivate young people to behave well. Sanctions are rarely used. Some of the young people's behaviour has been difficult and has presented challenges to the staff team. Behaviour management plans are not up- to-date as they do not include relevant detail and strategies for staff to effectively manage young people's behaviour consistently. When restraints occur records are not commented on by young people or evaluated by the management team.

Regular health and safety checks of the premises are carried out and relevant risk assessments are in place and regularly reviewed. All fire drills, fire alarm tests and fire safety equipment checks are up to date, with accurate records kept of each check. All staff have received fire safety training. All electrical appliances and installations are patent tested annually. All gas installations and appliances receive a safety check. These actions show that the home takes all reasonable measures, to ensure young people live in a safe environment.

Recruitment records for staff are held securely within the manager's office. The organisation's policy for recruiting staff meets regulations and is consistently applied in practice. The home operates a signing in and out book and visitors do not have unsupervised access with young people.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people receive individual support when they need it. Young people's assessed needs are known to staff and they are encouraged to engage with services provided to meet them. This includes the staff team, key workers, social workers, health and education.

Young people attend school regularly and their files contain individual education plans setting out targets to achieve. The home maintains good working links with schools that young people attend. Young people are assisted with their studies and there are areas where they can study in private and do homework if they wish.

Financial arrangements provided by the organisation for young people allow them to pursue their preferred hobbies and leisure interests. There is good use of local leisure facilities and young people enjoy holidays and weekend breaks with staff and friends.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The care planning documentation consists of a number of documents. Written placement plans are compiled for young people and individual looked after children's care plans are in place. Between them the plans cover all areas required and suitably detail the individual needs of young people and how these will be addressed. Staff have a good understanding of the individual needs of the young people.

Statutory reviews take place in line with requirements. Young people are encouraged to participate in their review meetings with support from staff. Where this does not take place young people are consulted by independent persons. The home liaises well with placing authorities, to ensure any statutory reviews take place within the permitted timescales or if it is felt necessary, to arrange and conduct emergency reviews. Young people are encouraged to be involved in the compilation of reports for such meetings and they are consulted before, during and after the reviewing process.

Young people are supported through situations where contact with their families is not taking place. Arrangements are put in place for letters and cards to be sent and received. Staff promote contact and are proactive in ensuring any contact issues are resolved.

The home has appropriate policies, procedures and practices in place, for young people moving in to the home. Generally, young people visit the home before admission or the manager and staff from the home will visit them. Referral information is considered by the manager and staff and any identified likely impact on young people already accommodated in the home is discussed with senior management within the organisation.

Young people's views are sought regularly and taken in to account on any issues that are likely to affect them. The home has good systems in place, to enable young people and significant others, to express their views and opinions on relevant issues.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

There are no young people living at the home who are of an age where they need formal pathway planning. Young people are encouraged, from an early age, to engage in basic daily tasks such as cooking and tidying their rooms, which will equip them with the skills they need as they progress into adulthood.

The home is fit for purpose and furnished, but shows some usual signs of wear and tear evident in any domestic dwelling. Repairs are completed within reasonable timescales, and young people have a say in their bedroom décor and general furnishings within the home. There are some outstanding repairs and at the time of

this inspection temporary measures are in place to board up damage to walls and doors.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The home's Statement of Purpose document is available within the home. However, It has not been updated to include the current staffing arrangements. A young people's guide is available. The documents inform social workers, parents and young people about the services young people can expect to receive.

The home's promotion of equality and diversity is good. The staff team reflect a good balance of positive role models from different races, genders and age groups. They are also helped to have a healthy respect for difference and diversity issues. Young people are supported to develop an awareness of their rights and responsibilities and integrate fully into the community. Young people have opportunities to thrive and develop positively as individuals.

There have been some changes in recent months to the home's staffing arrangements. It is clear these changes have provided, at times, some inconsistencies which have impacted on young people. Continuity of care has not always been provided to young people. The management team have made a good start to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the service and show a healthy enthusiasm to driving improvements, despite the challenges. The management team are keen to involve staff in developing good practices. This means that potentially the outcomes for young people will be improved.

The quality of care is regularly monitored by the manager and Regulation 33 visitor. However, the monitoring process has not identified or addressed the issues raised at this inspection with respect to, health information, behaviour management plans, restraint records and staffing issues.

Young people's case files provide a detailed account of the progress they make while living in the home. Young people have access to the information written about them and can request this through staff or their key worker.

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
22	maintain an accurate and up-to-date record of measures of control used, as set out in regulation (Regulation 17 (g))	28/03/2011
24	ensure that all parts of the children's home used by children are suitably furnished and equipped and are of sound construction and kept in good structural repair externally and internally (Regulation 31 (2) (c) (d))	29/04/2011
1	include in the Statement of Purpose all matters listed in Schedule 1; in particular paragraph 5 of that Schedule (Regulation 4 (1))	11/04/2011
29	ensure that the employment of any persons on a temporary basis at the children's home will not prevent children from receiving such continuity of care as is reasonable to meet their needs. (Regulation 25 (2))	11/04/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure each child has a clear written health booklet plan (NMS 12.2)
- ensure staff have clear guidance within behaviour management plans, based on a code of conduct, setting out the control, disciplinary and restraint measures permitted and emphasising the need to reinforce positive messages to children for the achievement of acceptable behaviour (NMS 22.2)
- ensure action is taken, if necessary, in relation to any concentrations, trend or pattern in recorded issues or events, to improve the safeguarding and promotion of the welfare of children and the quality of care in the home. (NMS 33.2)