

Inspection report for Children's Home

Unique reference number	SC372613
Inspection date	04/03/2011
Inspector	Rachel Ruth Britten
Type of inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	02/11/2010
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2011

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 is a small children's home that looks after up-to-two young people, of either gender, aged between 10 and 17 years. It is located in a three-storey former farmhouse style property, situated in a semi rural setting on the outskirts of a busy market town. The operation and layout of the home allows staff to adjust the environment and the care provided to meet the specific needs of the children and young people accommodated.

One young person spoke with the inspector during this visit.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

The purpose of this unannounced interim inspection was to reassess the outcomes for young people under the national minimum standards relating only to the staying safe outcome. There was one previous recommendation made at the last full inspection in November 2010. The home continues to safeguard young people well overall through sustained good practice and generally robust systems of organisation. Four recommendations are made to address shortfalls identified. These shortfalls do not have a serious impact upon the safety of young people but they do have the potential to do so.

Improvements since the last inspection

There was one recommendation raised at the last inspection. This concerned the supervision of staff and ensuring that all staff receive sufficient supervision time. Managers state that they meet requirements for both regularity and length of supervisions for all staff, including a number of inductees who are currently working in the home. The supervision timetable was scrutinised and one staff member record. Evidence shows that the recommendation is met.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people's privacy is respected by staff and balanced sensitively with the need to protect them from harm. The young people's guide includes information about when it might be necessary to search their possessions. Young people enjoy a good balance of personal space in their bedrooms and bathrooms. Their behaviour reward scheme includes points for not going into one another's bedrooms. Managers give careful consideration to the change in dynamics brought by new admissions to the home, particularly if a young person has been the sole resident for some time. For example, the locking of bedrooms and the arrangements for monitoring young people's movements at night are reviewed. The arrangements agreed with the placing authority for telephone and face-to-face contact with family and friends are well supported by staff. However, the telephone is not freely accessible without asking staff first. This restricts the ability of young people to make confidential calls, for example, if they need to make a complaint or emergency call.

Young people know how to complain and feel able to do so if they are unhappy about any aspect of living in the home. Useful numbers are given to them in a personalised young person's guide. Similarly, logs show that safeguarding complaints, informal complaints, compliments and complaints from all sources are properly dealt with to safeguard young people and inform the safe working of the home. Notifications to Ofsted are made appropriately, although manager monitoring has shown one missing notification. This has given rise to the home assuming responsibility for sending notifications direct to Ofsted as well as through the organisation's main office. The home's monitoring has also identified that the various complaint logs need to be cross-referenced to ensure that there is one master list covering every complaint stating where the record is sited.

Managers and staff act appropriately to protect young people from abuse. They follow procedures and liaise with the Local Safeguarding Children Board. They maintain suitable policies and procedures to safely manage times when there is only one member of staff on duty with one young person. Managers also actively seek to continue therapeutic work with young people where safeguarding issues have arisen, so that their welfare and progress is prioritised and addressed. Young people are well protected from bullying because an atmosphere is created where bullying is known to be unacceptable. The young people's guide states: 'we will never deliberately make you feel small, make you feel stupid, make you feel bad or take away your rights'. The home's risk assessments address most areas concerning the environment and young people's activities. However, some of young people's known illicit and risky potential activities are not specifically risk assessed. In addition, the home's impact risk assessments do not review the risks of bullying in the home posed by each young person as the individuals in placement change. These shortfalls in the use of risk assessments potentially compromise the quality of preparation and action to minimise risky behaviour.

Young people are making good progress in developing socially acceptable behaviour.

Each young person has a specific absence without authority protocol, but these have not needed to be used since the last inspection. Managers and staff believe that good behaviour boundaries and unfamiliarity with the area are factors which contribute to this stability. Positive behaviour management techniques and achievable reward schemes for all aspects of good social behaviour are proving successful too. Young people are feeling empowered when they can buy larger items from savings and reward monies, which they use to develop hobbies and constructive pursuits. Scales are used to measure aspects of behaviour and mood. Patterns and links for individual young people are sought using the data produced, and individual work with young people aims to address positively all areas of difficulty. Success has been achieved recently in helping young people to gain a positive and more accurate understanding about certain iconic world figures, war history, controlled combat and self-defence. Similarly, improved behaviours for self-respect, self-esteem, sexuality and appropriate touch are being learned. Restraints, sanctions and reparations are mostly recorded well. However, one restraint which has been the subject of a safeguarding complaint has not been recorded in the home's physical intervention log. Monitoring has identified some shortfalls in staff efficiency in recording restraints, but has not identified this omission. This shortfall compromises young people's rights and safety if accurate records of physical interventions are not reliably completed and available to monitor practice.

Young people live in a safe setting where regular daily checks, weekly and annual checks are appropriately made concerning the utilities and security. This includes ensuring that young people are safe when transported in the home's vehicle. Fire drills are held regularly and young people know how to respond in an emergency. All staff are properly vetted and visitors to the home are usually signed in and their identification checked. However, maintenance workers for the organisation are able to enter and work on the home whether others are present or not. They do not always sign in or show identification. This means that records of visitors are incomplete and staff practice is not always seen by young people to be robust. There is also potential compromise to young people's safety. In addition, the hot water outlet in one bathroom is extremely hot and the front door bell is not working on the day of inspection. The temperature of the hot water is to be investigated, but does not pose a significant risk to the young people presently in residence. The door bell was fixed on the day of inspection.

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.

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 the siting of the telephone is accessible and private for young people and that any arrangements differing from this are agreed in placement plans and understood by the young people (NMS 9.5)
- ensure that risk assessments are carried out in relation to children's likely activities (both permitted and illicit) and in relation to the risk of bullying, so that action is taken to identify and reduce these risks to an acceptable level (NMS 26.2)
- ensure that manager monitoring of restraint record books effectively identifies and addresses the implications for care of individual children and current care practice (NMS 22.11)
- ensure that the system to record all visits to the home is implemented in practice, including when the premises are empty. (NMS 27.11)