

Inspection report for Children's Home

Unique reference number	SC063814
Inspection date	07/12/2010
Inspector	Susan Mullin
Type of inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	10/03/2010
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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 a children's home owned by a registered charity, which owns a number of children's homes across the county, together with a residential family centre. The home has a service level agreement with the local authority children's services who purchase all the beds in the home for an annual fee.

The home provides accommodation for four children of either gender, aged from eight years to 17 years who have emotional or behavioural difficulties.

The house is a six bedroom, two-storey building situated in a medium sized town. Ground floor accommodation consists of an office, dining room, kitchen, two lounges, and a toilet. First floor accommodation comprises of six bedrooms and a bathroom. Two bedrooms are staff sleep in quarters. There is an enclosed garden and a separate office to the side of the house. The home is within walking distance of shops and public transport to a nearby town centre. There is a wide range of recreational opportunities within the immediate community and surrounding areas.

There are four young people resident in the home. At the time of the inspection three young people spoke very favourably of the care received and the support from staff.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This was a key announced inspection of the service to assess compliance with the National Minimum Standards for Children's Homes. The inspection focused on arrangements to meet young people's individual needs, to safeguard their welfare and protect them from harm, to ensure young people have a say in their day-to-day care and to ensure they live full and enjoyable lives. The inspection also considered how the home is managed and how staff are supported.

The home was assessed under the headings of Every Child Matters. Being healthy, staying safe, achieving economic well-being and organisation received a judgement of good. While enjoying and achieving and positive contribution received a judgement of outstanding. Overall the home was judged as good.

The Registered Manager has been away from the home for some considerable time on secondment and in her absence, the deputy manager has been acting manager. Subsequently, the findings of the inspection identified that the main strength of the home is in the way in which it is currently managed. There is great attention to detail with regards to comprehensive record keeping and robust quality assurance systems.

Communication to all agencies working with young people is frequent and effective. Staff are supported and feel valued and young people's needs are high on the agenda. Young people can enjoy a homely, well-structured and fulfilling lifestyle, provided by a team of caring and knowledgeable staff.

Two recommendations were made to ensure the certificate of insurance specifies the name and address of the setting and staff are suitably qualified.

Improvements since the last inspection

Two actions raised at the last inspection regarding the implementation of leaving care plans and ensuring all parts of the home are maintained have been met. One recommendation relating to ensuring placement plans demonstrate the effectiveness of the placement has also been met. The final recommendation relating to 80% of the staff being trained to National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in caring for children and young people remains outstanding and has been repeated at this visit.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people choose their meals and are actively involved in shopping for food and in the preparation of meals, which helps them prepare for adulthood. Menus support that staff encourage and guide young people to eat a healthy diet.

Staff are committed to meeting young people's health needs. Case files seen were current, comprehensive, legible and dated. Young people's records give clear details of individual health needs and what actions have been implemented to meet them. Staff actively encourage and support young people to access different health advisory and support services to ensure their physical and emotional needs are met.

Procedures are in place to ensure that medicines are appropriately administered and stored to safeguard young people's welfare. Staff receive training on the administration of medication and basic first aid. The acting manager monitors the medication records to ensure young people's needs are met.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people's rights to privacy are promoted and respected. Staff are professional about sharing confidential information and records. Information held on behalf of young people is correctly stored in lockable facilities which are only accessible to staff.

Safeguarding and protection issues are high on the agenda. Operational policies and procedures are communicated effectively, to promote the safety and welfare of young people. Young people are protected from potential harm and neglect, as staff

have a good understanding of their role and responsibilities in safeguarding young people. Staff are familiar with the signs and symptoms of abuse and are aware of the procedures to follow, should they have any concerns about young people in their care. Strong leadership consistently promotes an environment where safety is important for young people.

Young people receive information regarding how to make a complaint in an appropriate format for them to understand. Young people confirm that they know how to make a complaint and that staff go through the complaints procedure when they are admitted into the home. Young people confirm the staff encourage them to express any concerns they have and feel confident that any issues raised are treated seriously. Ofsted has received no complaints about the setting.

Young people are protected from risks they can present to themselves, or others, through the use of individual assessments. The assessments include information about countering bullying behaviour. Young people are aware of the anti-bullying policy and describe using meetings and key worker sessions to discuss issues of bullying in the home and community.

Young people are protected by staff offering guidance on behaviour management and absconding behaviour through a range of policies. Staff ensure that the whereabouts of young people are appropriately monitored. This ensures everyone is safe. Close supervision of young people is important and a prominent feature in the way staff manage perceived risks and a young person's vulnerability. Written risk assessments are in place and equipment and activities routinely assessed and serviced. Young people learn how to protect themselves in an emergency as regular opportunities to practise the evacuation of the building are undertaken. They are further protected because all fire safety checks are completed at regular intervals and an up-to-date fire risk assessment is on file.

All visitors to the home are monitored by staff, which ensure that unsuitable people do not have unsupervised contact with young people living within the home.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Individual support is comprehensively detailed in individual young person's placement plans. Observations and discussions with staff demonstrate that staff ensure each young person's individual needs are fully addressed. A young person said, 'I don't want to leave this home - ever'. The practical, individual support is reflected in the records of key worker sessions along with the variety of planning documentation that is in place. The staff know the young people well and are knowledgeable of their individual needs and the implications this has for their care and future. Young people are empowered to develop and take control of their own lives while being guided and supported by the staff team. Staff have developed increasingly positive relationships with young people and as a consequence, young people enjoy positive relationships with staff based on honesty and mutual respect.

Staff are positive in their approach to education and its value for young people. Young people attend schools and colleges. When young people are not in formal education, staff provide educational activities in the home and liaise effectively with the local authority to ensure an appropriate placement is found. Staff support young people in school where this is required to ensure they can access the full curriculum. Staff attend all annual reviews and forge close working links with school staff to ensure each young person's education is promoted and supported.

High staffing levels has allowed staff to spend quality time with young people. When individual educational preferences are determined young people receive the relevant personal support in the home to promote the best educational placement outcomes.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The home have not had any new admissions for some considerable time. All young people in their care have been in the home for a long period of time where they have enjoyed a settled, happy lifestyle. However, staff ensure young people leave the home in a positive way. They help young people to see their achievements and to look forward to the next phase of their lives. All young people are encouraged to attend and have input into their reviews and support where necessary. Young people spoke highly of the staff group and one said 'staff speak up for me and help me out when I need it'.

Young people have placement plans which guide the work undertaken with them. They are regularly reviewed and are monitored by the key worker to ensure they are implemented in practice. Good planning contributes to positive outcomes for young people who live in the home. Staff ensure contact arrangements are fully recorded. They provide practical and emotional support for young people to maintain contact with their families. This helps young people to maintain relationships with their families and contributes to their emotional well-being.

Young people confirmed they have a say in their care and how the home is run. They have regular key worker meetings and house meetings where their views are sought. Consequently, young people are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way the home is run.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people enjoy living in a clean, tidy and well-maintained home which is well decorated and furnished. Young people enjoy sufficient communal space which includes comfortable and attractive furniture as well as including games consoles, televisions and DVD players. The dining room is well furnished and enables staff and young people to sit together in a sociable and relaxed atmosphere. Young people

have their own bedrooms which they are able to personalise and they have access to bathrooms which are well maintained and sufficient in number.

Young people are given good support with moving onto independent living including support with attending further education. Young people are sensitively encouraged to learn independence skills from an appropriate age, including cooking, budgeting and shopping for themselves. They are also provided with freedom to socialise with friends appropriate to their age with guidance and supervision from staff.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The Statement of Purpose contains all the required information in relation to the services and facilities within the home. This document is available to parents, placing authorities and young people and provides an accurate description of the home. Young people also have access to a child-friendly summary of the statement used to assist them to settle in when they are first admitted.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Young people are given good quality care specific to their individual needs and placement planning includes identifying cultural or religious issues.

Young people are provided with good quality care by staff who are given good professional support, supervision and training opportunities. The management team ensure that all staff receive regular, formal supervision as well as informal support. Staff speak well of the training provided to them and believe that it helps to equip them in caring for young people. All staff are required to complete an induction programme when starting work in the home, which includes completing a specific training programme, on-going training opportunities are accessible thereafter. The good quality care provided to young people is evident through the good outcomes they experience and this is testament to the skills, commitment and experience of the staff team. However, progress on 80% of staff completing the National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in caring for children and young people has been slow.

Monthly visits on behalf of the responsible individual produce a detailed report on how the home is being managed and on the outcomes young people experience. This reporting process is a good quality assurance system which supports the acting manager in his role.

Young people's case files contain all required information to help staff support them. The information evidences the progress young people make while living in the home.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Recommendations

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

- ensure certificates of insurance specify the name and address of the particular home (NMS 26.9)
- ensure that 80% of the care staff have completed the National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People. (NMS 29.5)