

Inspection report for Children's Home

Unique reference number	SC035499
Inspection date	07/12/2010
Inspector	Nicola McEvinney
Type of inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	11/02/2010
--------------------------------	------------

© 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 children's home is operated by a local authority. It is able to accommodate up to six young people aged 11 to 17 years, of either gender. Young people may be admitted in an emergency.

The home is a large detached property situated on the outskirts of a small town with good access to local amenities and public transport. The communal areas comprise of an open-plan dining and living room on the ground floor. The young people have single bedroom accommodation and a bathroom is located near the bedrooms. There is a room available on the first floor where meetings can take place in private. There is a yard and a large garden. The home has two cars to transport young people if required.

Summary

The overall quality rating is inadequate - notice of action to improve.

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

The purpose of this unannounced full inspection was to check on the progress of the requirement and recommendations made at the last inspection and to ensure the home is meeting the national minimum standards.

This home has undergone a number of changes over recent months, a new manager has been appointed as well as a number of new staff. This is a committed staff team who endeavour to ensure young people are well looked after. However, some young people have been placed inappropriately without education provision and their identified needs are not being properly met.

The home is undergoing a total refurbishment with the aim of providing a comfortable and homely environment for the young people.

A number of shortfalls were identified at this inspection which impact upon the welfare of the young people placed: Medication records are not administered as prescribed; recommendations from safeguarding strategy meetings are not implemented; Ofsted is not informed of significant events; consideration is not given and recorded of the likely effects of an admission on the young person or the group of young people when making decisions about admissions to the home; some young people do not receive appropriate education; there are insufficient staff who are suitably qualified; there are not sufficiently robust monitoring systems in place; health care plans are not in place and all required information is not available on young people's files; curtains or blinds are not fitted to all bedroom windows; staff are not given clear guidance on what action to take when a young person goes

missing; young people do not have their views recorded following a restraint or disciplinary measure; and child care reviews are not held within 72 hours of admission.

Improvements since the last inspection

The requirement and some of the recommendations made at the last inspection have been implemented. Care plans are in place setting out how young people are to be cared for, although they remain rather basic. The consent for the administration of non-prescription medication and emergency first aid has been obtained from the person with parental responsibility. Behaviour management plans are in place giving guidance to staff on how young people's behaviour is best managed, ensuring a consistent approach.

A recommendation relating to health care plans and another to ensure young people who are admitted in an emergency have a child care review within 72 hours of admission have yet to be properly acted upon.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people are provided with healthy and nutritious meals, they are encouraged to help with meal preparation to promote their independence skills. Young people have free access to the kitchen and are able to make drinks and snacks when they wish. Alternative diets, for example, vegetarian, are catered for.

Health information is not available in all cases so it is difficult to determine how young people's health needs are met. Where health information is available young people's needs are well met. For example support was evident on sexual health issues and smoking cessation. The sexual health nurse and the looked after children's nurse attend the home and gives support and advice to the young people. The consent for the administration of non-prescription medication and emergency first aid has been obtained from the person who holds parental responsibility.

There are some incidents where medication has not been administered in line with its prescription. In particular, records demonstrate that antibiotics were not given to some individuals when they were away from the unit. There are sufficient staff who have attended first aid training to ensure a first aider is on duty at all times.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

Young people's files are kept securely ensuring confidentiality. Each young person keeps their key to their own room. However, curtains are not fitted in all young

people's bedroom's, which does compromise their privacy.

Young people have a clear understanding of how to make a complaint and are confident that they would be listened to. There are no complaints recorded in the complaints log.

The inappropriateness of some placements adversely affects their welfare. The staff have followed procedures when safeguarding issues have arisen. Strategy meetings have been held following incidents. However, recommendations arising from the strategy meetings have not been implemented. The staff have put in strategies to help keep young people safe, for example, increasing staffing at pertinent times, having staff on duty until the early hours of the morning and monitoring internet access and telephone usage. All staff have attended safeguarding training.

Staff address any form of bullying, including name calling.

There have been a number of incidents where young people have failed to return to the home when expected. A number of these have been linked with safeguarding concerns. The staff have taken appropriate action to secure the safe return of the young people. Although there is a generic policy and procedure in place there are not individual protocols that advise staff what action to take in each case.

There have been a number of significant events arising at the home where Ofsted have not been informed, for example, a fire and police being called to the home.

Individual crisis management plans are in place identifying anticipated behaviours with guidance to staff to show how these behaviours are best managed: this ensures a consistent approach. There has been one restraint recorded, this was a gentle hold and it was properly recorded. There are a number of sanctions recorded, these were proportionate. However, young people are not encouraged to comment on these records following a restraint or sanction.

There are risk assessments in place for each individual, the premises and activities identifying the risk with strategies in place to minimise it. However, a risk assessment has not been undertaken on the impact of emergency admissions to the home for both the admitted child and the group of existing young people. This has compromised the welfare of young people. Fire records are in good order although fire drills have not been held at night. Other health and safety checks are carried out, for example the gas supply is checked annually as are small electrical appliances.

The local authority have robust systems in place to ensure only suitable people are employed. Staff are vigilant to check the identity of visitors to the home.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is inadequate.

Staff have good key work sessions with young people to support them on a number of issues. Services are accessed to help meet some needs, for example, the looked after children nurse and the sexual health coordinator support individuals. The staff liaise with the children and adolescent mental health service to manage some young people. However, not all young people who have been referred to external professionals, have received the support they require.

Not all young people are receiving suitable education or training. Staff are trying to address this but education provision has been withdrawn from some before an alternative is secured. Some young people access virtual learning packages. Staff endeavour to undertake some educational activities with the young people, for example, visits to museums in nearby cities.

Young people engage in a range of leisure activities, for example, going to the cinema, ice skating and bowling. The home has computers available for the young people with a range of computer games. Some young people enjoy guitar lessons organised for them.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is inadequate.

Placement plans are set out under the Every Child Matters outcomes. These are basic but give some guidance to staff to show how the young people are to be cared for.

Staff produce a detailed report for the statutory childcare review, young people are encouraged to attend their meeting to ensure that their views are heard. However, if a young person chooses not to attend the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) will meet with the young person to ensure that they can express their views. Reviews are not always held within 72 hours of admission to the home.

Contact arrangements are clearly set out in young people's files.

Most currently accommodated young people have been admitted to the home in an emergency. Little consideration has given to the effect of their admission upon themselves or the existing group of residents when the placement was made. This has compromised the welfare of all the young people.

Regular house meetings are held and young people are involved in the decision making that affects them. Care plans are drawn up with young people and they are able to make comments. Some young people have been involved in discussions regarding their future placements.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people are encouraged to develop their self help skills within a supportive environment. For example, some are involved in shopping and preparing their own meals. All are responsible for their own laundry, although support is given with this task. Young people are responsible for keeping their bedrooms tidy.

The home is in the process of a refurbishment programme; this is an on going process which is enhancing the environment. Some young people have not had window covering for some period, leaving rooms looking stark. However, blinds are to be fitted imminently.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

There is a comprehensive Statement of Purpose in place informing interested parties what services the home provides. A children's guide is also produced and although it is not in a child friendly format it explains to young people what they can expect when they come to live in the home.

The promotion of equality and diversity is inadequate. The individual needs of some young people are not being met and were not duly considered prior to admission.

Staff have good access to training, for example, staff have attended courses on safeguarding, behaviour management, sexual health and fire. Not all staff have commenced National Vocational Qualification at level 3 or equivalent within three months of joining the home. There is insufficient qualified staff employed in the home. However, staff employed come from a range of disciplines, including social work, the youth service, education and youth offending, giving the team a wealth of experience.

There are adequate numbers of staff on duty to supervise young people; staffing is adjusted according to the needs of the young people.

The home is monitored, although some issues highlighted in this report have not previously been picked up, for example, not all young people have health care plans, some bedrooms did not have curtains and medication records are incomplete.

Young people's files do not contain all the required information, for example, health information.

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 any medicine which is prescribed for a child is administered as prescribed (Regulation 21(2)(b))	01/01/2011
17	promote and make proper provision for the welfare of children accommodated, in particular implement recommendations made at safeguarding strategy meetings (Regulation 11(1)(a))	31/01/2011
20	ensure that Ofsted is informed of any notifiable event as listed in Schedule 5 (Regulation 30(1) and Schedule 5)	01/01/2011
26	promote and make proper provision for the welfare of children accommodated, in particular ensure that, prior to admission, the needs of children and their likely effects upon the existing group of residents, is taken into account and recorded (Regulation (11 (a))	13/12/2010
7	make proper provision for the treatment of young people accommodated (Regulation 11(b))	31/01/2011
13	make proper provision for the education of children accommodated (Regulation 11(b))	31/01/2011
29	ensure there is a sufficient number suitably qualified staff working at the home (Regulation 25 (1))	01/04/2011
33	establish and maintain a system for monitoring the matters set out in schedule 6 (Regulation 34 (1)(a) and Schedule 6)	01/01/2011
35	maintain in respect of each child a permanent record as specified in schedule 3. (Regulation 28 (1)(a) and Schedule 3)	01/01/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure health care plans are developed setting out how the home is to meet the health needs of each young person (NMS 12.1)
- ensure young people's privacy is respected by ensuring there are curtains or blinds fitted to bedroom windows (NMS 9.1)
- ensure that there are individual protocols in place based on the needs of the child to inform staff what action to take when a young person goes missing (NMS 19.2)
- ensure young people are able to write their views on the homes records following

any disciplinary measure or restraint (NMS 22.14)

- ensure a fire drill is held at night (NMS 26.8)
- ensure a review is initiated within 72 hours of admission to the home (NMS 5.6)
- ensure staff work towards National Vocational Qualification at level 3 or equivalent within three months of joining the home. (NMS 29.5)