

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC036584
Inspection date	9 March 2010
Inspector	Robert Hewston
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	16 September 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 Cripins, 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 outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

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

The home is a detached property located in a residential estate. The home provides placements for four young people of either gender from 11 years to under 18 years of age. The home provides therapeutic care using the transactional analysis approach. There were four young people in residence at the time of inspection. The accommodation is domestic in size and presentation. Communal areas include a dining room, lounge and activity room. The main office, staff toilet, laundry and kitchen are also on the ground floor. The rear garden is mainly lawn with a paved area up to the house. The frontage has tarmac driveways with a footpath to the front door. The home has its own vehicle for transport.

Summary

This is an unannounced interim inspection. The outcome areas of being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving and organisation were fully assessed. The recommendations from the last inspection have also been looked at.

The overall quality rating is outstanding with outstanding features in being healthy, staying safe, positive contribution and organisation outcomes. The previous full inspection showed enjoying and achieving and economic wellbeing as good.

The Registered Manager has met all of the previous recommendations. One recommendation has been made relating to recording staff and young people's initials when taking part in a fire evacuation. The home still provides an excellent overall quality of care. The management and staff team demonstrate a commitment to providing a safe, stable environment for young people.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Two recommendations were made during the last inspection that took place in September 2009. They related to recording young people's views and improving the written health plans. Both have been addressed and met. All young people now have completed written health plans, up to date information on any health concerns and medication and they have been read and signed by the young people and staff team.

The improvement in recording young people's significant views has enhanced the therapeutic approach from the staff team to the young people. Young people are confident to discuss sensitive issues, have them recorded and work towards positive outcomes for themselves. The recordings show how young people are still struggling with attending school and causing disruptive incidents but are now able to explain their feelings and how they trust and want the support and care from the staff team.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are receiving an outstanding service that is clearly focused on their emotional wellbeing and health needs. Young people's physical, emotional and health needs are identified and well met through a range of medical services. Young people have detailed health care plans

developed from health assessments. The looked after nurse meets with young people to produce a medical letter of their immunisations and a chronology of their medical history that can go forward with the young person. The effective and well established routines in the home ensure the young people have choices in what activity they want to participate in. Some young people enjoy cooking and willingly participate in the preparation of meals at the home. Young people's awareness around diet and exercise is excellent because staff are committed to a programme of education which fits in with the home's wider approaches to promoting a healthy lifestyle.

The management have reviewed the medication records to ensure there is accurate recording of the amounts of medication issued and the dates of returns. This means there is a clear audit trail for the monitoring of medication and that medication is safely administered. Staff are proactive in their attempts to enlist specialist medical professionals to fully assess the specific health requirements of young people. The excellent links with the medical professional services has enhanced staff awareness of young people's health and behaviour needs. All young people are registered with a doctor, dentist and optician. A record is kept of the outcomes of all medical appointments to ensure any ongoing concerns are addressed. The records demonstrate that young people's health is being monitored and promoted by the staff in the home.

Young people's health and safety is effectively promoted through the home's policies and procedures for the safe storage and administration medication. Administration records demonstrate that staff are following individual prescription instructions. Staff are able to respond to accidents and unforeseen medical needs because they have access to first aid boxes and have been trained in basic first aid skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Very good systems, supported by an experienced staff team, are in place to protect young people and to keep them safe.

Young people's privacy is properly respected. Young people know that no-one will enter their bedrooms without their permission except for safeguarding reasons. These reasons are clearly explained in the young people's guide. There is a cordless house telephone which young people can use for private telephone calls and sufficient space for them to be alone on the premises should they wish. Confidential records are safely and securely stored.

Young people receive clear information of how to make a complaint in their welcome booklet, complaints leaflets and through independent visitors to the young people's meetings. Staff receive training and guidance in how to receive complaints and will try to address young people's concerns as they arise. Young people are able to raise any issues or concerns through effective formal and informal communication systems, including contact with external independent people or agencies. Management take young people's concerns seriously and respond promptly in writing with the outcome of any investigation.

Young people are clearly benefiting from a service that has an outstanding focus on safeguarding and protection matters. Young people feel very safe in the home. Operational policies, procedures and staff guidance are used effectively to promote everybody's safety and welfare. Young people are frequently and consistently engaged by staff in how to keep themselves and others safe. The introduction of key discussions enhances the wellbeing and safety of the young people. The in-depth approach to look at why young people go missing or have not attended

their school placement has enabled the staff to understand young people's feelings and concerns. As a result young people going missing has decreased and improved communication links with the young people's education provision.

Young people are encouraged to take responsibility for their behaviours and to understand the consequences of their actions. Staff talk through incidents with them, sometimes through direct work sessions, and actively work to avoid incidents of physical intervention. The lack of physical interventions taking place at the home shows that the staff are working effectively with the young people to improve their behaviour. Staff focus on the positives and are patient and listen to young people. Young people are given many chances to adjust and improve inappropriate behaviours. For example the new reward system looks at individual needs and targets as well as general rewards. Where more formal interventions are used, such as sanctions or physical interventions, the home's records demonstrate that staff responses are proportionate. Young people's individual risk assessments highlight the methods to be used to assist a young person in calming down. Staff are using their knowledge and understanding of young people's needs in this area to communicate in a way that is supportive and encouraging.

The potential for bullying is taken seriously and risk assessed with respect to each child. Bullying is rare, however staff are mindful of the potential for bullying at all times. Staff challenge any offensive, hurtful language or actions and make others aware of behaviours that may be considered to be oppressive. Detailed risk assessments demonstrate very good consideration of a range of safeguarding risks in respect of each young person.

All statutory health and safety checks are carried out within the required timescales. Staff and young people know and understand fire evacuation procedures and respond to them in a timely manner. Risk assessments are available for the building and fire prevention. For example, fire prevention systems are checked and serviced regularly. Well rehearsed emergency evacuation procedures are carried out and risk assessments are completed to inform the home about environmental safety issues. The records do not show who took part in the fire drills. This potentially could place staff and young people at risk if not all staff and young people have participated in the drills.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people receive very good support from the staff team to promote their education, identity and self esteem.

Each young person has separate plans designed to ensure that their cultural, religious and other needs are met. In addition, any needs in relation to the young person's sexual identity are properly considered and supported. Where some young people are confused about their identity or unsure about pursuing their inherited culture, they are encouraged by the staff team to work through their feelings and wishes, sometimes with therapeutic support. Young people celebrate religious and cultural festivals with staff and family members. They are encouraged to discuss and value each other's differences.

Staff have a thorough awareness of individual young people's needs and discuss them at handovers and team meetings. They show a high motivation to make sure that individual needs are met, and act as advocates for the young people. The home provides a positive culture of engagement and dialogue where young people's needs are well known and risks are managed

effectively. The home's records reflect the diverse and individualised needs of each young person. Staff operate in a non-discriminatory way and understand the importance of promoting social inclusion and the need to challenge any form of discrimination. Young people feel valued and supported.

Young people receive excellent support from staff to help them through their education. Arrangements are well established with supportive routines that help with consistent attendance. Education is viewed positively and staff know what they need to do for each young person to ensure the right help is provided. As a consequence of this, young people receive practical and emotional support to do well.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Young people have a placement plan which is used alongside other information to ensure the home's staff are fully informed about individual needs. The available information is of an excellent quality and details the support required resulting from assessments of individual needs and risks. Case files contain a range of information including weekly and monthly reports that provide an overview of events, routines and how the home is supporting young people. Young people's plans include the arrangements for contact which demonstrate that they are fully supported to maintain relationships that are important to them. Young people's case records also highlight any limitations on family contact to ensure staff are informed about any agreed restrictions on these arrangements. Staff are vigilant and aware of the actual and potential risks young people can face in these circumstances.

Staff demonstrate that they place great value on the views and opinions of the young people and spend a lot of quality time with them to ensure that their views can be established. Staff are sensitive and aware of the need to listen to young people. This approach fits with the home's wider operation in terms of consultation and listening to young people. Excellent arrangements are in place that allow young people to express themselves in range of different ways. The home's records show that staff respond positively and the home's day-to-day operation is influenced by what young people have to say. There are regular young people's meetings and key working sessions which work very well to ensure that young people's wishes and views about their life and the running of the home can be established.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The management and organisation of the home is professional and delivers very positive outcomes for the young people. The Registered Manager is an effective manager and knows the needs of the young people well. He has a broad knowledge of operational issues in the home and manages the staff in a way that is extremely competent. There are very good relationships between the management team and the staff.

Young people live in a well managed home where staff are supported to work effectively in achieving outcomes outlined in individual plans of care. Information about the home's operation

is clearly reflected in the statement of purpose. The young person's guide also provides the right information that outlines what can be expected from the home in a readable format.

The principles of staff professional development and ongoing training are given a high priority and ensure that staff are highly skilled in meeting the needs of the young people. The Registered Manager has set up a system for supporting staff including regular staff supervision and ensuring that there is a senior staff member on duty at all times. In addition, there is always a senior manager on call and available to staff. There are good systems in place so that there are opportunities for discussion about individual young people and the running of the home generally. This helps to provide a consistent approach to the young people.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Young people are cared for by staff who belong to a diverse care team. Staff knowledge and awareness about each young person's needs is excellent. This is because there is a comprehensive range of information available to ensure each plan of care is individualised and unique. In addition, young people are provided with a caring and supportive environment where differences are understood and where everyone is treated fairly and with equal concern.

Efficient systems are in place to scrutinise the quality of the care being delivered and a strong management team communicate effectively to ensure that any patterns or trends are addressed. As a result, the manager is confident that the quality assurance reflects young people's experience of the provision.

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 meets the Care Standards Act 2000, The Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
----------	--------	----------

Recommendations

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

- ensure the recording of fire evacuation procedure show which staff and young people participated (NMS 26)