

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC049189
Inspection date	17 November 2009
Inspector	Robert Curr
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	26 January 2009
--------------------------------	-----------------

© Crown copyright 2009

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

The home consists of two adjoining terrace houses linked by an internal connecting door. The home provides accommodation for up to three young people of either sex aged between 11 and 18 years.

The ground floor of the home has two lounges, two kitchens and two dining areas. The first floor has five bedrooms. There are three bedrooms for young people, allowing each young person to have their own room. The two remaining bedrooms are for staff and office use. Parking is available to the side of the home and on the main road at the front of the home.

Young people are accommodated from placing local authorities and from existing homes within the organisation. The home is not adapted to accommodate young people with a physical disability.

At the time of the inspection two young people were present and participated in the inspection process.

Summary

This was an unannounced inspection. All of the key national minimum standards were checked and improvements made since the last inspection were noted.

This is a good service. Young people's education is encouraged. Leisure needs are met and a multi-disciplinary approach ensures young people's views are taken into account when planning their future.

A number of policies relating to equality and diversity are in place and the staff demonstrate an appreciation that individual young people may have a range of possible needs arising from diversity.

Young people's welfare is enhanced by the positive relationships fostered by the staff team.

The arrangements for internal monitoring of the home contributes to improving the quality of the care provided.

There are weaknesses in relation to safety and actions have been raised.

There are sufficient numbers of experienced and competent staff. However, the aim to have the appropriate number of staff hold a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) must be maintained.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the Registered Person was asked to take action in relation to aspects within being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving and organisation.

Administration of medication is clear and staff have a wider understanding of safeguarding procedures. Young people are still without the use of a computer for education or leisure purposes.

The manager has gained a qualification suitable to their role within the setting. Training records are hard to follow and although some progress has been made in relation to staff training, National Vocational Qualification ratios do not meet current standards.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people are provided with a varied diet which promotes healthy living. There is clear evidence that young people help with planning menus or shopping. The staff provide opportunities for the young people to develop cooking skills.

The staff promote the health and well-being of young people. The health care plans are detailed and provide guidance for the staff who record information about the health of the young people. Records are maintained and show that dentists, opticians and the looked after children's nurse have been used as required.

Support has been organised with the cooperation of a range of health care professionals and the young people are encouraged to discuss any issues they have and one-to-one counselling is available for young people identified at particular risk.

The majority of the staff have an appropriate first aid qualification. This ensures that first aid is available to the young people at all times.

The administration of medication is monitored and safely stored to ensure young people's health is protected. Policies and procedures are in place for this purpose.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The staff promote the privacy of the young people. The young people say that they can have keys to their bedrooms and say that staff knock on their doors before entering. Confidential information is stored securely and appropriate policies are in place. The young people can use the cordless telephone, so that they can keep in contact with friends and family.

Young people have access to information on how to make complaints and this is available in the children's guide. Young people have confidence in the complaints procedure and say they can speak to any of the staff if they have concerns.

Staff have undertaken safeguarding training and appropriate policies are in place. Young people state that they feel safe at the home and the staff help to keep them safe.

The staff and young people confirm that currently there is no bullying at the home and appropriate procedures are in place should an incident occur. Procedures are in place should any young person leave the home without permission.

The staff endeavour to encourage socially acceptable behaviour through a range of measures. The staff manage the young people's behaviour and good relationships exist between staff

and young people. Records indicate that there have been incidents requiring physical intervention and sanctions. Staff receive training in the use of behaviour management techniques.

Systems are in place for young people to be cared for in a safe physical environment. However, there is no evidence that electrical equipment checks are carried out by a competent person. This is not a safe and satisfactory arrangement.

Regular fire drills take place and checks on fire fighting equipment are up to date. There are members of staff that have not undertaken a fire drill practice at the recommended frequency. This could compromise the health and safety of the young people residing at the home. The manager committed to these members of staff taking part in a fire drill practice on or before their next duty. However, records indicated that the young people resident are routinely involved in fire drills which adds to their safety

Ofsted has undertaken an audit of staff personnel files within the organisation. Any shortfalls identified are being addressed by the provider. There are no issues within this setting in respect of recruitment checks.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The young people receive support as required. Valuable involvement with staff and young people is recorded. There are examples of the staff supporting young people within key working sessions. One young person said 'staff support me when I am making plans'. This is good evidence that young people receive individual attention from the staff.

Young people who come to live at this home have not always attended school before they are admitted. Education is valued and staff have developed an ethos in the home, which endeavours to make attendance at school a normal part of life, which in turn encourages young people to attend school. Staff work closely with young people and provide facilities that are conducive to study and support them to participate in extra curricular activities.

The young people enjoy a number of activities including cinema trips and five-a-side football. However, they do not have access to a computer or internet facility within the house to undertake schoolwork or pursue leisure interests. This could disadvantage the young people with regard to their education.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The arrangements for care planning are good. The plans set out the day-to-day needs of the young people and how these are going to be met. The plans also include information on behaviour management and risk assessments. There is clear evidence of monitoring and reviews and young people are actively involved in the care planning process. The young people attend their statutory reviews. Reports and minutes of these meetings are on file to provide staff with additional information.

The staff support contact arrangements well. Information about contact is recorded in the contact plans and they are known to staff and young people. The staff actively support contact

by accompanying young people, providing transport and activities. Young people say they have friends and positive friendships are encouraged.

Young people are able to contribute to the day-to-day running of the home and to make choices over their daily living. Young people state that they have opportunities to make choices over their daily living, for example, activities, clothes and the choice of television programmes.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Staff encourage young people to develop the skills they will need in adulthood. For example, young people are given incentives to complete tasks and achieve targets. They are encouraged to learn basic life skills, such as keeping their own rooms clean and tidy.

The home is decorated and furnished to an acceptable standard, which creates a domestic environment appropriate to the age and culture of the young people living there. However, the disused fire in the lounge is unsightly which does not look pleasant and the cooker in the main kitchen is not working. This results in staff having to use the facilities in the adjoining house. The manager has a maintenance and repair programme.

There is sufficient communal and private space, to allow young people to spend time together if they wish, or to be alone if they prefer.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The staff have an understanding of identity and how this impacts on looked after children and their care. Issues relating to equality and diversity are addressed through the care plans.

The statement of purpose and children's guide contains a range of information for young people, staff and professionals.

There are always sufficient staff on duty to ensure that young people are properly cared for at all times. Staff confirm that they are well supported by the management team. However, supervision sessions are not provided at the recommended intervals.

Young people's welfare is safeguarded by a committed staff team. A number of training events have been arranged. The manager maintains a matrix that is not up to date. Training records are hard to retrieve. It is not clear when staff have had training in the various subjects. The staff are in varying stages of achieving a National Vocational Qualification at Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People. Currently, the overall qualification recommendation is not met.

Arrangements for the external monitoring of the home are in place. The visits are carried out regularly by senior staff within the organisation and reports are produced.

The manager has achieved the Award for Managers in Residential Child Care level 4.

The young people's files contain a range of documents, which the staff require in order to look after the young people. They are in good order and securely stored. The young people have access to the files if they wish.

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
26	ensure that all staff that work in the home take part in a fire drill on or before their next duty (Regulation 32)	17 November 2009
23	ensure the home is suitably equipped, in particular ensure that the cooker is in working order (Regulation 31)	15 December 2009

Recommendations

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

- ensure electrical equipment is tested for safety by a trained and competent person (NMS 16)
- provide young people with a computer and access to the internet to carry out education work and for leisure pursuits (NMS 14)
- remove the partially dismantled and disused gas fire in the lounge (NMS24)
- provide all staff with one to one supervision at the recommended intervals (NMS 28)
- maintain a written record of all training undertaken by all staff working at the home (NMS 31)
- ensure a minimum ratio of 80% of all care staff complete a National Vocational Qualification level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People or an equivalent. (NMS 29)