

Inspection report for Children's Home

Unique reference number	SC036026
Inspection date	20/01/2011
Inspector	Debbie Foster
Type of inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	30/09/2010
--------------------------------	------------

© 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 provides up to five long-term placements for young people of either gender aged between 11 and 15 years on admission.

The accommodation consists of five single bedrooms and communal areas for eating, studying and relaxing. There is a computer room and private telephone area.

The home is in a residential area, close to the local shops, public transport, health and leisure facilities.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This was an unannounced full inspection focusing upon 25 key national minimum standards (NMS) under the Every Child Matters outcomes for children and young people.

Young people have taken part in this inspection.

Staff give high importance to guiding and ensuring a healthy life style is promoted with young people. This is being achieved through providing access to a wide range of health care professionals. Young people's welfare and safety continues to be robustly promoted by staff. Strong protection measures assist in keeping young people safe. There are detailed plans in place to ensure this happens. Managing behaviour positively is a significant strength at the home. A real emphasis exists on rewarding and giving incentives to young people for their positive behaviour. A consistent staff team who have implemented clear boundaries with young people supports the success the young people achieve in this area. Education and vocational courses are vigorously promoted for all young people. Immense effort is put into engaging young people in full-time education programmes by the staff team. All staff are trained in a wide variety of safety and childcare subjects. Effective leadership is exercised in the home by the Registered Manager and extensive monitoring system are in place. Each of these areas supports young people to make continued progress in their lives.

The short fall found relates to the service are that bullying and intimidation is occurring in the home. Although, action has been taken to address this, a number of young people did say they do not always feel safe living in their home. Pathways plans are not all up to date and current.

Improvements since the last inspection

The registered person has been made the following improvements in staying safe and economic well being. All young people are aware of the formal complaints procedure. Direct work has been carried out on bullying and its impact on others. Pathway plans link to care plans and set out clear objectives. These identify relevant timescales for young people to have all necessary skills to assist them in preparing for leaving care.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are actively given information and encouraged to eat a nutritious and balanced diet. The staff see this as an important part of keeping young people healthy. The menu includes a variety of healthy food options which young people are involved in planning each week. Young people said the staff explain and encouraged them to eat healthy. There is always fresh fruit and vegetables available for snacks and meals.

The health needs of young people are identified and services rigorously pursued to ensure that their good health is promoted and maintained. The staff have access to a wide selection of professionals to gain advice and guidance for young people. This ensures they support young people appropriately. Young people said that they have attended health appointments with the full support of the staff. These include the looked after nurse and professionals to support the emotional health needs. Therefore, young people have access to the appropriate healthcare professionals to meet their individual needs.

There are robust monitoring systems in place which ensure all medication in the home is administered correctly and safely. Young people are supported by well-trained staff that follow a very efficient and effective medication policy. The procedures for the storage, administration, recording and disposal of all medication are fully understood and followed precisely by staff. Staff benefit from being trained in the use of first aid.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The young people's privacy is well respected and information confidentially handled. Young people said the staff do knock on doors before entering their bedrooms. They also have keys to their own bedroom door. This promotes their privacy and ensures

they have their own private space. All records are securely stored. Staff follow the confidentiality policy as part of their daily practice.

Complaints are given importance and taken very seriously. The staff and the young people are fully aware of the complaints procedure. Information on how to make a complaint is available in the children's guide and easily accessible to young people. No complaints have been made since the last inspection. Previous complaint records show that prompt action has been taken to investigate, with clear outcomes of complaints being recorded.

Good safeguarding measures are in place to keep young people safe and their welfare is promoted. Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures are available for staff to refer to and use. All staff have received safeguarding training and receive refresher training in this area. They are aware of the procedures to follow when required.

Staff and some young people said bullying and intimidation is occurring in the home. Both said that bullying is not tolerated. Immediate action has been taken to address the bullying and intimidation within the home. Clear strategies are in place to reduce the bullying occurring. The staff are fully aware and explain in detail how they are supporting and addressing this with young people. This includes discussions and the undertaking of workshops with the victims and the perpetrator. Support is being given to those involved.

There is very close monitoring of each young person's whereabouts. Meetings have taken place to discuss these matters, with further meetings planned to review the situation. Although, action has been taken a number of young people did say they do not always feel safe living in their home. A young person said if it continued they will be asking to move.

There are robust measures in place to manage unauthorised absences. There are well established links with agencies who specialise in working with young people who go missing. Staff talk to young people about keeping themselves safe and respond appropriately to protect them when they go missing without authority. Direct work has been undertaken with young people to assist in them recognising the dangers they may put themselves in. The work staff have undertaken in this area has brought very positive outcomes for individual young people. The number of incidents, when young people have gone missing without authority has reduced significantly since the last inspection.

Managing behaviour positively is a high priority. There are strong relationships between staff and young people. The staff are promoting and encouraging positive behaviour. A real emphasis exists on rewarding and giving incentives for positive behaviour. Clear boundaries are in place for young people. Individual and detailed behaviour strategies are recorded and support each young person's placement plan. Staff incorporate these strategies into practice in caring for each young person. These are supporting young people moving forward and behaving in socially acceptable ways. There have been no sanctions and three physical interventions have been made since the last inspection in September 2010. Those made have

been reasonable for the behaviour presented. The sanction and physical intervention records are held within a bound volume. The records meet the requirements of the regulations.

Young people's safety is actively promoted through the practices and support from staff. Fire records indicate that frequent checks on the system and appropriate fire instruction, drills and training have taken place. Therefore, young people's physical safety from fire in the home is well protected.

Health and safety areas are monitored by the manager and the staff team to support keeping young people safe. There are risk assessments, which cover the relevant areas and record, in good detail, the supporting safety measures for staff to follow to reduce risks identified for individual young people. The risk assessments have been reviewed on a regular basis.

Staff recruitment files have not been checked on this inspection. These will be checked at the Children and Young People's Directorate, Human Resources department prior to the next inspection. Previous inspection of this area has found robust procedures are followed to recruit staff and checks undertaken to ensure they are suitable to work with children and young people.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The young people receive excellent individual support from the staff and wealth of professionals. This assists them to make progress in their lives. The professionals involved with young people include those assisting young people with emotional and behaviour difficulties. Young people also benefit from excellent links with field social workers and school tutors.

Education and vocational courses are vigorously promoted for all young people. Immense effort is put into engaging young people in full-time education programmes by the staff team. Each young person has a personal education plan. The progress young people are making is varied and difficulties arise from those who choose not to engage. The young people use the home's computer for educational and leisure purposes. Therefore, the education of young people is actively promoted and highly valued as part of their preparation for adulthood.

The home promotes the hobbies and interests for young people very well. Young people like to spend their time going to the cinema, playing electronic games, using the computer and socialising with friends and family. A young person said they enjoy going ice skating.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people's needs are detailed within individual placement plans and other supporting documents. These outline clearly what the young person's needs are and how they will be met. Staff show a very good understanding of young people's needs and explain how they meet individual needs on a daily basis. This is supported by the records of focused, one-to-one work they have undertaken with young people.

Care reviews take place at the required intervals and minutes from reviews are held on individual young people's case files. Young people attend their care reviews. A young person attended their review and gave their views about matters that affect their future during the inspection. Therefore, the home ensures young people's progress is being monitored and built upon.

Staff actively ensure links with the young people's family and the community are built upon and maintained. Young people meet regularly with family and friends and have contact by phone.

Young people's views are genuinely sought and acted upon. They are encouraged and involved in decision making about their lives and influence the way that the home is run. This includes daily discussion, focus work sessions and regular young people's meetings. Examples of changes made as a result of listening to the views of the young people include the decorating of the lounge, their own bedrooms, holidays, incentives, activities and birthday treats.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people are being well supported to develop independent living skills appropriate to their age and understanding. They are involved in a wide range of areas and undertake practical daily living tasks. These include: preparing and cooking meals, cleaning chores, processing their own laundry, and learning budgeting skills. The progress young people are making in these areas is recorded within the individual independence skills record for each young person. A young person said that they are good at cooking and budgeting their own money.

Pathway plans are in place and include the views of the young person and parents. Suitable and relevant areas are covered. However, not all pathway plans are current and up-to-date.

The accommodation is decorated and furnished to a very good standard, providing a positive, modern and domestic environment for the young people to live in. The home is clean and tidy and well maintained. Two young people are currently

choosing the wallpaper and paint for their bedroom to be re-decorated. They said they like their home and it is comfortable.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The home provides any referring professional with comprehensive information about the home in the form of the Statement of Purpose. Young people are equally well informed through an informative children's guide that helps to familiarise them with what they can expect from the service. Young people are clear and aware of expectations and the rules of the home.

Young people receive care from a competent, child-centred and very experienced staff team who can meet their needs. Staff said they are a strong team who work extremely well together. They spoke about their work with young people with commitment. The staff team benefit from having an excellent communication system in place. This occurs through formal supervision at regular intervals, two weekly staff meetings and daily shift handovers. These communication systems support and guide staff in promoting young people's welfare and safety very well. All staff are trained in a wide variety of safety and childcare subjects. An ongoing programme of regular refresher training is provided in a range of subjects to enhance the staff team's competency to meet the needs of the young people. All staff have the National Vocational Qualification at Level 3 in caring for children and young people, equivalent or above. Staff training includes such areas as legislation relating to children, sexual health, self harm and drugs awareness.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Staff have a excellent understanding of individual needs and ensure that these are met on a practical level. The equality and diversity for each young person is addressed throughout the care planning process.

Extensive monitoring systems are in place. An array of monitoring is undertaken by the manager and staff team who have delegated areas of responsibility. Monthly monitoring visits take place to check that the care provided to young people is suitable. These are carried out in detail. In addition periodic monitoring is also undertaken by the service manager. This enables the service to identify deficiencies and omissions, which they address to improve the care for young people.

Effective leadership is exercised in the home by the Registered Manager in order that the home is organised, managed and staffed to deliver the best possible care to young people. The systems put in place by the organisation ensure a high quality of care is provided to the young people ensuring positive outcomes.

Young people's individual case files are confidentially stored and are arranged in a manner which make them readily accessible to staff. This upholds young people's

privacy and confidentiality. Young people said that they are aware that they can access their files. The files examined are very well maintained and organised.

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 that the reviewing of any bullying or intimidation within the home takes place at suitable intervals, in particular gaining the views of young people to assess progress in eliminating this. Any necessary action must be taken to ensure young people's safety in and outside the home (NMS 18)
- ensure pathway plans are kept up-to-date and current. (NMS 6)