

Inspection report for Children's Home

Unique reference number	SC066187
Inspection date	29/03/2011
Inspector	Jacqui Gosling
Type of inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	26/08/2010
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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

The home is one of a group of four homes that have been set up to provide intake and assessment services for a local council. It provides short-term care and accommodation for up to three young people aged from 12 to 16 years who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The home is a detached property located among similar houses. The ground floor comprises a lounge, dining room, kitchen, staff office and toilet. The first floor has three bedrooms for young people, a bathroom and a staff sleeping-in room. There is also a rear garden. There are currently three young people living at the home. The home is situated within walking distance of local amenities. There are local bus routes to the city nearby as well as surrounding areas.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

This was an unannounced interim inspection. The outcome areas of being healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution, economic well-being and organisation were not looked at during this inspection. Standards in relation to staying safe were inspected. One young person participated in the inspection.

The overall quality rating for the home remains outstanding, with no actions or recommendations being made as a result of this inspection. Each young person is receiving a focused level of care and support that successfully promotes their personal needs, social development and safety.

Improvements since the last inspection

The manager was required to take action in relation to one recommendation made at the last inspection that took place in August 2010. Appropriate action has been taken and the Statement of Purpose now accurately describes what the home sets out to do for young people, with regard to its assessment function and conditions of registration.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Young people benefit from living in a home that has a very good focus on safeguarding and protection matters. The home has an extensive range of operational policies and procedures that are used effectively to promote the safety and welfare of young people. The home has strong leadership that consistently promotes an environment where safety is acknowledged as important.

Young people's privacy and confidentiality is respected by all staff. Staff are sensitive and aware of the need to only disclose or share information that is needed to meet young people's needs. The home has good policies in respect of staff entering young people's bedrooms and for conducting searches of these rooms when it is necessary to do so. Young people are fully aware of the reasons staff may have to search their rooms, even when they have never had their room searched. This shows excellent engagement of young people in the required procedures.

Young people say they are encouraged to raise issues with staff or the manager if they have any concerns regarding the care they receive. Young people can access the complaint form without having to ask a member of staff. This is excellent practice. Complaint forms are also available in a number of languages if required. For example, Kurdish, Urdu and Polish, taking into account the multi-cultural area and young people's potential needs in relation to their identity, race and culture.

The home manages complaints and concerns effectively. Resolving complaints in a manner that young people both understand and agree with. Records of complaints, both internal and external, identify clear outcomes. The records kept include young people's comments on the outcome of the complaint and their signature. In addition, young people confirm they know the complaints procedures and they are aware that they can contact a number of advocacy services if they want to speak to someone outside the home. This excellent practice ensures young people's concerns are acknowledged and addressed proactively.

The home has effective child protection policies and procedures, which staff employ to ensure that all young people, staff and the wider community are kept safe. Staff receive excellent training to enhance and develop their knowledge and awareness regarding child protection matters. Young people are well protected because staff recognise and fully understand their role in child protection. Staff ensure that risk assessments of young people's behaviours and activities are in place and that they are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that young people remain safe. Staff ensure that the whereabouts of young people is consistently monitored to promote the safety of everyone. Excellent supervision levels and knowledge of the young people are features of the way in which staff manage the risks and vulnerabilities that young people display. Young people say they 'feel safe living here'.

Staff focus on developing supportive and consistent relationships, promoting young people's safety and protection which is central to the operation of the home. Young

people are confident the staff listen and act on what they have to say. They also know that inappropriate behaviour will be challenged. Young people are protected from bullying as staff are proactive in creating a culture within the home that does not tolerate bullying. The home has a countering bullying policy in place and anti-bullying statements are posted on a notice board in the house. The excellent focus on developing supportive and consistent relationships makes the home a safe and comfortable place to live because expectations about behaviour and conduct are clearly communicated in a way that has a positive effect on young people.

There are robust protocols in place for ensuring young people are as safe as possible if unauthorised absences occur. Staff encourage young people to let them know where they will be when they leave the home. Individual risk assessments identify any specific issues that staff would need to consider in the event that a young person does not return to the home when expected. If a young person goes missing, staff work closely with police and other agencies, to ensure the safe return of the young person to the home. Staff report promoting young people's safety and protection is central to the operation of the home.

Young people are assisted to develop socially acceptable behaviour through discussions with staff on an individual basis and during house meetings. This takes place in a safe and supportive environment. There is a strong emphasis in the home on recognising and rewarding positive behaviour and effort. All staff are trained in techniques of diffusion and de-escalation, as well as the prescribed methods of safe holding. The records show physical interventions are only carried out when necessary to keep the young people safe. Records further shows life space interviews are undertaken with young people after the event and a debrief is undertaken with staff members. This is excellent practice.

The home has developed procedures to assess and minimise any health and safety risks identified to keep young people and staff safe. There are risk assessments for all aspects of the safety of the premises and grounds, the potential behaviour of young people and their activities. These assessments are regularly reviewed and amended where necessary. The records kept in the home show that regular fire drills are undertaken to ensure that staff and young people are aware of how to safely evacuate the property. Upon arrival, staff show all visitors to the home the fire exits, this is an example of their excellent understanding of fire procedures and their commitment to ensuring everyone will be safe should an emergency occur. The home's manager ensures that utilities, domestic equipment and vehicles are serviced as required and checked regularly to ensure they remain safe to use.

Staff recruitment procedures are very robust, ensuring that all staff are thoroughly vetted before they start work. Prospective staff complete shadow shifts in one of the organisation's homes and young people are asked for their opinion on how they engage with them. This is an excellent way of engaging young people in the proposed recruitment of staff. The identity of all visitors to the home is checked before they are allowed in. These robust systems protect young people, as they ensure that unauthorised individuals are not able to gain access to the home.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is not judged.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is not judged.