

Inspection report for Children's Home

Unique reference number	SC036584
Inspection date	12/11/2010
Inspector	Robert Hewston
Type of inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	09/03/2010
--------------------------------	------------

© 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

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

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

During this full inspection which was unannounced, all key standards were inspected. The inspection covered all outcome areas from the Every Child Matters framework. The inspection assessed the capacity of the home to promote equality and diversity.

The overall quality rating is outstanding. All young people accommodated at the home, participated in this inspection.

Young people's views and wishes are central to decision-making in the home and staff help them to have a voice about how they are cared for. The staff demonstrate excellent practice in assisting children and young people to gain the skills they need to become as independent as possible in adulthood. The staff are committed to improving the lives of the children and young people. The home also has a clear focus on ensuring young people are protected and that known and potential risks are managed in a way that supports their safety and wellbeing. Two recommendations have been raised as a result of this visit in regard to risk assessments and staff personal files.

Improvements since the last inspection

During the last inspection that took place in March 2010, one recommendation was made.

The home was asked to ensure the recording of fire evacuation procedure show which staff and young people participate. Fire drills record now include all staff and young peoples initials who have participated in all fire drills this year.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are receiving an outstanding service that is clearly focused on their emotional well-being and health needs. Staff are active in engaging young people in a range of health-related topics that supports them to learn about their own health and fitness. For example during all of the summer holidays as well as the recent school breaks activities were organised to keep young people active and lead a healthier life style. The effective and well established routines in the home ensure the young people have choices in what activity they want to participate in. All young people who were surveyed for the inspection stated they receive healthy food which they enjoy. Several mentioned they are involved in planning menus. The menus offer a varied, nutritious diet of freshly prepared meals. They take account of the dietary and religious needs of children and young people.

Young people are provided with excellent guidance, advice and support on health and personal care issues appropriate to their individual needs and wishes. All young people have comprehensive health care plans that are regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure the health needs of young people are met. Staff have excellent relationships with key health professionals. They work closely with these professionals to meet the needs of all young people. Young people are accessing regular, high quality therapeutic support that matches their needs. Communication systems in the home are strong. These practices support children and young people to meet their health targets and maintain excellent health.

Staff manage, record and monitor medication safely. They take responsibility for understanding the effects of the medications used by children and young people. As a result, they reduce the risk of children and young people being harmed by the misuse of medicine.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The home continues to provide an environment that is safe and secure and which provides excellent arrangements for the promotion, protection and care of young people. There is a range of policies and procedures to promote their safety and welfare. All young people have lockable bedroom doors and know staff will not enter their bedrooms without their permission. Staff respect young people's right to privacy and only breach it where there is genuine concern about a child or young person's safety. Staff understand the limits of confidentiality if a child or young person is at risk of harm or abuse. Sensitivity is used to monitor contact arrangements where restrictions exist. All confidential records are maintained securely. These measures protect children and young people's right to a private life.

Young people trust the staff and manager to listen to their concerns and act on them. They take such concerns seriously and address them without delay. Each

young person's right to complain is supported by the staff team. Young people say that staff show concern for them if they have worries about what is happening at the home and respond quickly. Young people feel listened to and their views respected. The recording of complaints is monitored on a regular basis.

Staff communicate clear expectations regarding boundaries which sufficiently help young people to begin to understand consequences for their behaviour. Staff's approach to behaviour is based on redirection and purposeful intervention to calm the situation quickly. Young people's individual risk assessments highlight the methods to be used to assist a young person in calming down. Staff use their knowledge and understanding of young people's needs in this area to communicate in a way that is supportive and encouraging.

Young people feel safe to report bullying. Staff work with all children and young people to stop the bullying by using one to one discussions, children and young people's meetings and mediation. This helps children and young people to understand the impact of their actions or words. Excellent records are kept on a chronology of the restorative approach used. Records show prompt action including, informal or formal meetings, staff intervention together with outcomes and actions for the young person. Another excellent example of modifying behaviour is the "making it right" approach involves young people in discussing and reflecting on any incident and exploring why they became involved in the behaviour; this successfully engages the views of young people and achieves good outcomes for them.

The home has a robust procedure for reporting and responding to any safeguarding concerns and has good links with the local safeguarding team. Training for staff in child protection is updated regularly ensuring that staff have a very good understanding of child protection issues.

A restorative approach to behaviour is encouraged within the home. This has decreased sanctions, there is no absconding behaviour and little physical intervention required. The reward system and risk assessments have improved highlighting areas of behaviour that are individual to that young person's care needs. Risk assessments have been regularly reviewed and monitored but not all have been sign off by the management of the home.

All staff understand it is their responsibility to keep the building safe, to carry out fire checks and to ensure repairs are undertaken without delay. A fire risk assessment is in place and has been reviewed. The young people and staff are briefed on the home's emergency fire procedures and regularly participate in practice evacuations. The home ensures that all of its care staff complete training in the use of fire fighting equipment. Fire records show clearly which staff member and young people who have participated in all fire drills. Portable appliance testing is routinely undertaken. Staff recognise the particular vulnerability of young people with little sense of danger. As a result, the building offers a safe environment for young people.

Staff recruitment practices are satisfactory. The home has established careful selection and vetting of all new staff to ensure the protection of young people.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Young people receive a high level of individual support and guidance that is consistent with their identified needs and overall plan of care. Key working discussions with "all about me" and "my feelings" documentation shows the excellent interaction between young people and the staff team. Key workers work closely with children and young people to identify targets and plans. They ensure these are implemented. The plans take account of the children and young people's needs in relation to culture, religion, gender, personal history and disability. By focusing on the unique character and needs of each child and young person staff are able to respond to children and young people's changing needs and plans. This supports children and young people to achieve good outcomes

The staff have promoted an environment where young people understand it is important to attend school. Staff support them to do this and to achieve their potential by building good relationships with educational professionals, monitoring achievements and assisting with homework. Young people have access to excellent educational resources in the home. Staff show they are interested in how the school day has been for the young people when they return. This helps staff to pick up and address issues before they become too serious. Staff show genuine delight in the successes of young people at school. The ethos of the home and staff team is focused on fully promoting education with the view that the young people can achieve positive outcomes.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Each young person has 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. Significant work is undertaken prior to and at the point of admission to ensure the needs of the young person and the needs of others already living at the home are taken into consideration. For example staff meetings and fortnightly meetings held with the therapist look at young people's behaviour, compatibility, key worker and the behaviour plan of any new admission.

Staff encourage young people to express their views about how they are cared for. They use communication systems in children's meetings and key worker sessions which allow children and young people to express their views and opinions. The established key working discussion have been further advance with " My feelings" documents. This gives the young people an opportunity to express their wishes,

fears and feeling around their safety, bullying, their future and any concerns or issues they feel happy to discuss. This has enabled staff and therapist to change behaviour management plans, risk assessments and review consultation documents to clearly show the young peoples views on their welfare and care within the home.

Staff place a high priority on ensuring children and young people maintain contact with their families. Staff manage contact arrangements well. They show determination to build lines of communication with the parents and guardians of children and young people. The support provided by staff allows children and young people to begin to rebuild relationships with their families. This increases the likelihood they will be able to build positive attachments and relationships with others in the future. It also contributes to reduced levels of absence as children and young people feel they have the support of staff to see their families rather than having to run away to do so.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people are provided with a safe and comfortable home which is domestic in style and layout. The location of the property provides young people with a degree of privacy because it is set back from the main road and has its own front and rear gardens. The accommodation is maintained to a good standard and it is kept clean and tidy. Young people are provided with individual bedrooms which are suitably maintained and personalised to their own tastes. The use of photographs of young people interacting with staff in recent activities gives a homely feel. Young people have access to sufficient levels of communal space which gives them choices regarding their recreational and leisure time. The home provides young people with sufficient bath, shower and toilet facilities with appropriate locks to ensure their privacy is maintained. Suitable laundry facilities are also provided to meet the needs of the home.

Any young people who are leaving care and moving into independent or semi-independent living are fully supported. At present, due to the young peoples age, there is no independent programme being used. Young people do benefit from a staff approach that is practical and realistic and which incorporates learning through the day-to-day domestic routines of the home. Further development in specific independence programmes is needed to give young people the skills and understanding of budgeting, cooking and living independently.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The manager and staff are very clear about their role, aims and ethos. The literature provided by the home clearly communicates this to children, their families and social

workers. Staff ensure young people have access to an informative and easy to understand range of information when they are preparing to move into the home. As a result, young people, their parents and social workers are able to make well-informed decisions about whether the home can meet their specific needs. The home's Statement of Purpose, children's guide and policies and procedures provide a significant range of information about services and arrangements for young people's care. Staff are aware of the principles and aims of the home and are positive and enthusiastic about their work using a variety of creative measures to engage the young people.

Young people are provided with a service that includes a stable and committed team of staff who deliver consistent care and support. The commitment from staff is a strength of the home. Most staff absences are covered from the existing team who are already known by the young people and this ensures continuity of care. The number of staff on duty is always enough to meet the needs young people and support their welfare and protection. Recent staffing shortages due to sickness, annual leave and recruitment did not effect the management the care and support offered to the young people.

The management of the home is competent, committed to the well-being of the young people and supports the staff while having high expectations of the quality of care they provide. There are effective monitoring systems to ensure national minimum standards are met and the quality of care provided to young people is continually improved. There are good training and support programmes that provide staff with the skills and knowledge to comprehensively help young people through their placement.

Staff are well supported through weekly team meetings and by a manager and senior staff who are available and approachable. Staff consider their one-to-one supervision to be very useful, supportive and that it allows for development and reflection of their practice. In addition to supervision there is an open door policy so staff feel able to share opinions or ask advice at any time. Staff shift handovers are well planned to ensure all information is exchanged and shared.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. This is promoted very effectively in all aspects of the service. The Registered Manager and staff are committed to ensuring the home carefully meets the individual needs of each young person living in the home and provides them with equality of opportunity to achieve their aspirations. Staff are aware of their responsibility to provide equality of opportunity to all young people regardless of race, culture, gender, disability and sexuality. Staff ensure children and young people access services and resources which can help them to achieve in line with their peer group in the wider community. These excellent practices enable staff to meet young people's diverse needs and to offer equal opportunities for all young people to achieve their goals.

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 all behaviour management risk assessments are signed of by the key workers and management (NMS 22)
- maintain the information specified in Schedule 2 in respect of each member of staff, in particular, references, full employment history and interview minutes. (NMS 27)