

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC062288
Inspection date	20 May 2009
Inspector	Julian Mason
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	24 October 2008
--------------------------------	-----------------

© 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 is a detached property located in extensive grounds. It is in the countryside adjacent to a main road and within easy reach of several large towns. The home is registered for up to four young people of either gender, aged between nine to under 18 years, with no more than three years between the oldest and youngest resident. It states in the home's Statement of Purpose that placements are limited to six months, during which a programme of assessment and education is undertaken. The home aims to provide young people with a stable care provision that enables their needs to be assessed, to ensure that the next placement is best suited to their medium to long-term future needs.

Summary

This was a full unannounced inspection that concentrated on key National Minimum Standards. Two young people were living at the home who were present during part of the visit, one young person participated in some of the inspection process. The inspection focused on areas related to being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution, achieving economic wellbeing and how staffing and management arrangements supported the operation of the home.

The overall judgement for this service is good. Young people live in a home where they feel safe. The registered manager and staff team provide young people with a comfortable and homely environment. Staff know what support each young person requires so the care they received is individualised. Young people are supported and encouraged to be successful in education. Staff are helpful and practical when young people need to learn about life skills and independence. Young people's medication records do not always demonstrate that staff are following the home's policy in this area. Young people's health may be affected because prescription instructions are not being followed.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

No requirements were made at the last inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people are provided with the necessary support and guidance to ensure their good health and wellbeing is maintained. Staff keep a range of records including individual health plans that detail medical, physical and emotional needs. Young people can approach staff about health matters that concern them and staff act promptly to ensure the right help and support is provided. The home encourages young people to attend routine health appointments and promotes these arrangements as being an important aspect to overall good health.

Most staff have up-to-date training in basic first aid, administration of medication and food hygiene. The home has appropriate consents in place that allow staff to give permission for emergency treatment if needed. Young people's medication is administered by staff and records show that medicines are given when needed or requested. However, medication records do not

clearly demonstrate that all medication which is offered or refused matches individual prescription instructions.

Young people's good health is further promoted by the home's commitment to providing a balanced and varied diet. Weekly food menus are planned in advance and involve young people who are able to influence the choice of meals. Staff encourage young people to stick to the planned menu but do accommodate requests to vary mealtimes to suit circumstances on any given day. Young people can access fresh fruit as well as snacks and drinks when needed.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people are provided with a home that is a safe place to be. There is a good awareness of young people's needs and the home's records reflect important information that is used to continually assess any risks. There is a very clear procedure in place for responding to child protection and safe care concerns and the registered manager has made several referrals to the local child protection team. Any incidents or allegations are dealt with appropriately and quickly. The home works within multi-agency processes as outlined by the organisation's policy to ensure young people are protected.

Staff practice is underpinned by a range of training that supports the home to be a safe place for young people to live. For instance, staff receive repeated child protection, behaviour management and health and safety related training. These key areas of practice are also outlined in organisational policies and procedures that guide staff in their work with young people. As a consequence of these arrangements, young people feel that they are safe and treated fairly.

Young people can present challenging and uncooperative behaviour that can be difficult to manage. Staff use their training and knowledge to try and minimise the effects this behaviour can have on the progress and development of each young person. Bullying is known to be unacceptable by staff and young people. The registered manager ensures that information is available to staff that promotes a consistent approach to managing these areas of need. Young people's individual plans provide guidance to staff that is unique to each individual, their plans outline desired outcomes that are positive and beneficial. Staff demonstrate patience, they promote boundaries that are safe and in the best interests of young people. Where more formal interventions are used, such as sanctions or physical interventions, the home's records demonstrate that staff responses are proportionate and fair.

Other areas of the home's operation also promotes young people's safety and wellbeing. For instance, matters relating to privacy and confidentiality are managed well, staff know the difference between information that is kept in the home and what must be shared with others. Complaints from young people are very few but are dealt with quickly and fairly, standards of health and safety are maintained to ensure the home is safe. Staff are clear about what to do if a young person is away from the home without permission but this rarely happens currently. Staff are good at engaging with young people to prevent these circumstances from occurring in the first place.

Young people's protection is further supported by safe recruitment, selection and vetting practices for all new staff. The service has a clearly defined system in place that ensures all necessary checks have been completed and are acceptable prior to any staff member starting

work in the home. A written record of this process is maintained for inspection and is followed in respect of all staff currently employed.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people receive individual support that is consistent with their needs. Key workers are responsible for ensuring everyday requirements are being met and that social workers and other professionals are kept informed about progress and developments. Staff are able to focus on the different needs of each young person because there are individual plans of care that detail the aims of each placement and the actions associated with successful outcomes. Staff understand the importance of acknowledging young people's differences so that needs relating to areas such as ethnicity, religion, gender and disability can be identified and met. Staff are fully aware of known and potential risks because this information is communicated effectively.

Staff are successfully supporting young people to attend their school placements. Educational arrangements and routines are based on individual needs and circumstances. Staff are able to be flexible in their support to young people from those who are studying for their GCSE's to young people who are trying to re-establishing a pattern of school attendance. Staff are encouraging and positive about education which helps to build young people's confidence.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff provide good support to young people when they move-in and leave the home. Young people are encouraged to say what they need in these circumstance and this way of working is part of the home's wider approach to involving each young person in their care and daily living arrangements. Young people are also able to contribute to their plan of care as they are included and involved in formal review meetings with their social workers and other professionals.

The registered manager ensures that each young person has an up-to-date placement plan that identifies their current needs. The plans provide key information to staff about important areas of need as well as guidance on how to meet the requirements identified. Young people are able to and are encouraged to maintain contact with family and friends. Staff are well informed about any contact restrictions and arrangements are clearly matched with placing social workers agreement.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people benefit from living in an environment that is spacious and comfortable. The home is subject to an ongoing process of redecoration and refurbishment with repairs and maintenance being addressed in order of importance. Staff work to a schedule of domestic routines to ensure the home is clean and tidy. Young people are able to personalise their bedrooms and they are satisfied with the accommodation provided.

Young people are helped to plan for independence and staff encourage and support them to learn life skills they will need when they leave the home. Staff provide lots of practical opportunities for young people so they experience routines that relate to being responsible and independent. The home sometimes does this in the absence of an agreed local authority plan but this is not treated as a barrier to providing young people with the help they need.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Young people are provided with a service that includes a stable and committed team of staff who deliver consistent care and support. The organisation has a good staff training programme that includes key areas of learning for new staff as well as refresher training for existing team members. In addition, there is a national vocational training programme in place to ensure all staff can achieve the appropriate level of qualification which is consistent to their roles and responsibilities. Staff have a good understanding of young people's needs and shift teams are sufficient in number to provide the right care, support and supervision. The registered manager provides good support to the team which in turn helps to shape staff practice and the team's overall effectiveness.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The home operates in a way that demonstrates a clear recognition of the varied and different needs young people have. Each young person has a plan of care in place that fully identifies each individual's needs in terms of their ethnicity, race, religion, culture, gender, disability and language. Awareness and knowledge has been further improved in this area because some staff have received updated organisational training called 'Valuing Diversity'.

There is a good range of information available to young people and others detailing the home's operation and its services. Both the Statement of Purpose and children's guide are regularly reviewed to ensure all information is up-to-date. The young people's guide provides clear information about external advocacy services and how to contact them if needed. As a consequence, this information helps promote young people's rights and entitlements. Young people have dedicated records that contain the information required for the home to meet their needs. The home works closely with placing social workers to ensure all important Looked After Children documentation is provided. Where this is not the case, the registered manager takes steps to try and remedy the situation.

The registered manager has good systems in place to monitor the operation of the home and the overall progress of each young person. Regular visits are made to the home by organisational representatives and findings are reflected in written monitoring reports. The registered manager responds to these reports along with other activities relating to the evaluation of the service. For instance, the registered manager is well informed about placing social workers views regarding the progress of individual young people. Currently, the home has gained some very positive feedback from placing social workers about the success of young people's placements.

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 Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
13	ensure a written record is kept of the administration of any medication to any young person (Regulation 21).	30 June 2009

Recommendations

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