

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC038780
Inspection date	24 March 2010
Inspector	Dennis Bradley
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	5 January 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 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

This children's home is a semi detached Victorian building on the outskirts of a large city centre. The service provides care for up-to-four young people aged between 10 years and 17-years-old. The home is registered to provide care to young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties. All young people have their own bedroom on the first floor of the three-storey building. There is a garden that young people can use and the home is close to local amenities. The home is one of three homes owned and run by a private company.

Summary

Not all the standards have been covered at this interim inspection. The inspection was unannounced. One purpose of the inspection was to check on the progress made to address the requirements raised following the last inspection. These related to: staff training and support, and the arrangements to safeguard young people and staff from the risk of fire. All the key standards for the outcome area 'Staying Safe' were also assessed. The young people were present during the inspection.

There was evidence of positive relationships between the staff and young people. The manager and staff provide a caring environment and there is a strong motivation within the team to ensure young people are looked after safely. There are satisfactory arrangements for making sure the home provides a safe, secure and consistent setting for young people. Staff are good at encouraging and supporting the young people to develop and maintain socially acceptable behaviour. There is a clear commitment to improving the service. Staff sometimes do not keep suitable records of searches of young people's possessions and the home's risk assessments are not sufficiently comprehensive. Some staff do not receive appropriate supervision and support.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last inspection the registered person was asked to ensure that: arrangements are made for staff to receive appropriate training; young people and staff are aware of the procedure to be followed in case of fire; the recommendations made by the fire safety officer are addressed and that there is a current fire risk assessment for the home. The registered person has taken appropriate action to address these matters and this will help promote and safeguard the welfare of the young people.

The registered person was also asked to ensure all staff receive regular, recorded supervision. There is evidence that the arrangements for providing staff with regular formal supervision have improved. This helps make sure staff receive appropriate support and guidance in safeguarding and promoting young people's welfare. However, some staff still do not receive formal one to one supervision from a senior member of staff at the frequency specified in the national minimum standards. This action will be repeated.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff take seriously the principles and practices of keeping young people safe. They encourage and support young people to have privacy in accordance with their needs and wishes. For example, the young people all have keys to their bedrooms and these rooms all have en-suite facilities. Staff also make sure information about young people is handled confidentially and stored securely. There are policies and procedures in place to help ensure this happens. However, staff sometimes do not keep suitable records of when they carry out searches of young people's rooms and possessions. Although staff gave appropriate reasons for carrying out some searches of young people's rooms, the records do not include sufficient details of these reasons. Consequently, they do not clearly demonstrate that staff respect young people's rights to privacy, and only carry out these searches where failure to do so would put at risk, the welfare of the young people or others. Also staff do not record whether the young person was present at the time.

Staff make sure the young people are aware of who they can go to if they have any complaints or concerns. The young person's guide to the home includes appropriate information about how to complain. There are procedures and guidance for staff covering how to manage complaints appropriately and ensure young people are listened to. The home has received no complaints since the last inspection. A young person said this is, 'a great home'.

The home has appropriate procedures for safeguarding young people from abuse. The majority of staff have had training in child protection and training is arranged for those who haven't. This training helps staff protect young people from abuse and ensures they respond appropriately to any allegation or suspicion of abuse.

Staff work hard to create an atmosphere where bullying is known to be unacceptable. They try to help the young people to develop an understanding and tolerance of each other's diverse needs. The home has a clear anti-bullying policy and the Registered Manager said they are trying to identify appropriate training for staff. Young people's individual risk assessments cover bullying issues. However, there is no risk assessment covering the times, places and circumstances in which the risk of bullying is greatest and how to reduce these risks to safeguard the welfare of the young people.

Staff take appropriate action to keep young people safe when they go missing or are absent from the home without permission. There are policies and procedures for staff to help make sure this happens.

Staff are good at encouraging and supporting the young people to develop and maintain socially acceptable behaviour. They give positive messages to young people to reinforce acceptable behaviour. There are systems in place to reward progress based on encouraging young people's development and self-management of their behaviour. Staff support young people to recognise and value their improvements and to understand their behaviour and the impact it may have on others. When staff use sanctions these are relevant and reasonable. Records show that the use of physical restraint by staff is well managed. Apart from two relief staff, all of the staff team have had training in positive behaviour management. The Registered Manager said training is being arranged for those staff who have not had it. This training covers how to reduce or avoid the need to use physical restraint with young people.

There are satisfactory systems in place to keep the young people and adults safe from the risk of fire and other potential hazards. For example, the Registered Manager now makes sure there are regular fire drills so that staff and young people know what to do in case of fire. There are satisfactory arrangements for carrying out regular checks of equipment such as fire alarms to make sure they are working properly. Staff also carry out a range of risk assessments to identify any risks to the health, safety or welfare of the young people and how these can be reduced or avoided. However, there is no risk assessment covering the use of weight training equipment by young people and its storage in one of the communal rooms.

The home has satisfactory systems for making sure it only employs suitable people to work with young people. It carries out a range of checks on new staff before they start working at the home, including a criminal records bureau disclosure check. There are appropriate arrangements for monitoring and managing visitors to the home. These help ensure they do not have inappropriate access to young people.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is not judged.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Staff feel well supported and there are satisfactory arrangements in place for making sure most staff now receive appropriate support and supervision. However, the arrangements in place for other staff are not satisfactory. Relief staff do not always receive one to one supervision from a senior member of staff after each eight shifts they have worked in the home, and new staff do not receive supervision at least fortnightly. Because of this, these staff may not receive appropriate support and guidance in safeguarding and promoting the young people's welfare.

There are satisfactory arrangements for providing staff with training in caring for children and young people. Most of the care staff have a suitable qualification confirming they have the competencies needed to care for young people. Apart from one relief member of staff, those who don't are either undertaking or are due to commence, suitable training. As well as core training such as emergency first aid and positive behaviour management, staff can access some short courses that cover the specific needs of young people. New staff receive a comprehensive induction to make sure they can meet the needs of the young people.

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 Childrens Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
28	ensure all staff receive appropriate supervision, in particular relief staff and new staff within their first six months of employment. (Regulation 27(4)(a))	30 April 2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure all searches of young people's possessions are documented showing in particular the reason for the search and who was present at the time (NMS 9.8)
- carry out regular recorded risk assessments of the times, places and circumstances in which the risk of bullying is greatest (NMS 18.5)
- carry out recorded risk assessments in relation to young people's known activities, in particular the use of weight training equipment. (NMS 26.2)