

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC063683
Inspection date	4 August 2010
Inspector	Michelle Moss
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	9 November 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

The home offers accommodation to six young people. The building is designed in a way that offers plenty of space to the young people, including a large lawn garden area to the rear of the building. The ground floor of the building consists of a living room, dining room, computer and arts room, kitchen, laundry room and access to a private telephone.

The home is within easy reach of places of worship, shops, restaurants, local community markets and a range of community activity centres.

The first floor is designed to have two separate landing and bedroom areas. Each side consists of three single bedrooms, storage cupboards, shower and toilet facilities and a communal area on each landing with soft seating. Between the landings are additional toilet and bathing facilities.

Five of the six young people resident at the home participated in the inspection.

Summary

This was a key unannounced inspection that has looked at all Every Child Matters outcomes. The home is meeting the vast majority of the national minimum standards and in some cases exceeding them. Young people experience a caring, consistent, stable and secure staff team who are committed, well trained and experienced. Young people are able to develop and achieve in areas of physical and emotional well-being and, in particular, their education. They live in a well designed and pleasant home that meets their needs exceptionally well. The home had no areas requiring improvement resulting from their last inspection. However, there are a few minor shortfalls that have emerged this time. These include behaviour management, care planning and parental consent. Despite these shortfalls there remain a number of strengths that have been seen at previous inspections and continue to provide good outcomes for young people, for example enjoying and achieving.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

There were no actions or recommendations made as a result of the home's previous inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people benefit from good access to a range of appropriate services designed to meet their emotional, mental and physical needs. They also have opportunities to discuss personal health related matters such as alcohol, smoking and sexual health with either their key worker, in one to one sessions, or through the home's well established links with various health related agencies and professionals. This focus of care has successfully helped young people to stop smoking and actively discouraged them from other activities that compromise their health. Each young person has a health plan that informs about individual health needs. However, the plan is not comprehensive and does not always include essential information about a young person's medical history, any necessary preventive measures or any specific monitoring required

by staff. This limits staff having access to concise health information that can be provided to health professionals, especially in a medical emergency.

Clear procedures are followed for the management, secure storage and administration of medication to ensure young people receive the correct medication important to their health. Nevertheless, consent for staff administering non prescribed medication or emergency first aid is not secured for every young person from a person with parental responsibility. This limits staff being informed about any factors that should be acknowledged regarding parental wishes or beliefs.

Staff work alongside young people to help them increase their knowledge of basic nutrition and receive a balanced diet. This includes holding regular themed nights which encourage young people to try new dishes. The staff try hard to make mealtimes a social occasion where young people engage positively with peers and staff. Young people are able to assist with the shopping, preparing and cooking of meals. Salad is always offered with meals and fruit is made available to young people to help to boost up their five a day intake. The staff accompany young people to local gyms and leisure centres, and especially to swimming activities. This encourages young people to use these facilities which helps build their self esteem, confidence and physical fitness.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people report feeling safe, protected, secure and respected by staff who care about their welfare. Staff are suitably trained and understand their responsibilities for the protection of young people under their care. Joint working between the home and different agencies ensures effective safeguards are maintained that help to protect young people from harm. This includes risks associated with being missing from care. Young people confirm that staff are good at helping them to keep themselves safe and always reinforce the message about being careful when out. All staff show real appreciation over the serious implications of bullying and its potential harm to young people's welfare. There is a commitment by staff to tackle all types of bullying through initiatives and strategies that improve behaviour and increase awareness. Young people are equally well informed about the impact of bullying and are confident that staff will deal with it straight away.

The staff listen to and respond appropriately to the concerns raised by young people. This helps young people to be confident to trust the home's complaints procedure. The staff show a respect for the privacy of the young people and for maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality.

To help manage young people's behaviour, the staff team have a hierarchy of de-escalation techniques and skills. These include verbal intervention approaches which are deployed to assist and support young people during stressful situations. Nevertheless, when young people are stressed, the support offered through verbal intervention can occasionally be felt by young people to be less supportive and inconsistent to de-escalate the situation. The rationale for using restraint is always and only to ensure safety. All restraints are recorded and countersigned by the manager and contain essential information. However, there are occasional failures to ensure the record captures every use of restraint applied during an incident. Sanctions are frequently imposed as an attempt to encourage young people to develop socially acceptable behaviour and to limit risk taking, such as going missing from care. All the sanctions imposed

are recorded, although they are not comprehensive to show they are always imposed fairly, consistently and are helping young people to reduce risky behaviour.

There are systems in place to monitor, record and prevent risks to young people's health and safety. These include water, electrical safety and all aspects of fire prevention. In addition, the home has risk assessments that are aimed at reducing risks without compromising young people's rights including accessing daily activities.

There are comprehensive procedures in place to ensure the vetting of staff and monitoring of visitors are thorough in order to safeguard young people. This extends to staff being required to have Criminal Record Bureau checks repeated at set intervals, that are then properly validated and the outcomes recorded on staff files to help sustain the safety of young people.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Young people who have been out of education receive wonderful support to re-engage. Staff will go that extra mile to get young people back into full time education and support them through examinations. The staff team are dedicated to supporting young people to attain qualifications that will help their future career prospects and to achieve their aspirations. This level of success has been made possible by the home's resourcefulness in seeking help of services such as Connexions. This fantastic support has meant young people have exceeded all expectations. Young people equally have great opportunities to develop social skills, talents and abilities. This extends to having free access to various leisure facilities and having a comprehensive activity planner drawn up during school holidays, of which the young people take full advantage. Young people are able to have organised holidays about which they are fully consulted.

Young people have plenty of opportunities to talk to someone who can help with any personal difficulties. This includes having a key-worker, opportunities to receive one to one work and access services such as children's rights. Each young person is consulted and encouraged to pursue their religious beliefs if they feel it is appropriate. If the staff do not have the knowledge to facilitate this, advice is sought from either the young person's family, community or place of worship.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Each young person has a placement plan that includes detailed assessments. These assessments provide a wealth of information which is used by staff to help young people flourish. For example, monthly updates of the placement plan show young people are making good progress in their placement. The integration of diversity issues into the plan are excellent. This is particularly well evidenced through the development of a booklet which enables young people to celebrate their identity. The format of the placement plan is made up from a number of documents such as, a residential care plan, monthly reports, looked after children's reports, assessments and a health plan. Despite this comprehensive range of documents there are some inconsistencies between the different documents. For example, information recorded in the plans prepared by the placement authority do not match up with documents written by the home. As a consequence, information about young people's individual needs is not consistent and this hinders staff from having concise information that they can resource. For example,

information on self harming can vary between different plans. This causes confusion over the level of monitoring required and the extent of risk. More positively, staff strive to learn more about young people's needs through consulting them which helps to build better relationships in which diverse needs can be met. The staff recognise the importance of consulting with young people. They are resourceful about getting the help young people need in which they can rebuild self-confidence and self esteem.

In most cases, admissions are planned and include young people having the opportunity to visit the home before moving in. Similarly, when young people are leaving the home, this is usually planned unless there are exceptional circumstances where the safety of the young person or others cannot be achieved. When a young person moves on in a planned way, the staff will play a key role to ensure a successful transition is achieved. This includes ensuring the right agencies are involved to support young people through this change.

Young people are able to sustain positive relationships with family, friends and the community. If restrictions are required, these are recorded clearly to reflect safeguards.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

The location of the home is central to schools, leisure facilities, transport and other community facilities. These are actively used by young people to aid personal growth, development and opportunities. Staff and young people show genuine pride about the home and have collectively been creative in making the service feel homely, comfortable and secure. For example, young people play a significant role in designing the garden and picking the furnishings and fittings for lounges and their bedrooms. This creativity and participation means young people live in a pleasurable and relaxing atmosphere in which they have gained a real sense of ownership and belonging.

The staff team play key roles in helping young people build up practical skills they will need to live more independently. Young people show huge enthusiasm to work with staff to learn new skills such as preparing meals, washing of clothing and other domestic tasks. Young people get involved in setting menus and shopping for food to increase their knowledge about basic nutrition and how to keep to a budget. This inspiring support gives young people additional skills, values and attributes that will help them stay safe and be better prepared for adult life. An outstanding example of this is through the strong support young people receive from staff and outside agencies to have aspirations such as attending university.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Management plays a crucial role to ensure all staff receive adequate training and support to fulfil their role. As a result the staff have access to a wide range of internal and accredited courses, including first aid, care of medicines and safeguarding. These continuous training opportunities allow the staff to provide tailored support to reflect the Statement of Purpose and admission criteria. These courses help care staff to gather the required knowledge to keep young people healthy and safe.

The management team monitor and sign appropriate records as part of their internal quality assurance. Regulation 33 visits take place at regular intervals to provide an additional quality

assurance mechanism. The findings of these visits are reported to the manager and used to drive forward improvements in the quality of care for young people.

The staff are dedicated to their work with young people which is delivered in a child-oriented way. This is reflected by the comments made by young people that describe the staff to be respectful, caring, kind and who make them feel safe and secure.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. This stems from the staff ensuring they gain knowledge of each young person's cultural heritage to understand their identity and experiences. For example, the placement plan is particularly good at capturing young people's identity and cultural heritage, both in terms of acknowledging individual needs and setting out how these needs will be addressed. Each young person is consulted and encouraged to pursue their religious beliefs. Finally, the staff are excellent at seeking help to understand the complex issues for black and minority ethnic young people in care, including health, culture and identity.

Young people's individual case files are confidentially stored and are arranged in a manner that makes them useable by staff and yet accessible to the young person. On their admission, well presented booklets are provided to young people to help them to have a clear understanding about the home, including what they can expect from staff. This helps their transition to a new setting to be less daunting.

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
22	ensure any discipline measure, specifically sanctions are not excessive or unreasonable. Also ensure the written records of both sanctions and restraints meet regulations (Regulations 17.1 and 17.4)	3 September 2010
2	ensure that the placement plan is consistent with any plan prepared from the placing authority and clearly sets out arrangements for health and safeguarding of the young person. (Regulations 12.1 (a) and (b) and 12.4 (a))	30 September 2010

Recommendations

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

- make sure the health plan includes details on medical history, any necessary preventive measures and health monitoring required by staff (NMS 12.2)
- make sure prior written permission from a person with parental responsibility for a young person is obtained for the administration of first aid and appropriate non-prescription medication (NMS 13.4)

- make sure measures of control are based on establishing positive relationships with young people including incidents in which verbal intervention is necessary. (NMS 22.3)