

Inspection report for Children's Home

Unique reference number	SC067839
Inspection date	02/11/2010
Inspector	Bill Drumm
Type of inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	08/01/2010
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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

This children's home offers a therapeutic placement for up to two young people aged six to 17 years who have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The home is on three floors; the ground floor consists of a large communal lounge, kitchen, utility room, staff office/sleep-in room, toilet and a conservatory dining room. The young people are provided with their own bedrooms which are located on the first floor along with a bathroom and staff sleep-in room. An activity/classroom is located in the attic space on the second floor.

The house is set in its own grounds which comprise a hard standing area to the front of the building and garden area to the rear.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This was an unannounced key inspection of the home. All of the outcome areas for young people were inspected and were found to be good. Overall, this is a good service.

Members of staff care about the young people who live there and treat them with dignity and respect. In addition, members of staff are fully committed in supporting young people to achieve their maximum potential and to develop socially acceptable behaviour. Young people were observed to have a very friendly, open and honest dialogue with members of staff and appeared relaxed and comfortable in approaching them with their concerns.

Members of the staff team are knowledgeable, skilled and committed to delivering a high quality service to young people. Monitoring processes are good and ensure standards are maintained, with any shortfalls addressed quickly to improve provision to young people. There are clear systems and procedures for keeping young people safe and for their health and welfare to be promoted and their needs met. Young people and members of staff actively share ideas about what the home does and how high standards and quality can be maintained.

Two young people currently live at the home, both of whom directly contributed to the inspection process.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection, the home's manager has ensured that all members of staff working there have completed their National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People, are currently undertaking this course of study or are registered to commence this course of study in the New Year.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Members of staff ensure young people have easy access to fresh fruit and vegetables. One young person said, 'We always have good food and there's always a choice of what to eat.' Nutritious meals are provided and young people participate in the planning of menus. The home also ensures that young people are able to sample food from different countries and cultures. Young people living at the home enjoy a healthy, well balanced diet and healthy eating is promoted.

Young people living at the home have their health needs fully identified and reviewed. Each young person has a healthcare plan which outlines what their physical and emotional needs are and what support they may need. Young people are supported and encouraged to attend all meetings and appointments with healthcare professionals and therapists. Members of staff have all attended first aid training. The health needs of young people are promoted.

Policies and procedures relating to the safe handling and administration of medication are in place. All members of staff have undertaken training in the safe handling and administration of medication. An audit of the home's administration records was undertaken. Records show that medication administered to young people is recorded appropriately. Young people living at the home are protected by the home's medication administration systems.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Members of staff are pleasant and friendly towards all the young people living at the home, all of whom have their own bedroom. Young people are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms in a style of their own choice and to keep the rooms clean and tidy. The home has policies and procedures in place which explain what action members of staff should take when it is necessary to search a young person's bedroom. No room searches have been carried out since the last inspection. Personal information relating to each young person is stored securely to prevent unauthorised access. Young people living at the home are treated with dignity and respect.

There are policies and procedures in place for dealing with complaints in an effective and timely manner. The young people's guide provides clear information to young people about the complaints process. Young people were observed at the time of the

inspection to speak freely and honestly with all members of staff and to make their needs known. Young people said they felt comfortable speaking with members of staff if they were worried about something. All members of staff have received training in the complaints process and young people know how to complain if they are unhappy with any aspect of living at the home.

Young people living at the home are fully protected from exploitation and abuse. A copy of the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures is available in the home. There have been no child protection referrals made since the last inspection. All members of staff working at the home have undertaken training in child protection and the welfare of young people is promoted effectively.

The home has policies and procedures in place with regard to countering bullying and all members of staff have received training in countering bullying. The young people's guide to the home includes information for young people about what action they should take if they feel they are being targeted by bullies. Each young person receives one-to-one support from staff members. The circumstances in which bullying might occur are therefore very much reduced. Young people spoken to during the inspection said that bullying does not happen within the home. Young people are protected from bullying.

There have been no occasions since the last inspection when young people have been absent without authority. The home has effective policies and procedures in place with regard to what action members of staff should take if a young person is missing. Procedures comply with national minimum standards and provide clear guidance for staff action, particularly when a young person returns to the home after being missing.

The home has policies and procedures in place relating to the safe holding or restraint of young people, and members of staff have received appropriate training. Restraint records are retained within a separate bound and numbered book used specifically for that purpose. The written records meet national minimum standards and regulation. There have been a small number of restraints used within the home since the last inspection. The home also has policies and procedures in place which relate to the sanctions members of staff are permitted to use to help young people modify their behaviour. Sanction records have been completed appropriately. Members of staff spoken to during the inspection confirmed that they had all undertaken training in the safe holding of young people and that this training is regularly reviewed and kept up to date.

Young people are protected from fire and other hazards within the home. There are good systems in place to ensure that young people, members of staff and visitors to the home are kept safe and free from hazards. Fire drills are carried out at regular intervals and these include some undertaken at night. Risk assessments are undertaken on the known and likely activities carried out by young people. These risk assessments are thorough and help to protect young people from the risk of accident or injury.

Written records show that thorough and detailed checks are carried out to ensure that all members of staff are suitable to work with young people. Young people living at the home are provided with physical safety and security and are protected from being exposed to potential abusers.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people living at the home have their own key worker and they receive help and support when they need it. Written records retained within the home show that formal and informal key worker meetings take place regularly. The progress of each young person is regularly reviewed and members of staff offer help, guidance and support to help them improve their behaviour.

All the young people living at the home attend school, college or training. The home has a proactive approach to helping young people progress with their education and training in order to help them achieve their maximum potential. In addition, young people living at the home are actively encouraged and supported to develop their own hobbies and interests.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people living at the home are appropriately placed. Planning and placement meetings take place prior to the admission of any young person to the home. Meetings held prior to admission help to ensure all essential information is available and that the placement has the greatest chance of success. Each young person has their own placement plan, which outlines what their needs are and how they will be met. In order to help ensure that needs are met, the manager and members of staff undertake individual risk assessments of each young person and devise more detailed care plans following admissions.

Written records retained within the home show that the needs of young people are regularly reviewed and the changing needs of young people are highlighted. The home's manager, members of staff and young people themselves regularly attend these meetings. However, copies of all paperwork associated with the statutory reviews of young people are not always present in the home. Young people may not therefore receive the services they need to meet any changing needs.

Contact with friends and family is discussed at each young person's planning meeting, prior to admission. Where appropriate, young people are supported and encouraged to maintain regular contact with their friends and families. Restrictions on contact between young people and their families are discussed prior to admission. The reasons for these restrictions, if any, are both known and understood by the manager and staff at the home.

The admissions procedure for the home is good and, where appropriate and possible, arrangements are made for the young person and their parents to visit the home before a placement is agreed. Members of staff work hard to try to make young people feel welcome and to understand what it will be like to live there.

Young people are encouraged to raise issues which affect their lives. Meetings take place between members of staff and young people about how the home is run and what improvements can be made. In addition, each young person regularly completes a written questionnaire about what they like or dislike about living at the home and what improvements can be made.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Formal pathway plans, for the young people who require them, were not available in the home at the time of the inspection. The needs of the young person had not been assessed and there was no plan in place for their future. Young people may not receive the care they need to prepare them and support them into adulthood.

Young people enjoy homely accommodation that is decorated, furnished and maintained to a very high standard. Members of staff help to maintain the building and to keep it clean and tidy. Young people living at the home are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms and are encouraged to keep their home clean and tidy.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Members of staff support and enable young people to participate in community-based activities on an equal basis and to develop their own identity. All members of staff have attended equality and diversity training. The Statement of Purpose has recently been reviewed and accurately describes what services young people can expect from living at the home. However, the document does not include specific information about the members of staff working at the home, their qualifications or experience. Young people may not therefore be fully aware of the skills various staff members have and how they can be looked after.

Young people are looked after by members of staff who are very well supported and properly managed. All members of staff receive regular, formal supervision. The manager and her deputy also make themselves available to talk with members of staff should they need to do so. Staff meetings are held at regular intervals.

Young people receive the care and services they need from well trained, competent staff. Not all permanent members of staff are trained to a minimum National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People. However, those who do not have this qualification are either undertaking the course of study or

are registered on the course and are awaiting a start date. The home's rotas ensure that there is always a mix of both male and female staff on duty. Consistency of care is provided to young people and there are clear arrangements in place for members of staff to deputise in the absence of the manager.

A record of all training received by members of staff is maintained within the home. Young people are looked after by members of staff who are well trained and competent to meet their needs. The care of young people living at the home is monitored regularly. A system is in place to ensure performance is monitored and any patterns or issues requiring action are highlighted.

The needs of young people are recorded to reflect their individuality and daily records are maintained. Information relating to the care that young people receive is stored securely. Where appropriate, young people are able to access this information within the home if they request it.

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 that written records of all statutory reviews of placement plans are retained on each young person's file (NMS 3.4)
- ensure that each young person living at the home who is eligible has an up-to-date and comprehensive pathway plan (6.1)
- review the home's Statement of Purpose to ensure it fully complies with national minimum standards. (NMS 1)