

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC061005
Inspection date	15/11/2011
Inspector	Nicola McEvinney
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	17/01/2011
--------------------------------	------------

© 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.

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 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the *Inspections of children's homes – framework for inspection* (March 2011) and the evaluation schedule for children's homes.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service that exceeds minimum requirements

Satisfactory: a service that only meets minimum requirements

Inadequate: a service that does not meet minimum requirements

Service information

Brief description of the service

This children's home is owned by a local authority and provides accommodation for up to eight young people between 12 to 16 years with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be **good**.

This is a large children's home accommodating eight young people with very differing needs and behaviours. For example, some young people are at the younger age range and require a lot of interaction with staff; another group consist of young people who do not fully engage with education; another group are unaccompanied young people who present differing needs and some young people who are approaching the end of their time in care. The majority of care plans reflect what is happening in each young person's life.

The young people benefit from a skilled staff team who are able to make small strides with even those reluctant individuals. Young people enjoy warm relationships with the staff and know that they are cared for. Social workers speak positively about the positive relationships staff have with young people and have helped them to get to know their young people.

Young people's views are taken into account in the running of the home, they are involved in choosing menus, personalising their own bedrooms and decide what activities they wish to partake in.

Young people feel safe in the home; those young people who have previously been involved in serious risk taking behaviour, said that they know staff will protect them from harm.

Areas for improvement relate to ensuring care plans reflect the changing circumstances of the young people; health plans include details about preventative medical interventions; and to ensuring Ofsted is notified about significant events.

Areas for 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 person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
20 (2001)	ensure health care plans include preventative measures prescribed to young people (Care Planning Regulations 2010 Regulation 5 and Schedule 1(4)(c))	02/01/2012
30 (2001)	ensure Ofsted are notified about significant events. (Regulation 30 (1) and Schedule 5)	05/12/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure young people's care plans are monitored to reflect their changing needs and behaviours. (NMS 25.2)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for children and young people are **satisfactory**.

Outcomes for the eight young people are variable; the majority of young people benefit from the care and support they receive, while others refuse to engage with staff and the outcomes for them are not so positive.

Some young people arrive at the home presenting as vulnerable young people, some lack social skills, others with a history of involvement in serious risk taking behaviours. These young people have benefited by the care, structure and routine offered and develop a sense of self-worth.

Young people's health needs are set out in their individual development plans, although medical intervention is not recorded in health care plans in all cases. All young people are registered with doctors, dentists and opticians to ensure their health needs are addressed. The majority of young people enjoy healthy nutritious meals which promotes good health. However, for some young people on semi-independent living, it is not clear what they actually eat, which compromises their health and well-being.

The majority of young people attend their place of education and are doing well. Some young people who had not attended school for a number of years have alternative education packages organised and with staff support attend quite well. However, some individuals have recently refused to engage with education despite

efforts made by both school and the home. The local education department employs a teacher to support young people with their education. This is particularly pertinent for those young people where English is not their first language; the support they receive has helped them immensely.

Young people have access to community facilities including the local gym, the library and some are in local football teams.

Contact arrangements are clearly set out in young people's files; although the majority of young people make their own contact arrangement with family and friends.

Young people are encouraged to help with meal preparation and keep their personal space clean and tidy. This promotes their independence skills. The home has some young people on a semi-independence programme whereby they shop and prepare their own meals. However, some individuals are not fully engaging with this programme, which compromises their health and well-being.

Some young people have very recently moved after a number of years living at the home. These individuals were fully prepared and able to live independently. They learnt to drive, achieved excellent A level results and have gone onto higher education, which gives them good life opportunities.

Quality of care

The quality of the care is **good**.

Young people enjoy good relationships with the staff. They feel well looked after and staff are approachable and are there for support and guidance.

Young people's views are sought on a number of issues and they have access to a children's rights organisation if they want an advocate. Some young people have an independent visitor to ensure that they have someone to talk to outside the home.

Young people confirm that they know how to make a complaint and are confident that they would be listened to.

Young people's care plans, in the form of an individual development plan, clearly set out how they are to be cared for. Twenty-four hour management plans are also in place giving clear guidance on their individual routines. However, some plans require updating as they do not reflect the changes in behaviours which impact on how they are to be cared for.

Young people are supported by having access to a number of services to help meet their needs. For example, the looked after children nurse will support them on sexual health issues. A worker from the child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) attends monthly staff meetings. This worker offers support and guidance to the staff to on how some of the complex behaviours some young people present can be best

managed.

The majority of young people are good attendees at their place of education. Staff are proactive in supporting their attendance and will go with some young people and sit in on their lessons if they are struggling. This has been well received by the young people as well as school and has resulted in improved behaviour. However, some young people, despite staff's efforts, have recently refused to attend school.

Young people enjoy a range of activities including football; some young people are in the local teams; the cinema, the local gym; ice-skating and bowling. Some young people enjoy trains and have been taken to a railway museum and others enjoyed a holiday over the summer.

Needs relating to young people's heritage, culture and religion are clearly set out in their individual development plan. Young people benefit from a staff team who reflect the culture and religion of the young people who live there and also of the city in which they live. This promotes tolerance and understanding. There is a good gender balance and staff are good role models for the young people.

The home has recently been redecorated and is well maintained, pleasantly decorated and furnished creating a homely environment for the young people. The bathrooms require some attention, although the Registered Manager stated that this work is planned for the New Year.

Safeguarding children and young people

The service is **good** at keeping children and young people safe and feeling safe.

Young people confirm that they feel safe in the home; any incidents of bullying behaviour are quickly addressed to ensure that the young people feel safe. Young people consider that staff ensure that they are safe and will actively protect them from harm.

None of the young people at the home go missing from the home, although some young people stay at friends where staff know their whereabouts. Staff have regular telephone contact with young people when they are away from the home to ensure that they are safe. Staff have worked hard with these individuals to come to an agreement about how often they stay away from the home to promote their safety and well-being; although some refuse to engage, which can compromise their welfare.

Young people are protected to some degree by the prompt action of staff to report them missing when they fail to return to the home. There are good links with the police missing persons co-ordinator who will also take steps to help protect young people.

The majority of young people are well behaved and are settled in the home. Individual behaviour management plans are in place identifying triggers to potential

behaviours with strategies in place to manage. This ensures young people are cared for consistently which promotes their well-being.

Young people are protected by robust recruitment procedures ensuring that they are looked after by suitable people.

Young people are protected by having individual risk assessments as well as risk assessments for the premises and activities that identify potential hazards with strategies in place to minimise the risk.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of the children's home are **good**.

Young people benefit by living in a well managed home with staff who are clearly committed to providing a good level of care.

The home has a development plan in place addressing areas where they see improvements could be made. For example, to work closer with the CAMHS team and the educational psychologist to enable them to have a more effective partnership to improve outcomes for young people; to have a careful matching process and look after a group of young people of similar ages to enable them to have a long-term placements and grow up together.

The Statement of Purpose is a comprehensive document and clearly sets out to interested parties what services the home has to offer. Young people are given a personalised young people's guide with information about their social worker, independent reviewing officer and Ofsted inspector. This is a child-friendly document and informs young people what they can expect when they come to live in the home. Young people also have information about the home's expectations. These are the basic rules of the home with a clear explanation of why they are in place. This information helps young people to know what they need to do to develop socially responsible behaviours.

Young people benefit from being cared for by a skilled, enthusiastic and competent staff team who clearly enjoy working with this group. They have good training opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge, including courses on behaviour management, first aid and attachment as well as sessions with the CAMHS adviser.

There are sufficient staff employed to meet the needs of the young people; shortfalls in the rota are covered by the staff team to ensure young people are cared for by a consistent group of staff.

Young people are protected by the robust monitoring systems that in place. For example, the Regulation 33 visitor monitoring the service picked up that staff had not notified Ofsted about significant events, and addressed the issue with the Registered Manager.

Young people's files are in good order, although individual development plans do not always reflect what is going on currently in the young people's lives.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.