

Inspection report for Children's Home

Unique reference number	SC042994
Inspection date	18/01/2011
Inspector	Elaine Cray
Type of inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	13/08/2009
--------------------------------	------------

© 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

The home provides short breaks for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Up to five young people can be accommodated at any one time. The building is single storey and provides accommodation for five young people in single bedrooms with appropriately adapted bathrooms in close proximity. There are two lounges, a dining room and a sensory room. Staff bedrooms are close to young people's rooms. There are also staff office areas located within the building. The home is located in a residential area, close to the town centre with easy access to local facilities and services. There is car parking space to the side of the building and the large enclosed gardens to the rear have a range of play equipment.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This was an unannounced full inspection planned to review the service provided against identified key national minimum standards. The service is judged as good with some outstanding outcomes. Some young people participated and others were observed in the inspection process.

This is a well managed service where young people and families receive a high standard of care delivered by experienced and knowledgeable staff. There are excellent arrangements to promote the health of young people during respite stays at this home. Young people are kept safe with effective and thorough safeguarding systems. The service works closely with parents and involved professionals and young people are provided with a high degree of individualised support. Young people are presented with opportunities to develop skills, make personal choices and try different activities with other young people during their stay.

The quality of care provided is monitored closely from within the service and by external managers who visit the home. There is a strong commitment to service development and promoting positive outcomes for young people.

There are four recommendations made a result of this inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

Two recommendations from the previous inspection are addressed. Young people's safety is improved with risk assessments in place for young people using the trampoline, and recording in the physical intervention book is now consistent and detailed.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

There are excellent arrangements in place for promoting and maintaining the health of young people who use this service. Staff have an excellent understanding of the complex medical needs presented by some young people. There are clear procedures and a clear commitment to working with parents and agencies to support medical needs and promote the good health of young people

Young people's healthcare needs are identified and reflected in well detailed healthcare plans, which are effectively implemented. Plans are developed in consultation with parents and supported by health professionals and consistent staff training. Staff have a good awareness of individual health needs and consult regularly with parents about young people's changing health requirements and preferred support strategies.

Young people are protected with safe and robust medication procedures and systems. Staff undertake medication training and there are excellent and effective procedures to transfer young people's medication from parents to the service for each respite stay. Medication is stored securely and is administered as directed by the prescribing practitioner. The medication administration system is closely monitored by the management team. Outside training practitioners confirm a high level of confidence in staff knowledge and practice in meeting the medical and the healthcare needs of the young people. Parents are similarly complimentary about the staff team's ability to meet young people's health needs.

Young people's health is further promoted through the availability of good catering arrangements. The service's effective liaison with parents is crucial in understanding and meeting the dietary needs and preferences of young people. Detailed information regarding allergies, likes, dislikes and support for having meals are recorded in care plans. Information is then transferred to information cards for the cooks to ensure effective communication and consistency. Young people's needs and preferences are represented in weekly menus based on planned admissions, a balance between individual preferences and a healthy diet needs. The kitchen is well organised and staff have completed required training. Young people and parents comment positively about the catering arrangements.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people benefit from and are kept safe by a competent staff team, robust policies and procedures and regular monitoring of the health and safety of all who live, work and visit this home.

The home has clear policies and procedures regarding the recruitment of staff which are in line with the Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the national minimum

standards. Visitors to the home are vetted to ensure the safety of young people.

Young people say they are safe at the home and parents confirm a high level of confidence in the service's ability to keep their young people safe while maintaining dignity and independence. Staff understand safeguarding young people procedures. The home's records and discussion with the manager and staff demonstrate a good working relationship with the Local Safeguarding Children Board. All concerns are taken seriously and there are clear and accountable processes for recognising and responding to concerns.

Staff undertake training which supports their ability to protect young people. This training includes first aid, safeguarding young people, behaviour management and health and safety training. Comprehensive risk assessments are documented which set out clear risk management strategies for group activities and in relation to individual young people. Staff have an excellent understanding of the known and potential risks for individual young people, and know how to safeguard them successfully.

Young people and their families are listened to and are able to give feedback and raise a concerns and complaints. The service has a written complaints policy and procedures, and information is provided to families when they are first linked to the service. There is also written information in symbol form, enabling individuals who may not be able to read to understand the procedure. Young people at the home have complex communication needs and staff have an excellent awareness about how the young people may display expressions of dissatisfaction. Records show that dissatisfactions and more formal complaints are dealt with effectively and feedback, including positive comments, are used to develop and improve the service and outcomes for young people.

Young people's right for privacy is respected. Staff are mindful of the need to promote young people's right for privacy when providing personal care, while at the same time ensuring that they are safe and that their needs are appropriately met.

Behaviour is well managed. Known challenging behaviours, triggers and behaviour management strategies are reflected clearly within care and behaviour plans. Planned responses to behaviours are discussed with parents, placing social workers and school placements. Groups of young people staying at the service at any one time are effectively planned and monitored. This pre-planning ensures that individual behaviour management plans can be supported and group dynamics are positive and manageable. Central records relating to behaviour management are maintained, but the names of others present, including young people, are not included in the sanctions records. There is a countering bullying policy. Young people are protected from the actions of others by planning admissions, high levels of staff supervision and by staff having an in-depth awareness of the needs and behaviours presented by the young people.

The physical environment is well maintained and monitored in terms of health and safety and there is comprehensive and detailed documentation. Fire safety

procedures are checked and monitored, but records do not identify the times that the regular fire drills take place and it is not clear if a night time drill has been carried out. Maintenance checks and servicing of the heating system, portable electrical appliances and moving and handling equipment ensure the home is a safe place to visit, live and work in.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people receive a good level of support and encouragement to enjoy and achieve. They benefit from a key working system in which staff ensure each young person's needs are assessed and met. Individual needs are clearly set out in care plans. Staff are knowledgeable about and able to implement a broad and varied range of support strategies to help young people enjoy and participate in the daily routines and activities of the service. The home provides a range of adaptations and equipment which enable young people to fully access the services provided. They are supported by staff who have a good awareness of individual needs relating to gender, culture and religion, including resources in the local community.

Young people are cared for by experienced and caring staff who are committed to their roles and responsibilities. Staff ensure young people have access to a variety of opportunities and fulfil their potential. Young people enjoy a range of activities in the home. For example young people explore their date of birth in terms of the Chinese new year and make a wall collage, while others quietly watch a DVD of their own choice. Activities also include trips to the cinema, bowling, clubs, play schemes, parks and the seaside. Comments from social workers include 'the service is always instantly welcoming as you immediately see art work that has been completed by young people who attend for short term breaks', and 'staff promote young people to participate in activities that perhaps they have not tried before'.

While the primary responsibility for young people's education is planned and supported by parents, the service effectively facilitates all young people's school attendance. Staff liaise with schools and parents on a regular basis to promote continuity of care and education for young people.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The arrangements to support young people to make a positive contribution are excellent. At the point of referral, a visit is made to the family home by key members of staff. The child and parents are provided with written and pictorial information about the service. There are clear and practical admissions procedures and young people are sensitively supported with their transitions from their family home to the short stay service.

An assessment of need is undertaken in consultation with parents and involved

professionals. Individual needs are clearly and concisely set out in detailed and consistently implemented placement plans. Plans are reviewed on a regularly basis. Young people who are able to understand that information is written down about them say they know about their care plans. When they talk about how they are supported, the information contained within the plans is consistent with their experiences. Records show that staff, young people, families and education contribute to the looked after child review processes. Comments from social workers include 'staff work very well with professionals and contribute to meetings and plans for young people. Staff do support young people in giving their opinions about how the service is run.' Parents comments reinforce the excellent arrangements for making a positive contribution saying; 'individual needs are well supported. We are always kept informed' and 'our child can communicate her needs and is listened to'

Staff are knowledgeable and have a very good understanding of the individual young people using the service. This means that they are able to respond quickly to young people's needs and, where appropriate, are able to support them to make their views known. The service works closely with social workers and parents, and there is a commitment to developing the service in response to feedback canvassed from young people and their families.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people are cared for in a well maintained and equipped environment. The home is decorated to a good standard and levels cleanliness and hygiene are high. The accommodation enables young people to spend time together or to be supported one-to-one with an activity. Bedrooms are developed to meet young people's differing needs. For example, a number of the bedrooms have moving and handling equipment and some rooms have pictures while others are left with plain walls in order to not over stimulate some young people. There is a large garden which includes a play area, summer house, sensory area, a greenhouse and vegetable plots.

Young people are supported with a good range of adaptations and equipment. There are adapted bathing facilities, a sensory room, specialised beds and equipment to support young people eat their meals.

In line with individual needs and abilities, young people receive support to develop areas of independence and to learn new skills. Staff encourage young people to take on as much responsibility as possible for their own personal care. They are encouraged to make choices and try new things. Parents comments include 'my child is more independent when staying at the service'.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home has a Statement of Purpose which is generic to young people being looked after by the local authority's children's residential services. Supporting appendices to this main document provide more specific information about the actual facilities and services at the home. Young people and parents are provided with comprehensive and useful information about the service which supports them to understand what they can expect to receive.

Staffing levels are good, providing young people with a minimum of one to one support. Rotas are completed in advance and reflect good levels of experience and competence of staff on duty at any one time. Most staff are qualified to National Vocational Qualification at level three. There is an effective and varied training programme and this is provided for all staff, including ancillary staff. Refresher training is well organised to ensure staff keep up to date. Although staff are supported and developed with staff supervision there are some inconsistencies both in terms of availability and recording of the supervision process.

Young people's records are kept securely and reflect each young person's history and progress. Records are well written and up to date. Written diaries and regular positive liaison between staff and families keep parents informed of what their children are doing during their time at the service. Comments from parents include, 'the service does everything very well. I find the service an excellent place for my child', 'the communication is good' and 'staff are excellent and do their best, they give the children a happy time providing them with a secure environment'.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Care staff have a good insight into needs of the young people using this service and provide a sensitive and responsive standard of well-planned care. The service provides young people with an opportunity and adapted facilities to try new experiences and develop friendships with other young people who also have a disability. Diversity of need is supported in terms of individual need and promoting awareness with themed activities, and displaying information about other cultures and celebrations. For example, the most recent theme is Chinese new year celebrations.

Young people are cared for in a well managed service with good numbers of competent and caring staff. The quality of care provided is monitored closely by the very experienced management team. External managers also visit the home and undertake monitoring checks.

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 the sanctions records include the names of any other staff, children or other people present (NMS 22)
- ensure fire drills cover night time fire evacuation procedures (NMS 26.7)
- ensure staff receive at least one and a half hours of one to one supervision from a senior member of staff each month (NMS 28.2)
- provide a written record detailing the time and date and length of each supervision held for each member of staff (NMS 28.3).