

Inspection report for Children's Home

Unique reference number	SC061810
Inspection date	28/10/2010
Inspector	Anne Bannister
Type of inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	30/03/2010
--------------------------------	------------

© 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 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

This is one of a number of residential homes, which are owned and managed by the county council. It is a six bed children's home, situated in a rural location on the outskirts of a town. It provides accommodation and care for young people of both genders, aged from 12 years old up to 17 years old. Access to all local amenities and the town centre is catered for by transport from the home and a driver is employed at key times of the day to achieve this. The home is a large, detached property with spacious grounds, including an extensively grassed area, which can be used by young people. Young people are all accommodated in single bedrooms and share all communal recreation areas and bathroom and toilet facilities.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

At this unannounced full inspection, all key standards were inspected. Some aspects of the care provided to young people are outstanding with the remainder being judged as good.

Six young people were living in the home at the time of the inspection. Four of them contributed their views to the inspection.

Young people benefit from positive relationships with staff. Young people are afforded a range of facilities and opportunities to encourage and support a healthy lifestyle, to develop their life skills and to achieve good educational outcomes.

The home works well with other professionals to meet the needs of young people. The staff team work closely with a wide range of outside agencies in order to meet the range of needs presented by young people. Young people spoken to are positive about the care they receive in the home.

The actions that have been raised relate to inadequacies in documentation.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were no actions or recommendations to followed up from the previous inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Healthy eating is promoted for young people living in the home. All staff have undertaken basic food hygiene training ensuring they are aware of safe procedures to follow when they are preparing food. They share this knowledge with young people. A varied, balanced menu for is provided for young people. Young people are encouraged to help plan menus and staff are skilled at encouraging the young people's healthy eating experiences. Young people are positive about the food provided. They are encouraged to assist in food preparation. They are proud of the skills they are developing. Mealtimes are relaxed, social occasions where appropriate social skills are encouraged.

Young people's health needs are thoroughly assessed. Health information is obtained from families and the placing social worker. This enables staff to have a clear understanding of the young people's needs and how these are to be met. Health plans are detailed documents, addressing specific personalised needs. However, not all files had been adequately updated. Practice in the home is for all young people to be registered with local health professionals, such as the doctor, dentist and optician. The home have good working links with the health and advisory agencies, ensuring young people have access to professional specialist support if required. Young people are assisted to address personal hygiene needs in a sensitive and positive manner. Staff routinely involve young people in activities incorporating exercise thus ensuring young people's holistic health needs are addressed.

Appropriately signed consent forms, that cover all required areas, are obtained for each young person and all receive regular health checks. Designated members of staff have responsibility for ensuring all first aid boxes available at the home are regularly checked and re-stocked and for overseeing medication issues. Medication is securely stored and controlled drugs are appropriately stored with running totals maintained. Records are kept of all medication, treatment and first aid given to young people and if they refuse to take prescribed medication. Evidence indicates that any deficits in the recording of medicines are promptly identified and addressed. All staff have received first aid training, ensuring the home meet the requirement of always having member of staff with a first aid qualification on duty. These actions show young people's health and medication needs are suitably met.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Overall the arrangements in place to promote the welfare and safety of young people remain outstanding. The staff team are highly committed to ensuring that young people in their care are protected from harm. The young people's privacy is respected. This is clearly evident in how the daily routine is managed and how information is shared between staff and recorded.

Reporting of safeguarding incidents complies with local safeguarding procedures and the Ofsted protocol for reporting significant incidents. Staff receive annual safeguarding training to ensure their practice continues to promote young people's safety. Arrangements for complaints, bullying and behaviour management are handled well and ensure that young people feel listened to and protected. Bullying has been an issue within the new resident group. Staff are consistent in their response to addressing the issues and working with all young people involved to alleviate the problems experienced. Young people understand that staff will not tolerate bullying in any form.

Any instances of young people being absent without authority are well documented. Regular monitoring of the reasons they give for failing to return includes close liaison with the community police officers. This practice ensures there is a multi agency approach to promoting young people's safety and welfare.

Staff are competent in supporting the young people's needs. All staff are trained in methods and techniques of physical intervention. Since the previous inspection all staff have updated their training. Staff endeavour only to use physical intervention as a last resort, preferring to use their skills in de-escalation to try to support young people experiencing difficulties. Behaviour management plans and risk assessments are developed as part of placement planning arrangements. Accurate records are produced about all incidents and events. Documentation developed ensures both staff and young people reflect on their actions following any incident. This ensures the continued safety of both young people and the staff team working in the home.

There are sufficient baths, showers and toilets, to fully meet the needs of the of young people who may be accommodated at any one time. Doors on all such areas have suitable locks fitted, to afford privacy for those using them. All hot water taps used by young people have temperature regulators fitted to them.

There is a coordinated response taken to all aspects of health and safety. Records are maintained within a central file and safety and servicing certificates are held. A premises fire risk assessment has been completed. No hazards were observed to the young people's safety during a tour of the accommodation. Risk assessments of the building are regularly reviewed ensuring the young people's safety is promoted within the home environment.

Personnel files are maintained in the authorities Human Resources Department. These have been checked previously and found to contain full and satisfactory information. A robust vetting, recruitment and selection procedure is in place. Policy at the home is that there is no access to young people until full and satisfactory clearances are received. This shows that all reasonable steps are taken, to ensure that staff employed are suitable to work with young people. Vetting of visitors to the home is also undertaken with identity checks being carried out before access is permitted.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Members of staff have a well informed understanding of the individual young people's needs and there are strong professional working relationships between the young people and the staff team. Each young person has an individual placement plan detailing how their needs will be met. All of the young people have an assigned key worker to individually support them in the delivery of their plan. Staff are constantly reviewing the manner in which they relate to young people, in order to ensure they are enabling them to communicate their needs, wishes and concerns.

Education is actively promoted and plays an important part in the lives of young people. Staff see education as important, while supporting and encouraging young people to learn and study. Young people know that they are expected to attend education and conform with this expectation. They also have access to books and educational materials to aid their learning. Many young people are achieving significant educational attainments since commencing their placement in the home. Each young person has their own personal education plan in place and with the assistance of the home's education co-ordinator this is updated on a regular basis with the school and educational services. The educational co-ordinator is pro-active in calling support meetings for young people who are struggling with their education programme and talks to all education providers on a daily basis.

Staff practice shows that individual needs are assessed and addressed, in a way that promotes dignity, and acknowledges the different educational needs young people have. Young people are respected, and support is provided to ensure that their needs are acknowledged and that they are gaining confidence through their attainments.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people have placement plans that identify their needs and outline the arrangements for meeting them. The plans of the current resident group are at various stages of development, there having been four new admissions since the previous inspection. Staff put the plans into practice and keep records about young people's progress and experiences. Young people's placement plans are reviewed to make sure that they are up to date and continue to meet their needs. Young people are listened to and their views about their lives are taken into account. They are involved in their placement plans and play an active role in making decisions about their future.

Placement plans outline contact arrangements that staff comply with. Staff encourage young people's families and friends to maintain contact. This helps young people see their families regularly to help them maintain relationships. Staff make sure that the arrangements for contact promote and safeguard young people's

welfare, working closely with young people's families to ensure that contact is a positive experience for young people.

Young people enjoy positive relationships with staff, which are based on understanding and respect. Staff are motivated and interested in young people. They enjoy spending time with young people and are proud of young people's achievements. They have clear professional and personal boundaries with young people, consistent with good child care.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Staff prepare young people for adult life. Young people are encouraged to take more responsibility for themselves, suitable to their age and understanding. They routinely learn skills, such as shopping, planning meals, cooking, using money and household tasks. They are also encouraged to develop their personal care, organisational and social skills.

Each young person has their own room, which is decorated and furnished to a good standard and personalised to individual tastes. Young people are responsible for keeping their rooms clean and tidy as part of their independence plan. However, staff do support them with this and make sure that the rooms are in good order.

The service provides a good standard of accommodation for young people. It is homely, decorated and furnished to a good standard. This home enables young people to have privacy and provides appropriate areas for education work and meeting with friends and family.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. There is a detailed policy and guidance. Cultural identity is reflected within the choices being made on how bedrooms are personalised. The quality and detail of care plans ensures personalised services are provided that are capable of meeting young people's personal needs. Ongoing consultation ensures that the young people are fully involved with all aspects of their lives as well as the management and organisation of the home. Matters that promote fairness and understanding of other beliefs and cultures are routinely integrated into staff planning of activities for young people. There are strong links with educational providers that promotes development in all aspects of personal, social, health and citizenship. This all contributes to young people having a good foundation of skills that aid their preparation for adulthood.

The home's Statement of Purpose is in the process of being updated to ensure it contains all the required information in full. It clearly sets out what care the home provides and how this will be accomplished. The children's guide has been reviewed

and is well presented. It takes into account the different ages and abilities of young people. However, in the information young people are given about how to complain, it does not include any explanation of Ofsted's role as regulator and their right to raise issues of concern with us.

Senior managers and all other staff are very committed to providing high quality care for young people and monitor and constantly review staff practice, to improve the service they are providing. Viewing of staff duty rotas and observation of working practices, shows the home is adequately staffed for the young people currently living there. The staff team are well organised and benefit from strong, energetic leadership and management. The supervision and appraisal of staff takes place consistently within the recommended timescale, contributing significantly to their own personal development plans. Staff feel well supported and are clear about their own roles and responsibilities. In addition, team meetings take place monthly to give the whole staff team opportunities to discuss and review individual young people, the running of the home, staff development and training. Meetings also allow the staff team to look at ways to improve the service they offer.

The home is monitored by a representative of the organisation. This provides young people and staff with an opportunity to discuss any issues they may have about living at or working in the home. In addition, the manager monitors systems at the home to ensure that the needs of young people are met.

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/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Std.	Action	Due date
12	promote and protect the health of children accommodated in the children's home. In particular this relates to the need to ensure young people's health records are updated to demonstrate that their health care needs are being fully addressed (Regulation 20.1)	10/12/2010
1	produce a guide to the children's home which shall include a summary of the complaints procedure established under Regulation 24; and the address and telephone number of the regulator. In particular to make young people aware they can raise a concern with Ofsted. (Regulation 4.3 b and c)	10/12/2010