

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC357133
Inspection date	2 June 2010
Inspector	Stella Henderson
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	2 December 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 provides care and accommodation for three young people of either gender who are aged between 11 and 17 years. The home is a three storey semi-detached house situated in a community that provides access to public transport and amenities such as sports and leisure facilities.

One young person contributed to this inspection.

Summary

This was an unannounced key inspection of the home. All of the outcome areas for young people were inspected.

Young people are adequately safeguarded and there are some effective staff interventions across all outcome areas. Staff are nurturing and understanding, and young people have good support with their education and in preparing to leave care.

Changes to staffing arrangements and new admissions to the home have impacted on the performance of the home. There has been a lapse in basic good practice in certain areas which means the quality of care experienced by young people is compromised. For example, placement plans do not always reflect young people's holistic needs and there is inconsistency in recording across a range of documents.

Monitoring under schedule 34 is not robust enough to highlight these deficits or recognise when the standard of care for young people needs improving. Additionally, these audits do not provide for consultation with young people, their parents and other professionals who may want to comment on the performance of the home.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

No actions or recommendations were raised at the last inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people are able to stay reasonably healthy because staff are effective in meeting their individual health needs. Young people are supported to attend routine health appointments, and they benefit from access to a looked after children nurse and other specialist health professionals. Together with staff intervention, this helps young people to have a sound understanding around issues such as sexual health and drug use.

As far as possible young people are protected from self harming behaviours. Staff seek and act on advice from experienced, qualified professionals. There are occasions however where staff, who are not qualified to do so, make assessments and statements on the psychological state of young people. This puts young people at risk of inappropriate interventions.

Good practice around the administration of medication ensures that young people are protected. Procedures are implemented effectively ensuring that young people receive the right medication at the right time. A first aid kit is to hand and its contents are checked. All shifts are covered by someone who has been trained to administer first aid.

Young people do not receive a well-balanced healthy diet. Menus as served are not consistently recorded, and those that are planned shows that young people do not receive a diet which is sufficiently varied. This puts young people's long term health at risk.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people's right to privacy and confidentiality is generally respected. Staff do not always routinely follow the home's policy in respect of room searches however which compromises this right.

Young people live in an environment where risks to their safety are comprehensively assessed and effectively managed. There is excellent joint working with external agencies on safeguarding matters. Staff work hard to help young people recognise risks and to keep themselves safe outside of the home.

Staff are trained to recognise signs of abuse. New staff understand they must refer concerns to senior management without delay, although some notifiable incidents have not been communicated to the relevant authorities.

The home has policies and procedures on bullying, complaints and behaviour management, all of which are effectively implemented by staff. This means young people live in a home free of intimidation, and where any complaints are promptly responded to. Staff are good at building positive relationships with young people, helping to shape positive behaviour through focussed dialogue and effective interventions.

Sanctions are reasonable and, where necessary, the lowest level of physical restraint is used. Any missing from home episodes are managed well and with the safety of young people in mind, however recording does not always give a full picture of how young people are supported on these occasions.

Young people are protected by effective implementation of recruitment procedures. This ensures that no one who is deemed unsuitable is employed at the home.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people experience nurturing care which is highly focussed on their individual needs, provided by staff who have a good understanding of the task in hand. Staff help young people to feel comfortable with others living in the home. They support young people to take managed risks and to pursue their own particular interests.

There is effective key working with young people, who understand they can discuss matters with anyone in the staff team and with the children's rights officer outside the home. As well as addressing issues of concern, these interventions enable young people to experience

unconditional positive regard and provide opportunities to increase their confidence and self esteem.

Young people are of an age where they can make their own independent arrangements for learning and leisure, but they still look to staff for reassurance and assistance. Staff are good at responding confidently to this need, and supporting young people to achieve to the best of their ability. Staff provide young people with opportunities for learning, supporting college attendance, preparing for interviews, and providing study resources. This helps young people to have more choices and to think constructively about the future.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Placement plans generally assist young people reach their goals and meet their needs. On the whole staff draw up satisfactory plans to establish the objectives of the young person's placement but on occasion assessments are made that are too heavily focussed on one aspect of need or concern. This means that placement plans do not always reflect young people's holistic needs.

Young people are enabled to express their views about their care and the way the home is run. There is regular monitoring of young people's development and progress and staff work effectively to implement decisions from reviews and formal other meetings.

Staff in the home recognise the importance for young people of contact with families and friends. Young people are helped to build and maintain positive relationships, where this is safe to do so. This allows young people to maintain important attachments which have a positive effect on their long term emotional well being.

When young people first arrive at the home staff ensure they have as much information about them as possible. Young people confirm they are made to feel welcome and given guidance about how the home is run.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people are effectively supported in their transition to adulthood. They are helped to acquire and develop independence skills across a range of activities, from routine household tasks to taking greater responsibility for decision-making. Staff provide the necessary assistance with developing practical skills and also offer emotional support as young people manage the responsibilities of adult life.

Young people who are eligible are supported by clear pathway planning. This assists in monitoring whether young people are acquiring the skills and confidence they need for independent living.

Young people live in a home that is decorated and maintained to a reasonable standard. The home has a welcoming atmosphere, and young people are encouraged to take pride in their own rooms. They are able to personalise their bedrooms to reflect their individuality. Young people can relax in a range of communal spaces and there is sufficient space for private meetings.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Young people are generally well looked after in the home. They make good progress and they are adequately safeguarded. Staffing arrangements are in a state of flux, however, which has impacted on the consistency of care provided for young people, and recording practice in particular.

For example, diet sheets are not always completed for young people and fridge and freezer temperatures are not routinely checked. Missing from home records do not always show that discussions are undertaken with young people when they have been missing from home, and the visitor's book is not used in a way that assures safety for young people. Some recording and documentation is not signed off making it difficult to ascertain when it was originally recorded.

The process of transition has not been effectively managed, and monitoring under regulation 34 has not highlighted the deficits found at this inspection. Additionally, this audit does not allow for meaningful consultation with young people, their parents and other professionals. This means that the quality of care young people enjoy is inconsistent and opportunities to improve the care experience of young people is lost.

Staff numbers are sufficient to meet young people's need for care and supervision. Staff are generally well-supported with regular supervision, team meetings and training opportunities. Young people's records contain the information required by these regulations and are appropriately stored. They are, for the most part, written in a way that makes the information understandable for young people.

The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. The staff team is balanced in terms of age, race and gender and staff recognise the different individual needs of young people. The home makes sound efforts to overcome barriers to inclusion in the home and in the wider community.

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
10	provide food which is sufficiently varied (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(iv))	1 July 2010
20	ensure that if, in relation to a children's home, any of the events listed in column 1 of the table of schedule 5 takes place, the registered person shall without delay notify the persons indicated in respect of the event in column 2 of the table (Regulation 30 (1))	1 July 2010

34	establish and maintain a system for monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 at appropriate intervals. The system referred to shall provide for consultation children accommodated at the home, their parents and placing authorities (Regulation 34 (1)(a) and (3))	1 July 2010
35	ensure that any documents and records specified in Schedule 3 is kept up to date and is signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 28 (1)(b)(c))	1 July 2010

Recommendations

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

- provide a record of menus (as served) to demonstrate provision of a suitable and varied diet (NMS10.3)
- search young people's rooms only in accordance with the home's policy (NMS 9.8)
- ensure that all visits to the home are recorded and monitor such visitors (NMS 27.11)
- ensure the placement plan sets out the assessed needs and how these are to be met on a day to day basis. (NMS 2.1)