

Inspection report for Children's Home

Unique reference number	SC040642
Inspection date	04/02/2011
Inspector	Gavin Thomas
Type of inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	16/06/2010
--------------------------------	------------

© 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 children's home is owned and managed by a local authority. The house is situated in a residential area. The town centre and its amenities, which include a cinema, sports centre, park and library, are a short bus ride away.

One of the key objectives of the home is to provide individually tailored care plans to support and help prepare young people for moving on to semi/independent living. This is enhanced through the provision of a semi-independence flat which supports transitional plans for young people moving on.

Extensive work is undertaken to engage young people in meaningful activities and work experience placements.

All young people are accommodated in single bedrooms and benefit from adequate living space and a large rear garden, which young people help to maintain.

At the time of this inspection, seven young people were living at the home. Brief conversations took place with four young people during the inspection.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

This unannounced interim inspection focused on the action taken to address three recommendations made at the key inspection and the Every Child Matters outcome 'staying safe'.

Young people's needs are often complex and challenging. However, the expertise within the staff team and the staff's understanding of young people's individual needs and circumstances, help create an environment to support and sustain better outcomes and prospects.

Management and staff are persistent and consistent in working with external professionals and relevant others to ensure young people's safety and protection at all times. This is also achieved through vigorous monitoring of young people's well-being and effective record keeping.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, three recommendations were made for the registered provider to update two key documents with the relevant contact details for Ofsted and to review one aspect of fire safety.

The Statement of Purpose and the children's guide now contains the correct telephone number and address for Ofsted.

One designated fire door in the flat occupied by young people is now clearly marked. Further action is also being taken to maximise young people's safety by installing a magnetic closure on this door.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Young people do not have any issues regarding personal space and privacy. There are house rules in place for ensuring that young people understand and respect each others privacy. Any breaches regarding these rules are clearly recorded and monitored with young people's cooperation. The implementation of procedures for carrying out room searches is effective. These procedures are known to young people and enforced to maximise young people's safety and protection. The young people's telephone is situated in a private area. In addition, all young people have the use of mobile phones for making private calls.

Prompt action is taken in response to complaints. This includes initial contact with complainants and written records to explain the procedures taken to reach a resolution. Young people are very aware of the complaints procedure and encouraged to make their views known, including the opportunity to make formal complaints. This evidenced through completed records. The independent monitoring of complaints received ensures that complaints received are managed in accordance with written policies. Details of independent agencies are accessible to young people. This means that young people may contact a range of individuals or agencies other than staff to raise a complaint.

Young people's safety and protection is a high priority in all aspects of care and support provided. The assessment and admissions criteria take into account any safeguarding matters which may influence a young person's placement. Staff are vigilant of any situations which may compromise a young person's safety in or outside of the home. As a result, proactive steps are taken to minimise or prevent unsafe or dangerous situations involving young people. This often includes joint working with external professionals.

A range of strategies are in place for countering bullying types of behaviours. This involves young people's contribution in workshops, projects and discussion groups. The relationships between staff and young people enable staff to openly discuss

these matters with young people individually and as a household. Detailed work is undertaken with young people to help them overcome past experiences which are the likelihood of inappropriate behaviours towards others at times. These strategies and interventions are managed sensitively and according to agreed protocols set out in young people's care plans.

The numbers of incidences involving young people being absent without authority vary. Patterns of incidences are often linked to circumstances and matters impacting on a young person's emotions and well-being prior to admission. Staffs' perseverance in engaging with young people and young people's commitment towards their placement, contributes to a significant reduction in the numbers of incidences involving young people being absent without authority. Agreed protocols with external professionals such as the police are followed through to ensure that young people are not at risk.

Behavioural management strategies are agreed with young people. This means that individualised care plans take into account the types of intervention required to keep young people safe and to ensure that unacceptable behaviours are addressed appropriately and safely. Young people are given opportunities to comment on sanctions imposed. In addition, restorative approaches, incentives and praise are used to focus on positive behaviours. Young people's emotional well-being is nurtured in ways to help them through matters effecting their lives such as low self-esteem, anger and breakdown in relationships with significant others. Although young people's behaviours are at times unpredictable and challenging, the dynamics of the home and long-term strategies for intervention has a positive impact on young people. Staff are trained to physically intervene with young people for safety reasons. However, this is only used as a last resort and has not been used for some considerable time.

Fire safety arrangements are robust. Young people and staff are familiar with fire evacuation procedures. Records show that fire drills take place routinely including a drill at night. Fire detection and fire fighting equipment is tested routinely to ensure that appliances are in good working order at all times.

Visitors to the home are screened to prevent young people being placed at risk. Recruitment records examined at the key inspection indicates that robust procedures are in place for the recruitment and selection of suitable staff to work with young people. No new staff have been externally recruited since the last inspection. Therefore, recruitment records were not examined on this inspection.

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 not judged.