

Inspection report for Children's Home

Unique reference number	SC357455
Inspection date	26/07/2010
Inspector	Elaine Clare
Type of inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	26/01/2010
--------------------------------	------------

© 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 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 home is a private children's home owned and managed by a family partnership. It is situated in a small industrial town close to local amenities. It is registered to provide accommodation for up to four young males, aged from 10 years old up to 17 years old, with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Their overall aim is to offer a family atmosphere and environment, which will allow vulnerable young people in crisis the stability and care, giving them an opportunity to settle and achieve.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

The inspector was able to talk to four of the young people currently placed at the home during the course of the inspection.

Overall the home offers a high level of care to the young people. Staff continue to work very hard with all agencies and professionals to improve outcomes for young people. This hard work has paid off as excellent achievements were seen and heard of during the inspection across all areas of the Every Child Matters outcomes.

Young people receive excellent food provision; are encouraged to lead healthy lifestyles and engage in health education provided by specialists. They are protected by staff who are very well informed of safeguarding issues and who promote safe lifestyles and safe life choices. Young people's education attendance is excellent with support, from staff, for them to achieve and exceed their potential. The staff clearly listen to young people and they have numerous avenues to voice their wishes and concerns. The house is compact, homely and very well maintained. The management is excellent with a caring, calm and experienced manager who is very supportive of the staff team. Staff are able to access an impressive training programme together with regular supervision. Monitoring of the home is robust.

The inspection resulted in no actions or recommendations.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were two recommendation at the last inspection both of which have been addressed fully. The manager has made staff aware of the policy to inform the relevant authorities should a significant incident take place however no such incident has taken place since the last inspection.

A bound and numbered book to record any sanctions or physical interventions has been created in order to keep a central log of any incidents.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The home provides an outstanding level of health care provision. Young people can expect to receive a varied and balanced diet. Staff consult with young people about their food preferences and encourage them to take part in shopping and cooking, these being skills needed for independent living. Individual care plans include dietary needs and how they will be met. Young people with special dietary needs are suitably catered for.

Young people are encouraged to be well informed about their health needs and how they can be met. These needs are clearly identified pre-admission and addressed to a high standard while at the home. If indicated specialist professional input is sought, with multi-professional meetings regularly taking place. The staff encourage professionals to visit the home and provide health education for the young people. There are comprehensive individual health care plans in place which identify all relevant health needs. The health plans are subject to very regular reviews and are also closely monitored by the Registered Manager and the Regulation 33 visitor. Staff receive training around first aid and record accidents fully. Staff approach and respond to health needs in a sensitive manner and fully support young people at appointments and meetings. All records relating to health needs are extremely comprehensive and very well maintained. Outcomes for current young people in relation to health needs are excellent.

Young people receive medication, both prescribed and non-prescribed, from experienced and competent staff who follow the home's robust and comprehensive medication policy and procedures. This includes excellent systems for storage, recording and stock control measures. Robust monitoring enables good practice to be maintained and lessens the risk of errors occurring. Consents for the administration of medication and first aid are sought. Staff receive training in medication administration to enhance their competency. Current practice remains at a high standard.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Young people's privacy is respected and all information on them is confidentially handled. Files and sensitive information are kept securely in locked cabinets. Staff receive training around confidentiality during their induction programme to support their practice. The home has policies covering privacy and confidentiality that includes young people's records and staff discussing information with other professionals. The home also has a clear policy on young people's rights to access their records.

Young people have access to a robust complaints procedure. The right of a young person to make a complaint is made clear to them on admission. The young person's guide has clear guidance about who they can complain to and their contact details. Young people confirm they feel comfortable in voicing their opinions or concerns through key worker sessions or the more formal route, the complaints procedure. Staff receive training in handling complaints and whistleblowing during their induction process. There have been no complaints logged since the last inspection. Records show the manager, has in the past, handled any concern or complaint professionally, in a timely manner and in accordance with company procedures.

The home has very clear procedures to responding to child protection and safeguarding issues. Staff work in accordance with the company's own policy that works alongside the local child protection and safeguarding policy. Records show that staff work very closely with other agencies involved in child protection. Training is provided to staff during induction and subsequently through the company's well structured training programme. Advice is available for staff at all times from senior management via an on-call managers' rota system. Records are extremely well maintained and robustly monitored by the manager and Regulation 33 visitor. Staff provide young people with advice, guidance and support to keep themselves safe outside the home. This input has had a positive effect on the young people's behaviour. The Registered Manager and service managers have a wealth of experience in child protection and safeguarding. The commitment, communication and awareness shown by the organisation in protecting and safeguarding young people continues to be excellent.

Young people are informed of the home's zero approach to bullying prior to admission. This is followed up by regular discussions in key worker sessions if necessary. Staff are aware of triggers and react immediately to lessen the risk of bullying incidents occurring.

Each young person has written information for staff to follow if they should go missing or leave the home without permission. There is clear guidance as to whether it is an authorised or unauthorised absence and which professionals need notifying. Staff work hard to ensure young people are aware of the risks involved and such risks are included into their individual behaviour management plans. There have been no incidents of young people going missing since the last inspection.

The home notifies all relevant agencies of significant events as listed in Schedule 5 of Regulation 30 of The Children's Homes Regulations.

Each young person has a comprehensive behaviour management plan in place that is drawn up by staff and the young person together. They identify support needed to achieve positive outcomes in changing negative behaviours. Plans identify what may distress the young person and what agreed rewards and sanctions are in place. Records of sanctions and physical interventions are of a high standard. The number of physical interventions, incidents of absconding and sanctions recorded is very low. Young people do present with challenging behaviour at times but the staff team work well together and provide a consistent approach to dealing with any difficult

behaviour. Staff work hard to build positive relationships and provide a warm and caring environment where young people feel at ease to express themselves with the knowledge that staff are supportive. Staff work extremely hard to gain each young person's trust with excellent outcomes.

Young people are protected by robust policies and checking by staff of all health and safety areas in the home. This includes risk assessments that are regularly checked by the manager and updated monthly or yearly. All aspects of fire checks, including fire alarms, smoke detectors, emergency lighting and fire extinguishers, are carried out regularly. Young people and staff experience fire drills and know what to do if a fire occurred. The home has a comprehensive fire risk assessment in place that is revisited monthly by the Registered Manager. Gas and electrical servicing takes place very regularly and are up-to-date. All records are maintained to a high standard.

The organisation has a robust and thorough recruitment process that ensures all necessary checks are completed prior to a member of staff starting work. Young people are actively involved in the recruitment process and are encouraged to give feedback to the recruitment panel. The vetting of visitors is robust.

A social worker wrote to Ofsted and commented 'the children are safe, happy and incredibly well cared for. The level of support and expertise is consistent and reliable throughout the team.'

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Each young person has an extremely comprehensive care plan that addresses how support will be provided. Records clearly identify the individual needs of each young person. Each young person has a key worker who meets with them on a regular basis to discuss their care plan, weekly plans and overall behaviour and progress. High standard reports are forwarded onto the organisation's head office and placing social workers so all professionals involved in the young person's life are kept fully up-to-date. The home has excellent links with a wide range of agencies that fit with the needs of the young people.

Education is clearly valued by the home and young people are given high levels of support to maintain their placements at educational establishments. Attendance levels are excellent, with staff working hard to ensure all young people have access to appropriate educational establishments that will meet their needs. Personal education plans are in place and reviewed regularly with the schools they attend. Excellent contact is maintained between the home and individual education establishments. One head teacher wrote '(the home) communicate exceptionally well with school to ensure positive outcomes for the pupils'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Young people have their needs assessed effectively and comprehensively. As a result no young person is admitted to the home unless the manager and staff are confident they can meet the young person's needs. Each young person has an extremely detailed and comprehensive care plan in place, which covers short- and long-term plans and identifies strategies for staff and young people to use. These plans are reviewed very regularly. All looked after children's paperwork is kept in extremely well organised files. Young people are encouraged to take part in their reviews and do so proactively with guidance and support. Young people are encouraged to complete a questionnaire prior to a review and, if they do not want to participate in their review, are happy for their key worker to voice their opinions and wishes if necessary. Comprehensive reports written by key workers ensure progress is monitored and that any issues can be shared with the team, social workers, families if appropriate or external professionals.

Contact arrangements for each young person are clearly outlined in each young person's care plan. Staff are very supportive of young people in facilitating visits. Close communication with social workers result in agreed practices. Strategies are put in place in order to ensure young people receive high levels of support during and after contacts. Any restrictions on contact are also known and recorded. Excellent written records are maintained of any contacts.

The setting works hard to ensure moving in and leaving the home is a smooth transition. The referral process is robust and comprehensive, with good communication with placing authorities to ensure correct placements. Young people are encouraged to visit the home before placement.

Young people have numerous opportunities to discuss the running of the home and how they are being cared for. It is clear that young people's views and opinions are valued. Young people's meetings take place regularly when they can discuss areas, such as menu planning, activities, changes in the home and any other areas they bring to the meeting. Key worker sessions are held very regularly and provide the opportunity for young people to express their views and wishes. The manager is highly visible and approachable and senior management visit regularly where they seek the views of the young people who happily voice their opinions. The young people are confident in expressing their views and this is encouraged by the staff team. Advocates are proactively sought for young people if identified or requested.

Relationships between staff and young people are warm and respectful. Staff are clear of the boundaries and behavioural expectations and provide support so young people are aware of these expectations. This has resulted in very good outcomes for current young people. Young people make remarkable progress in managing their behaviour and utilising their communication skills. After a period of adjustment, initially following admission, young people learn to trust staff and respond to their support. Staff are professional and competent in carrying out their roles, and always

put the needs of the young people first. Staff are sensitive and supportive even during challenging times.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are fully supported in helping them prepare for adult life. Staff work closely with all professionals to ensure young people gain the skills necessary for adult life and facilitate smooth transitions into semi or independent living accommodation.

Young people live in a house that is spacious and situated close to amenities they can access. The house is very well maintained with young people respectful of their surroundings. The setting is homely and very well furnished and decorated. One young person said, 'I love the family atmosphere'. Young people are able to have their say in the choice of furnishings and fittings and able to personalise their bedrooms. Communal areas are open plan. There is an impressive maintenance spreadsheet that the manager can access to see straight away when any requests will be actioned.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Equality, diversity and equal opportunities are promoted via access to education whether inside or outside the home. Young people are given equal access to key working and staff support. Their needs are met on an individual basis, demonstrated through care plans and outcomes for young people. The company has tailor-made equality and diversity training for all staff.

The home has a Statement of Purpose that was last updated this year. The children's guide is of a high standard with a wealth of information for young people. The guide makes it clear what rights and responsibilities young people have and what they can expect from the home. It also includes what is expected of the young people in relation, for example, to behaviour. It includes useful telephone numbers of external agencies to whom the young people can approach for advice or to complain to.

There are clear lines of accountability within the organisation. The Registered Manager is calm, experienced and has an approachable and open manner. His monitoring of the home is excellent and outcomes for young people evidence his effectiveness as a manager. A staff member said 'the commitment of the staff and the manager is excellent. The day to day care of the children is outstanding.' He is supported by a strong senior management team. Good staffing levels are maintained, giving the young people access to very good levels of support at all times. The on-call system enables staff to access support and advice from senior managers within the organisation. Expectations are high for staff to access training

and a closely monitored system ensures that all staff are up to date with training. Training includes areas such as first aid, child protection, food hygiene, physical interventions, behaviour management, complaints and whistleblowing. New staff complete a thorough induction before going onto to take National Vocational Qualifications. Staff receive regular supervision and attend staff meetings.

Young people live in a home where staff practice is robustly monitored. The Registered Manager closely monitors records and practices on weekly basis. He is supported by the responsible individual in the organisation who visits regularly to offer support and guidance. The Regulation 33 visitor provides excellent reports following her visits, with actions and recommendations for the manager to address. These visits include consultation with the young people living in the home and feedback from placing social workers and families of the young people. The quality of these reports is excellent. They are submitted monthly to Ofsted without fail. There is an annual development plan for the home that covers areas from décor to finances and activities.

The young people's case files are very well organised, regularly reviewed and updated. They are subject to thorough checks by key workers, the manager, and senior managers within the organisation. Individual case files are stored securely and safely and arranged in a manner that makes them readily useable by staff. All records are maintained to an extremely high standard.