

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC060118
Inspection date	7 June 2010
Inspector	Roy Bega
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	14 December 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

A private organisation owns and operates this children's home. It is situated in an urban area of a city close to local transport and amenities. The organisation also has similar services located in the area.

The setting supports and cares for a maximum of one young person of either sex between the ages of 12 and 17 years who has complex emotional and behavioural difficulties. The unit specialises in the care of more vulnerable individuals who may be at risk or pose a specific risk to others and or themselves.

Through its approaches the home seeks to enable young people to recognise and accepting responsibility for their inappropriate behaviours. It then encourages the development of more socially acceptable sustainable behaviours to improve young people's quality of life as they move towards independence.

The organisation has a team of specialist practitioners who provide professional support and guidance for care staff and young people.

The organisation provides an approved behavioural approach to education known as the 'Award Scheme for Development and Accreditation Network' which follows the National Curriculum and encompasses a behavioural approach. Designated facilities are provided and appropriately trained staff are employed to deliver the scheme.

Summary

This is an unannounced full inspection where key standards for all the outcome groups are inspected. No actions or recommendations are raised resulting from this inspection.

The home is well managed and has an experienced and committed staff group who have a positive outlook towards training. They are provided with regular opportunities for training in areas to meet specific needs of young people.

Young people are actively encouraged in taking an interest in their personal health and in healthy ways of living. The home provides age-appropriate information regarding health, safety and social issues.

There is an open culture in the home of listening to young people. Young people benefit from the organisation's safeguarding policy and procedures. The organisation provides excellent procedural guidance for staff and information for young people regarding anti-bullying.

Specialist staff are employed by the organisation to support the home in meeting young people's needs. There are also excellent working relationships with external specialist agencies.

Staff are highly motivated and resourceful in supporting young people in preparation for transition or leaving care which includes securing appropriate accommodation, further education and/or employment.

Young people are encouraged by management and staff to maintain contact with family and significant others where appropriate and actively supported to rebuild relationships where they have become estranged.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

No actions or recommendations were raised resulting from the previous inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Young people's food choices are always taken into consideration and they are actively encouraged to help plan menus, buy food and prepare meals. Staff fully understand the importance of good nutrition and what makes up a balanced diet

Young people are provided with a comprehensive, easily understood and accessible health care plan which records how their specific and general health needs are met. The plan is completed before or immediately after admission and is reassessed at agreed intervals to ensure it remains accurate. Outstanding links with health services are maintained. When a particular health need is identified the involvement of specialist health workers such as the Community Adolescent Mental Health Service is sought quickly. This results in young people receiving specialised support according to their specific health needs.

Staff have informed access to medication policies procedures and practice guidance. They sign to confirm they have read and understood these. Staff who manage and administer medication demonstrate they have first-rate skills and have undertaken comprehensive training. Medication records are up-to-date and comprehensive. Quality assurance records show the provider checks monthly whether medication policies, procedures and practice are being followed.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

There are comprehensive policies and procedures in place which promote privacy and confidentiality exceptionally well. Discussions and observations show young people's privacy is well respected. Written and verbal information is managed and exchanged with attention to preserving confidentiality.

Discussions show that young people are enabled to make complaints in relation to the home. Since being at the home they have not had the need to make any complaint. They are sure however, that their concerns and complaints would be addressed by staff. Staff have excellent understanding of the complaint procedure and receive detailed training on commencement of working for the organisation. Adherence to the complaints procedure is monitored as part of monthly quality assurance visits.

Young people benefit from being cared for by staff who possess sound knowledge and understanding of their responsibilities regarding safeguarding. Management and staff are fully conversant with the practice guidelines in relation to reporting and dealing with allegations. Safeguarding awareness is covered as part of staff induction and is included in the annual

training programme. Young people report that they feel very safe and staff always give a high priority in keeping them safe.

Young people know the home's policy and procedures about bullying. They confirm bullying is not a problem within the home. Management and staff are proactive in creating an atmosphere where bullying is known to be unacceptable and are vigilant about the relationships between themselves and young people.

Detailed risk assessments and plans are in place regarding what to do in the event of young people becoming absent without authority. The plans comprehensively describe what action to take including who is to be notified and the timescales by which any person or agency should be notified. Staff have established very strong links and partnerships with the police. There is a comprehensive protocol with liaising with the police when young people go missing. Two incidents have occurred since the previous visit. Records and discussions show staff effectively operated the action plan and went out to look for the young people. They also made appropriate arrangements to collect them and provided a warm welcome on their return.

Young people's behaviour is supported by comprehensive and well organised behaviour management policies procedures and guidance. Staff build very positive relationships with young people which enables their effective implementation. Young people confirm they know what standards of behaviour are expected and are actively supported by staff to achieve them. The use of sanctions and restraint is minimal. Young people are always encouraged to add their comments to records about each sanction. Records and discussions confirm there have not been any incidents requiring the use of restraint since the previous inspection. Discussions and records confirm staff receive appropriate training in respect of behaviour management and use of acceptable methods of de-escalation and positive handling, which is updated annually.

Young people live in a home that provides good physical safety and security. Damages are repaired as and when required. Environmental risk management strategies contribute to keeping young people safe around the home. Supervised and unsupervised activities take into account the safety of young people at all times and where substantial or unusual hazards are involved, a recorded risk management plan is made. Gas and electrical safety checks are carried out at recommended intervals. Fire safety systems are installed and well maintained. The organisation have an external contract to provide advice and guidance regarding fire safety and training. Food storage and preparation areas are clean.

The organisation has a thorough recruitment process that ensures all necessary checks are completed prior to a member of staff starting work. The company's human resources department attend conferences and training to ensure they are up to date with changes in legislation relating to safer recruitment. The vetting of visitors is robust with records kept.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Young people's individual needs are explicitly identified and comprehensively met by their placement plan. Records and discussions confirm that these plans are implemented at all times to an exemplary standard. The organisation's specialist staff and well-established links and partnerships with a variety of external agencies and professionals, enhance the individual support available for young people.

Discussions and records confirm that education is actively promoted as being valuable in itself and as part of preparation for adulthood. Each young person has access to educational facilities and work experience opportunities in line with their age, aptitude, needs, interests and potential. Discussions and records confirm staff proactively support young people's daily attendance at the organisation's specialist education provision or at local mainstream schools and colleges.

Young people are able to pursue their particular interests, develop confidence in their skills and are supported and encouraged by staff to engage in leisure activities. Discussions confirm opportunities to participate in a range of activities within and away from the home are available. Daily notes and team meetings indicate staff have worked hard to engage young people in constructive activities with some success. Young people's comments and conversation clearly show they enjoy activities and are involved in the planning, including holidays.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The setting provides a stable and homely environment for young people who live there. Discussions and records confirm management and staff are very approachable, listen to what young people have to say and act responsively.

Discussions and records show the organisation and home follow a holistic approach in meeting the needs of young people by working in partnership with placing authorities, parents and where applicable the judiciary. Records, discussion and observation shows that during their stay at the home young people have a comprehensive placement plan that identifies their health, physical, social, educational, cultural and leisure needs and wishes.

Consultation with young people is excellent. Management and staff actively encourage young people to participate in the care-planning process and reviews. Discussions and records confirm young people are consulted about all aspects of their lives.

Young people confirm they are encouraged by management and staff to maintain contact with family and significant others where appropriate. Management and staff also actively support them to rebuild relationships where they have become estranged.

Relationships between staff and young people are based on mutual respect, understanding and clear professional and personal boundaries.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Discussions confirm that when appropriate staff provide excellent advocacy for young people during the transition process in preparation for independence and leaving care. Discussions also confirm that staff work in partnership with placing authorities in supporting young people and their families to ensure positive outcomes. Records were seen which show the process is sensitively planned and commensurate with each young person's ability to cope with change.

Observation and discussion shows that the standard of the young people's clothing is very high enabling them to feel proud of their appearance among their friends and peer group. Young people informed the inspector they are fully involved in planning the spending of the budget allocated to their personal clothing and toiletries. They are enabled to exercise choice in the

clothes and personal requisites through normal shopping arrangements. Records of personal allowances paid to the young people are maintained to a high standard, but avoid an institutional approach.

The home is decorated and furnished to a standard which creates a pleasant domestic environment. Young people show pride in their bedrooms by personalising them with possessions and posters.

There is a good maintenance and repair programme for the building. The organisation employs its own maintenance staff to ensure faults are rectified as soon as possible.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

An up-to-date Statement of Purpose sets out in detail the principles and methods for the care of young people and the running of the home. This includes accurate representation of the facilities and services that support its operation. As well as fulfilling the regulatory requirements, the Statement of Purpose provides information that young people, parents and placing authorities are likely to find helpful in terms of the care and experiences a young person accommodated in the home might reasonably expect.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Discussions and policies confirm the home strives to provide a service tailored to meet the specific individual needs of young people. It promotes a holistic approach in working with young people which considers all aspects of diversity. Staff receive appropriate training, ensure they are conversant with young people's needs and seek external professional support and guidance when required.

Staff confirm the organisation makes excellent provision for their support, training and development. All staff undergo a comprehensive induction programme and foundation training that equips them with the home's particular approaches and philosophies in caring for young people. Staff are actively encouraged to access the organisation's ongoing in-service training, staff development programmes and external professional courses.

Staff confirm effective, established systems for the running of the home are in place which avoid an institutional approach. The leadership of the home is clear and open. Discussions show accountability in the home is clear with shift leaders having responsibilities in ensuring records are maintained and daily needs of the young people are met. Young people confirm management and staff are very approachable and always ready to listen and talk with them. Management confirm they receive professional support and training to carry out their responsibilities.

The staff team has a balanced mix of male and female members. Staff duty rotas indicate there are sufficient staff on duty at all times. It ensures that specific time is allocated for quality time with young people, administration and handover. The organisation has its own bank staff to cover sickness and leave which discussions confirm causes minimum disruption for the young people.

Thorough monthly monitoring visits are carried out and form part of the quality assurance system of the home. It is centred on the experience of young people and whether the home is meeting their needs. Staff are fully involved in this process and confirm action is taken on any points raised.

Young peoples individual case files are stored in a secure cabinet and are arranged in a manner that makes them readily useable by staff and accessible to young people.

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
----------	--------	----------

Recommendations

There are no recommendations.