

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC063895
Inspection date	27 April 2010
Inspector	Katarina Djordjevic
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	17 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

This is a children's home for four young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties between the age of 10 and 18 years. It is part of an organisation and is located on the outskirts of a small town with local facilities including a post office and shops. There is access to public transport and the home has its own transport for trips to the wider community.

Young people have their own single bedrooms. Communal space comprises of a lounge, dining room, kitchen and education room. There is a grassed area to the rear of the house, with a patio and outdoor seating.

Summary

This was a full unannounced inspection. The purpose of the visit was to assess the quality of care provided for young people, in line with statutory requirements. All key standards were inspected and standards 15,21,28 and 32 were also inspected. The outcome groups relating to being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, economic wellbeing and organisation were assessed and are judged as good. Positive contribution is judged as outstanding.

The Registered Manager provides strong leadership and support which has resulted in further improvements in the quality of care for young people. Young people receive well-planned and regularly reviewed care that supports their needs, from a consistent and committed staff team. Empowerment of young people and keeping them safe is at the forefront of the care provided. Relationships between staff and young people are very positive and behaviour is well managed. Young people feel safe living at the home and feel good about the progress they are making at the home.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection two actions were made which the Registered Manager was asked to address. The first of these related to including in the Statement of Purpose how emergency admissions will be managed to ensure this does not impact on the existing group of young people living at the home. In response, the Registered Manager has worked hard to ensure the management of referrals actively takes into account the needs of the existing group and the likely impact on young people already living at the home. The second action was to ensure that unnecessary risks to the health or safety of young people are identified and so far as possible eliminated in relation to handling of food. The home's housekeeper is now well established, as are systems for the safe handling of food.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people live in an environment where a healthy lifestyle is actively promoted by staff. As part of health promotion young people are encouraged to eat healthily and take regular exercise. Staff receive a variety of training which enables them to meet the health and cultural needs of young people. Training for staff includes basic first aid, food hygiene, the administration of

medication and drug awareness. Staff work closely with other agencies to ensure young people's needs are met and that their health is promoted.

Procedures are in place to ensure that medicines are appropriately handled and stored to safeguard young people's welfare. Records of medication administered and disposed of are kept. However, the recording of controlled drugs is not in line with the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain's guidance, 'The Handling of Medicines in Social Care'. Young people are encouraged to self-medicate based on risk assessments which helps them prepare for adulthood.

Young people receive a varied and well-balanced diet based on their individual needs. Young people are consulted about the menus which reflect specific likes and cultural dietary needs. Records are kept of meals provided which enables staff to monitor young people's diet. Meal times are relaxed and organised around young people's different commitments including social and leisure activities. Young people are encouraged and expected to participate in the cooking of meals in preparation for adulthood and they say they enjoy this. Theme nights are held to enable young people to experience different cultural meals. For these, they are expected to research different cultures and make the meals from fresh ingredients.

Young people's health needs are identified and services are provided to meet them. Care records clearly identify individual health needs and how to meet them. Staff work tenaciously and sensitively to support young people to access different health advisory and support services to ensure their physical and emotional needs are met. Staff work closely with other agencies to enable young people with specific health needs, including drug and alcohol dependency.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Safeguarding young people is at the forefront of care practices at the home. There are a range of policies which inform staff how to protect young people from the risk of harm. At the same time, young people are supported to take risks in a controlled manner and responsibility for their actions. This helps them learn how to keep themselves safe in preparation for adulthood. Young people feel safe living at the home and understand that policies, procedures and staff practice are there to keep them safe.

Young people's privacy and dignity is well respected. Young people have keys to their bedrooms based on risk assessments. Young people said that staff knock on their doors before entering their bedrooms. Bathrooms and toilets all have privacy locks fitted. Confidential information is kept locked.

Young people live in an environment where they are actively encouraged to raise any concerns they may have. There is a clear complaints procedure which young people fully understand. The young people's 'Welcome pack' gives clear details of how to complain and who young people can complain to including Ofsted and the independent advocate. This information is also on the young people's notice board. One young person told the Inspector that they had contacted the Children's Rights Director to clarify an issue. Records confirm that complaints are taken seriously and dealt with promptly.

There are child protection policies and procedures which staff fully understand. This helps to protect young people from the risk of harm. Staff receive training in child protection. The home has a copy of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) procedures.

There is a clear anti-bullying policy and young people understand that bullying is not tolerated. Where there are incidents of bullying, young people said these are taken seriously and dealt with quickly.

Clear procedures and practices to deal with unauthorised absence help to protect young people from the risk of harm and abuse. Risk assessments are carried out for each young person. All relevant agencies are informed and records kept as required. Staff discuss the dangers of going missing with young people when young people return to the home.

There are written behaviour management policies and procedures and staff are trained in behaviour management and physical intervention. There is a strong emphasis on promoting incentives for, and rewarding positive and improved behaviour. Individual behaviour management plans are in place where needed which ensures safe and consistent management of young people's behaviour. Young people are motivated and supported to improve behaviour and are given the opportunity to reflect on their behaviour after every incident. Incident report forms give clear details about what happened, who was involved and the outcome. This helps the Registered Manager to assess if the incident has been managed in a safe, proportionate and appropriate manner thereby protecting young people from the risk of harm or injury. The Registered Manager discusses incidents with staff where shortfalls or inappropriate practices have taken place. This helps to ensure appropriate and safe management of young people's behaviour. Young people are clear about what is expected of them and accept why sanctions are imposed. Young people are consulted about the type of sanctions which may be imposed which helps them to reflect on their behaviours and take responsibility for their actions. Records of physical interventions and sanctions imposed are kept as required.

The management of health and safety is good which helps to protect young people and staff from the risk of harm and injury. General health and safety issues are addressed with a range of risk assessments in place including specific individual risk assessments. They identify hazards as well as risks faced when taking young people on community-based trips and activities. Servicing of installations and equipment is carried out as required. Fire safety procedures are good which helps to protect young people and staff from the risk of harm. Fire alarm tests are carried out weekly and regular fire drills take place. The fire evacuation procedure is explained to young people on admission.

Young people are protected from the risk of harm or abuse by comprehensive, robust policies, procedures and guidance for vetting staff and visitors. The recruitment of the right individual for the job is seen as much more important than filling a vacancy.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Care and support provided to young people is based on their individual identified needs. Staff have a good knowledge of young people's needs and give them support to help them achieve and acquire different personal care and independence skills. Staff work closely with other agencies to ensure young people's needs are met. Young people like living at the home and

are proud of the progress they are making. Interactions between young people and staff are positive.

Young people's education is seen as important and they are supported with their education through a positive learning environment in the home. For example, young people are supported with homework. Learning is extended to everyday activities such as cooking where young people are encouraged to research different cultures when 'Theme nights' take place. There is a school on site which young people attend if appropriate. However, young people are supported to attend mainstream schools where appropriate which also gives them the opportunity to make new friends in the local community.

Young people's daily routine includes opportunities for free and controlled time including time for relaxation. Young people are provided with an extensive range of activities both in-house and in the community which they enjoy and gives them opportunities to try new activities. This helps to build upon young people's self-confidence. Risk assessments are in place for trips and outside activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Empowerment of young people is at the forefront of the home's philosophy. Practices and systems within the home actively encourage and support young people to make positive contributions to their daily lives and have a say in their future. This helps young people develop their self-confidence and feel valued. Staff provide positive role models for young people. Staff are committed and caring in their approach which results in good relationships between staff and young people.

All young people have individual files which contain 'looked after children' (LAC) documents, placement plans, risk assessments and case records. Care records give clear details of individual needs and how to meet the needs. Records are of a good standard and inform staff how to meet the needs of young people. However, some records are not always signed and dated which does not make it clear if the document is current or has been reviewed. Individual risk assessments are in place and young people are supported to take controlled risks, appropriate to their age and understanding, in preparation for adulthood. Young people are encouraged to write their own risk assessments where appropriate. This is an excellent way to help young people understand why and how they may be vulnerable and how to keep themselves safe.

Review meetings are held as required and minutes of these meetings are kept on file. Young people are actively encouraged to attend their review meetings which helps them contribute to their future plans. Young people read, comment and sign monthly progress reports for social workers and progress reports for the statutory reviews prepared by staff.

Contact arrangements are clearly recorded to ensure that staff understand each young person's situation with regards to meeting with their family. Staff work hard to support young people to maintain valued relationships with family through appropriate contact arrangements.

The home has established systems for managing referrals, assessments and reviews in conjunction with placing authorities. The Registered Manager has worked hard to ensure the management of referrals actively takes into account the needs of the existing group and the likely impact on young people already living at the home. Staff try to ensure young people are given

appropriate support when moving in and are sensitive to young people's feelings. Young people are given the 'welcome booklet' either prior to admission or on the day of admission. This gives good information about what life is like at the home, what the young person can expect and what is expected of them.

The promotion of young people's rights is excellent. Policies and practices at the home enable young people to exercise their rights and take control where appropriate. Young people's meetings are held regularly where young people are able to express their views and opinions and put forward suggestions about the running of the home. Young people are encouraged to run the meetings and take minutes themselves with staff support. Key worker and direct work sessions are held regularly. These sessions are vital in ascertaining how young people feel, enabling them to reflect on their behaviour and the progress they are making and to monitor the care provided. Some young people attend the company's Regional Youth Forums which are held every half term and at the biannual national forum. Young people are also representatives on parliamentary forums. Young people also have access to an independent advocate.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people are actively encouraged and supported to develop daily living and life skills, in preparation for adulthood. This is based on individual needs, taking into account a young person's age, abilities and previous experiences. Young people are supported to make meals and do their own laundry.

Young people are supported to maintain their individuality and personal preferences in terms of clothing and personal requisites. There are clear systems for accessing pocket money and other allowances for clothing and toiletries which enables young people's needs to be met.

Young people live in a pleasant home which is decorated and maintained to a good standard. The home reflects the likes and interests of young people living there and there are lots of photographs on display of activities that young people and staff have been involved in. Young people are encouraged and supported to personalise their bedroom.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home's Statement of Purpose contains all the information required in Schedule 1 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001. This informs young people, their families and placing authorities about the services provided by the home. The young people's welcome booklet is given to all young people either prior or on admission to the home. The booklet informs young people about life at the home, what they can expect and various safeguarding information such as the complaints procedure and details of agencies and advice services that young people may want and need to contact.

The promotion of Equality and Diversity is good. The underlying ethos and practice at the home is based on the belief that young people, regardless of their difficulties, can co-exist within the wider community and have valuable contributions to make to society. Care and support provided is tailored to meet individual needs based on regular individual assessments. Young

people are enabled to have different experiences and opportunities to promote their quality of life. They learn about accepting difference from positive role models within the staff team.

The registered manager provides clear direction and leaderships and provides an excellent role model for the staff team and young people. As a result, the management team have continued to implement changes which have resulted in a significant improvement in the quality of care provided. The Registered Manager has established effective monitoring systems which ensure young people's needs are being met. Where shortfalls in practices or procedures are identified these are dealt with promptly. The Regulation 33 reports support the internal quality assurance systems within the home. Visits are carried out monthly and reports sent to Ofsted as required. The Regulation 33 reports are robust and help to ensure young people are protected from the risk of harm and ensure individual needs are being met.

Staff feel well supported by the management team and can approach them for support and advice at all times. Staff said that the Registered Manager will 'stop what she's doing' wherever possible to give both practical and emotional support and advice to staff. Staff receive regular supervision and staff meetings are held. Staff receive appropriate training to enable them to carry out their roles and responsibilities and, therefore, meet the needs of young people. The induction process takes place during the six month probationary period. The first five days are spent looking at the home's policies and procedures and then staff spend two days shadowing a shift leader. As a result of staff training and a well-managed team, young people are looked after by staff who fully understand their needs and are able to meet them consistently. Staffing levels, based on the needs of young people, provide appropriate levels of supervision for young people to ensure they are safe and that their needs are met.

Young people's files contain most of the required information as detailed in Schedule 3 of the Children's Homes Regulations, 2001, to inform staff about the needs of young people and how to meet their needs.

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
----------	--------	----------

Recommendations

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

- ensure the recording of Controlled Drugs is in line with the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain's guidance 'The Handling of Medicines in Social Care' (NMS 13)
- ensure all young people's records are signed and dated by the author. (NMS 35)