

Inspection report for Children's Home

Unique reference number	SC042147
Inspection date	02/11/2010
Inspector	Paul Taylor
Type of inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	01/03/2010
--------------------------------	------------

© 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 may accommodate up to six young people of either gender and is set in a residential area. It is close to all the main amenities and facilities. The house is a large and spacious detached property with a large rear garden. There are six bedrooms for young people and appropriate bathroom and toilet facilities. There is also a spacious dining room and lounge for communal activities.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

At this unannounced inspection all the key standards were assessed. The home provides a good standard of care to the young people. Two young people met with the inspector in order to give their views on how they feel they are being cared for. Four young people are currently living at the home.

The health care needs of young people are met appropriately. Young people are protected from the risk of harm as best as possible, with appropriate safeguarding training provided to staff. The behaviours of young people are fully considered, assessed and planned for within their individual behaviour management plans. The individual needs of young people are met to a good standard with thorough care planning and review procedures in place. Young people are assisted very well to contribute their views and opinions. Young people benefit from living in an environment which is homely and relaxed and which offers them a good standard of accommodation. The home is managed well with staff being suitably guided and supported to carryout their tasks.

Three actions were made as a result of this inspection. These relate to ensuring that all medication records are maintained accurately, having a bound book to record sanctions and restraints and asking that the manager applies to Ofsted to become the Registered Manager.

One recommendation was made asking that the home reviews arrangements and effectiveness of key-work sessions.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection three actions were made. These have been addressed. All members of staff now receive regular supervision. Risk assessments are reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

At the last inspection an action was made requiring that the manager of the home at

that time should apply to Ofsted to become the Registered Manager. This occurred, but the manager subsequently left the service.

Three recommendations made at the last inspection have also been addressed. Sanctions are now made which are related to behaviour and which have been assessed as being appropriate for young people in their individual behaviour management plans. The young people now have regular house meetings where they are given the opportunity to meet in a group to discuss how they feel the home is being run. There is a good record made of maintenance issues which have been passed on to the maintenance team. The record shows that these have been addressed promptly.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people are provided with a healthy and varied diet. They are involved in the planning of meals and their individual likes and dislikes are incorporated into menu plans. Young people can access snacks in between meals and fresh fruit is always available. The staff encourage the young people to eat healthily when snacking, for example choosing fruit instead of a packet of crisps. Young people are also encouraged to prepare their own meals if they are on a programme which is preparing them for independence. Meals are seen as social occasions and there is an expectation that everyone eats together as a group.

Each young person has a health plan that covers their medical history, health interventions, allergies, dental, hearing and optical needs. Young people receive annual medicals from a 'looked after children' nurse. Records relating to the health of each young person are good and contain, amongst other things, a record of all medical appointments as well as consents for medical treatments. Staff also provide guidance, advice and support in relation to health and social issues such as smoking and sexual health. Members of staff liaise with specialist health professionals, such as psychiatrists, in order to promote the emotional well being of the young people.

While there is a clear system in place for the staff to follow with regards to the storage and administration of medication this is not always followed. This can lead to doses of medication being missed or not recorded when given. One error in the medication record was noted, however, the dose had been recorded elsewhere and therefore the young person's well being had not been compromised.

The health planning for the young people is of a good standard and the young people are encouraged to establish healthy lifestyles and a healthy diet. This approach leads to good outcomes.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

All confidential information relating to young people is stored securely in the office. Members of staff always knock before entering a young person's room. When room searches occur a record is made of this event and the young people have the reasons for this explained to them. It is clear that privacy is respected and seen as a young person's right.

Young people are given clear details of how to make a complaint should they wish. Information is further contained in the young persons guide, while details are displayed in communal areas around the home including the contact details of independent advocacy services and help lines. Complaints are addressed promptly and young people receive feedback on how a complaint has been dealt with and resolved. Young people report that they are confident to complain and that they feel that members of staff will listen to them.

A robust approach toward child protection ensures that young people's safety is valued and promoted. Staff receive appropriate induction and training in child protection and have access to local safeguarding procedures. Members of staff are aware of what they need to do and who they need to contact if they have concerns about a young person's welfare. Good records are kept of any issues and these show how they have been resolved and what measures have been put in place in order to ensure the young people's safety.

The home operates a policy of zero tolerance toward bullying and all young people are made aware of it on admission. Appropriate staffing levels and careful monitoring help minimise the opportunities for bullying to occur. Staffing levels also ensure that they are aware of any dynamics which may be causing conflict and tension. Records demonstrate that when incidents have occurred they are taken seriously and the young people concerned are supported in resolving their difficulties.

The home has a policy and procedure for reporting young people who are absent without authority. Risk assessments are used to determine a young person's ability to maintain their own safety whilst in the community. All young people are made aware that to leave the home without staff approval can result in them being reported missing to the police. Staff have developed pen pictures and physical descriptions of each young person that can be relayed to police in the event of them being missing. Individual protocols, which highlight each young person's potential vulnerability, are in place should they go missing. Good records are kept when a young person has been missing and these include how the young person was supported on their return to the home. The home's approach to this issue has achieved good outcomes for young people. Incidents of going missing have significantly reduced in some cases.

Individual behaviour management plans and risk assessments are compiled which highlight possible concerns about challenging or risky behaviour which some of the young people may display. Each young person has their particular issues identified as

well as strategies of how to de-escalate challenging behaviour and what methods of physical intervention are appropriate. Positive behaviour is encouraged and rewarded with extra spending money or outings.

Sanctions imposed are varied and related to behaviour displayed. For example a young person did not have access to a bicycle for a period of time when they refused to wear safety equipment such as a helmet, when cycling on the road. Electronic records are kept of sanctions imposed.

All members of staff have attended training in the method of physical restraint used in the home. An electronic record is kept of any incidents which have required the use of physical restraint. The home does not have a bound book which records the incidents of restraint or sanctions imposed.

The health and safety of young people and staff is promoted to a good standard. Fire fighting equipment is routinely serviced and tested and fire drills occur on a regular basis. Risk assessments are carried out on the environment as well as activities and behaviours which the young people may display. The risk assessments are regularly reviewed and updated.

There are robust vetting procedures in place to ensure that all the required checks are carried out when a new member of staff is recruited. The staff files are well maintained, with the evidence of the checks clearly documented.

The systems operated within the home ensure that the young people's well-being and safety is promoted and protected to a good standard.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Though the home operates a key-worker system, there is an expectation that all staff are conversant with the specific needs of each young person. Religious and cultural needs are assessed prior to a young person's admission so that the home can ensure that they will meet them. During the course of the inspection it was possible to observe the social interaction of staff and young people. Young people were observed to be at ease in the company of the staff on duty. It is clear that the young people are offered good levels of individual support and are assisted and encouraged to make positive choices.

Each young person at the home has an identified educational placement. Good liaison is maintained by the staff and each young person's school or college and the young people are assisted and encouraged to attend. The value of education, and how it can enhance life chances and career prospects, is actively promoted by the staff team.

Young people can access a range of leisure and recreational activities in both the home and local community. Activities provided include ice skating, bowling, the

cinema and an occasional trip to an adventure theme park. Young people are also able to meet friends in the community.

Young people benefit from well planned individual support which enables and encourages them to attend education and partake in positive activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Wherever possible all placements are planned in advance, although assessment protocols and procedures ensure young people can be accommodated at short notice. Young people are admitted into the home once a full assessment of their care needs has been completed.

Assessments are made on all relevant and available information regarding the physical, social, behavioural and emotional needs of each young person. Such assessments are incorporated into plans of care which highlight the individual needs of every young person in line with looked after children placement planning. Care plans clearly guide staff in meeting the individual needs of each young person.

Regular reviews of care ensure each care plan matches the current needs of each young person in an individualised fashion. The whole staff team contribute to routine meetings where any change to each young person's circumstance, behaviour or emotional well-being are considered fully. Weekly summaries of each young person's behaviour and progress are completed by key workers and sent to the young people's social workers. Reports are prepared for formal looked after children reviews and young people encouraged to attend.

Young people are encouraged, when appropriate, to maintain regular contact with their family, friends and significant others. Any restrictions regarding access are made clear to all parties. Young people can maintain contact by phone and staff can accompany them on contact visits to support them if needed.

The home has an admission process which is aimed at enabling young people to move in at a pace which they can deal with. Short notice admissions can also be accommodated. Young people are prepared by the staff to move on to their next placement. As soon as a placement is identified the young person and staff meet with potential carers in order to start the transition process at a pace commensurate with the young person's ability to cope with change. The staff are aware that the moving on process for the young people, especially those moving on to independence, can be an anxious time where they will need sensitive and well planned support.

Young people are given numerous opportunities to express their views and to contribute to the day-to-day running of the home. House meetings take place weekly and these enable young people to voice their opinions on how the home is being run. Young people are offered individual support from key-workers who monitor their

progress and provide them with regular opportunities to spend one-to-one time with them. A large amount of structured key work sessions do not occur due to the young people opting out of them. Apart from key work sessions the young people are able to voice their opinions on an informal basis to members of staff as well as the manager and visiting directors of the organisation which runs the home.

Interaction between the young people and members of staff is seen to be relaxed and supportive. Young people feel that they can approach the staff team with concerns or difficulties as well as being able to relax with them. 'They're good for a laugh' was an expression used by one young person.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The home assists any young people in developing skills needed for independent living. This process is delivered at a pace with which the young people can cope. The home is aware that some of the young people may not be able to live independently for some time due to their emotional immaturity and vulnerability.

The home is comfortable and well maintained. Each young person is able to personalise their room with posters and pictures.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home has produced a Statement of Purpose that details the nature of the service. The statement is regularly reviewed to reflect changes in the staffing complement. The home has also produced a children's guide that details the nature of the home including its routines, activities, facilities and behavioural expectations. Young people are supplied with a copy on admission.

The home has sufficient members of staff to meet the needs of the young people living there. The staff team is diverse in terms of age, gender and experience. There are appropriate staffing levels, which ensure that there are enough members of staff to support the young people. There are good relationships within the home and the staff team engage well with the young people.

Members of staff report that they are well supported by colleagues and the manager. Supervision is provided on a regular basis. All members of staff are subject to annual reviews of their performance and these inform their training needs. There are rolling programmes of training in key areas such as child protection, restraint and first aid. This ensures that members of staff are up to date with the skills and knowledge they need to ensure the well-being of the young people.

There are well established processes to ensure that the operation of the home is appropriately monitored. The home is monitored internally by the manager and

externally by an independent person specifically appointed for this task. The quality of the reports written as a result of these visits is good.

Monitoring by the manager, of key records such as accidents, restraints and complaints, is of a good quality. The current manager, who is also the responsible individual, has yet to apply to Ofsted to become the Registered Manager.

The young people's files are maintained in good order. Good records are maintained which reflect the behaviour and progress of the young people.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Each young person's individual needs are known and met to a good standard. It is clear that the differing backgrounds and circumstances of the young people are valued and acknowledged, and that positive messages are given to the young people encouraging them to value difference in race, culture and beliefs.

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

Std.	Action	Due date
13	ensure that the recording of medicine administered and stored in the home is accurate. (Regulation 21 (1))	30/11/2010
22	ensure that a written record is made in a volume kept for this purpose, of any measure of control, restraint or discipline. (Regulation 17 (4)	30/11/2010
34	appoint an individual to apply to Ofsted to become the Registered Manager. (Regulation 7 (1))	30/11/2010

Recommendations

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

- review the effectiveness of the process of how key workers offer individual guidance and support to the young people. (NMS 2.2)