

Inspection report for Children's Home

Unique reference number	SC033817
Inspection date	08/09/2010
Inspector	Caroline Brailsford
Type of inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	28/10/2009
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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 home is one of four registered children's homes owned by the company and provides residential placements for three young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The home is situated in a rural setting close to a town where a range of leisure and community resources can be accessed. The home has large gardens, single bedrooms and provides pleasant and spacious communal areas. The staff team have use of a dedicated vehicle to support the care of young people.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This full inspection was unannounced and all key national minimum standards were inspected. Each of the outcome areas has been inspected. The outcome area positive contribution is judged as outstanding. Outcome areas staying safe, being healthy, enjoying and achieving and organisation are judged as good. Economic well-being is judged as satisfactory.

Strengths of the home include the care planning process which is robust and ensures that staff understand the young people's need well. The risk assessment process supports this work and risks are well managed. There is also an emphasis on contacts and staff invest lot of time ensuring that young people can maintain relationships which are important to them.

The home is well managed and the manager provides a balance of direct work with young people and operational tasks. This ensures that a good level of care to the young people is consistently provided.

The actions and the recommendations from the last inspection have all been achieved and the manager seeks opportunities to further improve the service. As a result of this inspection there is one action relating to the staff currently using the young people's lounge as a sleeping in area. In addition, there are three recommendations. These relate to risks assessment documents with regard to bullying, checks on the fire doors and to the windows at the exterior of the property which look unsightly.

Improvements since the last inspection

Actions from the last inspection included necessary improvements to the Statement of Purpose, and health and safety tests on gas and electricity. Progress has been

made so that these actions are now complete.

There was a third action set at the last inspection about the windows to the exterior of the property which looked dirty and stained. There have been some improvements to the cleanliness of the windows. However, the Perspex is still scratched and looks unsightly so a recommendation has now been raised.

The four recommendations set at the last inspection have all been achieved. There have been improvements to the risk assessments, complaints procedure and the manager has plans in place to ensure that all Ofsted inspection reports are shared with young people. Also the locks on bedroom doors are fitted with young people receiving a key where it is appropriate.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people are encouraged to have a healthy diet. They are involved in the choosing of the menu and enjoy food that they like. Each young person has a care plan which identifies how they like to be active and the staff invest time in ensuring that this happens in practice.

Young people benefit from guidance and support which is appropriate to their health needs. Health care plans are very comprehensive and set out in detail the care to be delivered. Risk assessments also work alongside the care planning information to ensure that health risks are minimised. The manager oversees the health planning process well and the detailed documentation ensures that staff are very familiar with individual needs and know how they should be met.

Staff training in first aid ensures that young people are safe because there is always a first aider on duty. In addition staff training facilitates a safe process for the administration of medicines in the home. The storage, recording and safe practices ensure that young people receive their prescribed medicines on time and that homely remedies are always prescribed by a doctor at the time that they are required.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The safety and welfare of young people has a very high priority in the home. The staff understand and are very clear about young people's individual safety issues, and risks are well managed and minimised. Risk assessment documents are extensive and help to ensure that the correct response from staff keeps the young people as safe as they can be. Responses from staff to young people who go missing is quick and in line with procedures. A good working relationship with the police also ensures that young people's safety is well considered should this happen.

Staff are aware of what they should do if there is a safeguarding issue in the home, and their familiarity with the policies and procedures means that they respond quickly and appropriately. There are good links with placing authorities and the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). The manager has robust procedures in the home for the management and monitoring of such information. This ensures that important information is shared at every opportunity and helps to protect young people.

Young people have the relevant information about complaints in the home and this is used by them if they feel that they have an issue. Complaints are responded to by the home's manager who records the investigation and outcome. He also ensures that he writes to and speaks to the young person about the outcome.

Staff are committed to ensuring that bullying issues are dealt with. Risk assessments also help the staff team to identify issues quickly. One young person's risks from bullying have been considered by the manager and the staff. However, the risk assessment document does not extend to individual bullying risks and issues.

There are procedures and practices in the home that ensure that staff protect the privacy and dignity of young people well. Young people feel that they can have privacy and have a room of their own. There are also areas around the house where privacy can be found, although the current mix of young people means that the house is very busy at this time.

There are sufficient staff to spend quality time with young people and young people are, therefore, able to express their opinions and views about their daily life at the home to the manager and staff.

Young people understand the boundaries for behaviour in the home. The staff team consistently reinforce these and are skilled at diffusing difficult situations before they arise. For example humour is a tool which works well in the home, creating an environment which can also be fun. Staff are very clear that they will only use physical intervention as a very last resort and where there is a serious threat to safety or welfare. Such events are clearly recorded. Sanctions are proportionate and the staff work hard to provide a consistent approach while acknowledging the differing needs of the young people.

The fire procedures are clear and understood by the young people and staff, and the drills, checks and tests are very regular which promotes the safety of all who use the building. There are two fire doors which appear to be sticking in the frames. The manager does not at present keep a record of checks to these doors. He reports that this is a difficult task to keep on top of due to the age of the building.

Recruitment records are kept centrally within the company. However, the manager ensures that he checks and keeps records of the recruitment process, and as a result is clear about the safety of any staff member he uses. These checks include a Criminal Records Bureau check (CRB), two references and proof of identification.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people make progress in their education and staff ensure that this has a high profile in the home. Some young people are educated at school in the community and have achieved good results from this. Some young people are educated in the home where it is not possible for them to attend school. Those young people's needs are considered and a qualified home tutor works with staff and individual young people to make sure that they are not disadvantaged.

Where young people have special interests and talents, the staff fully recognise this and facilitate activities and opportunities. These interests are well supported and happen in practice. Young people enjoy sporting activities and other creative opportunities. These have enabled them to achieve good results, which have for some young people increased their confidence and self-esteem.

Staff are creative in the way that they support young people. They use formal opportunities, for example, key working sessions, which are well recorded. However, staff create opportunities to support young people through other aspects of life at the home. They are successful in finding other more informal situations to support young people and give advice.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Care plan and risk assessment documents provide exceptionally clear information to the staff. This results in a good working knowledge and a consistent approach ensuring that needs are met. Each need is clearly set out and based on assessment information. The manager oversees the process and ensures that the plans are reviewed when there is changing information. Information regarding young people is complex, but the systems for ensuring that staff work with the most up-to-date information are good ensuring their safety and welfare.

Staff ensure that young people's views can be established. There is regular discussion with young people to establish their wishes and views about their life and the running of the home. There are also examples of practice having changed as a result of listening to the young people. Careful consideration is given to the views of young people about their placement and how it is working. They are also present at their reviews wherever possible.

The manager demonstrates that the right compatibility in the group and the capacity for young people to make progress is far more important than filling the beds and new admissions to the home are well considered.

When young people leave the home, their achievements are celebrated and they regularly choose to keep in touch with the staff and speak fondly about their

placement. Staff enable them to reflect on their time at the home and facilitate this contact where it is appropriate.

Arrangements are made for young people to maintain contact with families and friends. Staff invest a lot of time in ensuring that important relationships can be maintained. Where contact issues are complex for individuals, staff support the young people very well. This ensures that at every opportunity, relationships can be maintained.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

The manager and staff are aware of the importance of pathway planning. Work takes place to ensure that young people are encouraged to develop practical skills as they grow up and prepare to be independent. For example, they can practice tasks with regard to personal care and daily living.

The building provides a homely environment and it is evident that the furnishings, décor and fittings are generally well maintained. However, the Perspex windows around the property are scratched which in places looks unsightly.

The staff have been using the young people's lounge as a sleeping-in room recently which impacts on the young people because it is one of their main rooms in the house.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home is well managed and the manager regularly works with the young people. He is directly involved with their care so that he can have a complete overview of the work taking place. There are robust systems in place to monitor the practices in the home and records are scrutinised. This ensure that patterns and trends can be effectively addressed and that a consistent good quality care can be delivered.

The Statement of Purpose is current and up to date. Young people receive appropriate information about the home in a user-friendly format. Young people's files are well organised and because information is clear, it is easy to see the progress made and difficulties that young people face.

Young people are looked after by experienced, competent and well-trained staff. They have a good understanding of the needs of the young people and a practical knowledge of the policies, procedures and recording systems in the home. Staffing arrangements are good and sufficient in number to provide good quality care so young people can be safe, progress and achieve in their placements.

Staff training is well organised, with an induction package, an annual training plan,

and core training such as safeguarding, first aid and behaviour management. Staff are positive about the support and development provided by the manager.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The staff team have a commitment to assessing and understanding the differing needs of all young people and exploring ways in which these needs can be addressed. As a consequence the care is very individual.

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
24	ensure that the registered person provides sleeping accommodation for persons working at the home in connection with their work. (Regulation 31 (10)(b))	31/10/2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the registered person regularly carries out risk assessments with regard to bullying to reduce or counteract bullying (National Minimum Standard 18.5)
- ensure that the interior and exterior of the home are maintained in a good state of decorative repair, this is in particular relation to the windows (National Minimum Standard 24.3)
- ensure that there is regular testing on fire equipment in the home, this is in particular relation to the fire doors. (National Minimum Standard 26.8)