

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC045408
Inspection date	2 June 2010
Inspector	Diane Thackrah
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	28 October 2009
--------------------------------	-----------------

© 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 for two young people and sets out to offer high quality care in a stable and safe environment. This is achieved by providing an ambience where interpersonal relationships are based on mutual respect and understanding.

The home aims to offer a flexible range of living experiences that are sensitive to individual needs and acknowledge age, race, religion, sexual orientation, disability, and national and ethnic origin.

The staff team are committed to providing an environment which facilitates the young people's growth, maturation, self respect, acceptance of responsibility and development of age appropriate skills and behaviour. This is within the context of the need to provide young people with positive adult role models, guidance and boundaries and achieve within a manner that respects their rights, individuality and dignity.

Two young people currently live in the home. One of them was present during this inspection and contributed views.

Summary

This is a satisfactory service, with many good, and some outstanding features.

Checks on some of the home's fire equipment and escapes do not occur on a regular basis, and this practice does not fully promote the safety of young people. Record keeping is not always done well, such as complaints are not always recorded, medication held in the home is not always recorded and there are some gaps in information regarding new staff. Information about the induction undertaken by new staff, and on-going staff training is also not fully recorded.

This is a well kept home that staff make homely and keep clean. Space restrictions in the home mean that a communal room is also used as a staff sleep-in room and this is restrictive. Young people's health needs are well met through measures such as healthy food provision, good opportunities for exercise and staff having a clear understanding of young people's health needs. Staff help to keep young people safe by making sure that privacy is respected, complaints are treated seriously and all new staff undergo recruitment checks. Safety checks carried out within the building go some way to keeping young people safe.

Excellent opportunities exist for helping young people to enjoy themselves and make good achievements. Staff strive to ensure that young people receive a good education and have a wealth of opportunities for spending their time constructively in a way that they enjoy. Staff listen to young people and take their views seriously. They make sure that they contribute effectively to the reviewing of young people's care and make sure that young people's needs are being met. The home is run well in many ways such as in staff development and support, good team work and in the management of young people's personal files.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the registered provider was asked to make environmental improvements to the paintwork around the building and to the bathroom. Positive action has now been taken in relation to these requirements and young people and staff now benefit from a more pleasant environment. No corrective action has been taken in relation to staff not having a separate sleep-in room from the communal area.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people's health needs are met and their welfare safeguarded through good arrangements for first aid in the home. Staff have been trained to administer first aid and there is first aid equipment available. There are generally good arrangements for ensuring the well-being of young people who take medication, including staff training in the safe handling of medication, safe storage and monitoring of stocks held. However, records held do not fully reflect the full amount of medication held in the home, or the reasons why medication is not being administered. These shortfalls are noted to be errors in recording. Practice in this area must be improved in order to fully promote young people's welfare

Good health is promoted. Young people live in a healthy environment and their health needs are identified and services are provided to meet them. Young people have comprehensive health care plans. They have access to medical professionals in line with their needs and staff are helpful in providing good support and advice regarding health. Young people enjoy healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs. There is a good supply of healthy food available in the home and young people are actively encouraged to be involved in choosing the weekly menu. Young people have opportunities to prepare food and have access to drinks and snacks at reasonable times. Meals are treated as social occasions and there is a pleasant dining area that has room for staff and young people to dine together.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

There are satisfactory arrangements for health and safety in the home with measures in place to safeguard young people and staff from the risk of fire. These include regular tests of the smoke alarms and staff fire safety training. However, the arrangements for checking all fire equipment and escape routes, and for reviewing the fire risk assessment are not robust and do not fully promote young people's well-being. Staff say that in-house safety checks do occur, however, there are no records detailing that the gas installation safety check has been updated recently as required. Furthermore, there is some monitoring of the fridge and freezer temperatures, but shortfalls in this monitoring leave room for improvements in the handling of food hygiene in the home.

Young people are, in the main, well protected from harm through the home's staff recruitment policies and procedures. Documentation required to assess candidate's suitability to work with young people is obtained prior to a staff member being employed. Records are not maintained in relation to gaps in employment history. There are some good arrangements for handling complaints which ensure that they will be responded to appropriately and young people are given information about how to make a complaint in the young people's guide. However, the recording of complaints is not carried out in line with the home's policies and procedures, and

there is information on the young people's notice board that details that complaints can be made to an organisation that preceded Ofsted. Improvements in these areas are required in order to ensure that young people have their well-being fully promoted.

Young people have their privacy protected and information about them is held confidentially. Young people are able to speak to their family members and social worker and say that they have privacy to do this. Young people are protected from abuse. There is training for all staff members in child protection and relevant policies and procedures in place. Bullying is not reported to be an issue in the home and young people say that staff would prevent bullying from occurring. Young people who are absent without authority are protected by the home's policies and procedures and responded to positively when they return. This includes reporting missing young people to the police and other relevant people in good time and by spending time with young people discussing the reasons why they failed to return to the home.

Young people are supported to develop socially acceptable behaviour and staff respond constructively to inappropriate behaviour. Sanctions are used appropriately and physical restraint is used sparingly and as a last resort to prevent likely injury. There are clear policies and procedures in place which ensure that staff are aware of their roles in supporting young people. Training is provided in positive behaviour management.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Excellent arrangements exist which support young people to enjoy and achieve. Individual support is provided to young people in line with their needs and wishes and there are good arrangements in place for monitoring these needs and wishes which promotes consistency in care from staff. Comprehensive 24 hour plans are in place which ensure that staff are very clear about how best to support the young people to spend their days constructively. Young people say that they are very happy living at the home and say that the 'staff are great' and 'very supportive with education'. Young people have very good opportunities to do well in education. Staff actively promote education and value it as part of young people's preparation for adulthood. Young people have personal education plans and these are updated in line with the young people's progress. Both young people currently have full access to education and further education is promoted. Good links have been established between staff and the educational establishments attended by the young people and this promotes their educational progress.

Young people are actively encouraged to spend their time constructively and supported to engage in social and leisure activities that are appropriate to their age and development. The positive relationships that exist between staff members and young people help to ensure that these activities are well enjoyed. Young people are able to give examples of a wide range of activities that staff have helped them to participate in and say that they are encouraged to choose activities that they enjoy. Staff think that it is important that young people are given opportunities to go on holiday and it is positive that a group holiday overseas is currently being planned.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff ensure that needs assessments are in place for young people prior to them moving into the home and this ensures that they have the information they need to assess whether they

are able to meet these needs. Needs assessments include information regarding the young people's health, care, physical and emotional, cultural, religious, linguistic, racial, leisure and contact needs. This information forms the basis of a placement plan for young people and a key worker is assigned to ensure that this plan is implemented on a day to day basis. Reviews of care occur regularly and in line with statutory requirements. Staff contribute positively to these reviews and ensure that young people also are able to make their views known.

Young people say that they are able to maintain constructive contact with their family members and friends and provided with practical support by staff to do this. They also confirm that they are encouraged and supported to make decisions about things that effect their lives. They say they are encouraged to attend weekly house meetings where they can discuss things like the running of the home, activities and the choosing of the weekly menu. Young people are able to move into and leave the home in a planned manner. Young people say that staff help them to prepare to move out of the home.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people receive care which helps them to prepare for adulthood. Such care involves helping young people to budget, use public transport and to cook and meal plan. There is no pathway plan in place for one of the young people who is of an age where such a plan is required. Staff are clear that this is an issue which must be raised with the placing authority in order to ensure that this young person is fully supported to achieve a successful transition into adulthood.

It remains that staff sleep-in accommodation forms part of the communal area of the home. Young people and staff therefore remain at a disadvantage in terms of space and enjoying a homely environment. Staff have, however, made good efforts to ensure that young people enjoy homely accommodation that is decorated, furnished and maintained to a good standard. Young people are happy with their bedrooms. They are able to have a say in how they are decorated and are able to personalise them. There is a small, well maintained garden which young people are encouraged to enjoy.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Due to the shortfalls identified under the staying safe section of this report, the judgement regarding the organisation in the home cannot be higher than satisfactory. There are, however, some good aspects to the organisation of the home. A Statement of Purpose is in place which sets out what the home intends to do and allows young people, parents and placing authorities to know what to expect from the home. There is a competent staff team and arrangements are in place for staff to deputise in the absence of the registered manager. Many of the staff team are qualified to at least National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in caring for children & young people. There is monitoring of the service and staff ensure that young people have well kept files which are kept securely, in compliance with legal requirements. The promotion of equality and diversity in the home is good. Young people have a package of care and placement length that suits their individual assessed needs.

New staff undergo a very thorough induction programme in the first six months of their employment. However, no records are in place detailing that they have been introduced to the child protection procedures, fire training, medical procedures and recording before they start

work and it is therefore unclear whether they are competent in these areas. Staff receive training and development opportunities which they say are useful and relevant to their work, however, there is no clear written record of all training undertaken by staff in the home. Time is given for handover sessions to occur and this promotes good practice and consistency in care for young people. There are sufficient levels of staff, with good experience and qualifications to meet the needs of young people. The majority of the current staff team are employed on a permanent basis and this helps to prevent young people's attachments being overly disrupted.

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
13	ensure that suitable arrangements are in place for the recording of any medicines (Regulation 21 (1)).	2 July 2010
16	ensure that a written record is made of any complaint made to the home and incorrect information about making a complaint to the National Care Standards Commission is removed from the young people's notice board (Regulation 24 (5)).	2 July 2010
26	ensure that adequate precautions are taken against the risk of fire, including making adequate arrangements for the maintenance of all fire equipment and for reviewing fire precautions (Regulation 32 (1)(c)(iv)&(v)).	2 July 2010
26	ensure that there is an up to date certificate in the home detailing that the gas installation has been safety checked (Regulation 23 (c)).	2 July 2010
27	ensure that a written explanation is maintained of any gaps in the employment history of new employees (Schedule 1).	2 July 2010
31	ensure that new staff members have been introduced to the child protection procedures, fire training, medical procedures and recording before they start work and records are in place to indicate this, also, ensure that there is a written record of all staff training maintained in the home (Regulation 27 (4)(a)).	2 July 2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure that records are kept of the fridge and freezer temperatures on a regular basis (NMS 26).
- ensure that staff sleep-in rooms do not form part of the communal living area. (NMS 24)