

Inspection report for Children's Home

Unique reference number	SC381085
Inspection date	18/03/2010
Inspector	Julian Parker
Type of inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	21/09/2009
--------------------------------	------------

© 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 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

The home is a semi-detached property registered for two young people, aged between eight and under 18 on admission, who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It was registered in September 2008 and is operated by the local authority; it has the benefit of being indistinguishable from its neighbours. The home is located on a quiet road in a suburban area, a short walk from local amenities and bus routes to the city centre. It has front and back gardens, is not overlooked and has a large grassed area opposite.

Summary

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

This was an announced interim inspection. The visit concentrated on the Every Child Matters outcome areas for being healthy, staying safe and organisation. At the time of this visit two young people were living at the home who both declined to contribute to the inspection process.

Overall, the home provides a satisfactory standard of care for young people. The physical and emotional health needs of the young people are effectively met and staff evidently work hard to keep young people safe and constructively occupied. Staff are well supported by their manager, who presents a strong commitment towards practice improvement. However these efforts are undermined by shortfalls in key outcome areas which have resulted in two actions and two good practice recommendations.

Physical restraint training is not current for all staff. There are organisational shortfalls insofar as the home's Statement of Purpose has not been updated and external Regulation 33 monitoring is inconsistent in frequency. The home's insurance does not fully comply with standards.

This judgement will be reviewed at the home's next full inspection when all key national minimum standards will be re-assessed.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the registered provider was asked to act upon four recommendations. The recommendations asked for staff to complete their training for safeguarding young people and to develop clarity in behaviour management plans. The manager was asked to improve the frequency of staff supervision and team meetings to confirm the provision of ongoing support for staff at the home. All these measures have now been completed or introduced at the home.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

An awareness of healthy eating and the importance of a balanced diet is promoted with young people living at the home. Young people are involved with planning the daily menus and use this as a positive learning experience to experience different foods. Young people are introduced to self help skills, as part of their daily routine. Menu planning is flexible offering a range of dishes including cuisine from different cultures.

The health and welfare needs of young people are addressed by staff following prescribed policies and adapting their practice to meet each individual's requirements. Young people are registered with local health services and staff maintain accurate records of all related appointments. Staff work closely with the looked after children (LAC) nurse and other health professionals to help young people address their own particular health related issues. Young people are discouraged from smoking, alcohol abuse and illicit drug misuse. This helps them to be more conscious about leading a healthy and safe lifestyle. First aid arrangements in the home are good with staff receiving regular training, equipping them for dealing with minor accidents or ailments.

Young people's case files contain important information about their health and medical needs. Health is actively promoted by staff at the home with key aspects of health education and keeping safe being introduced. The home uses a medication policy which includes appropriate procedures and practice guidance for staff. Medication is safely stored in a lockable cabinet.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The right to privacy and appropriate levels of confidentiality are practically demonstrated by young people having their own lockable bedrooms, by the protection of sensitive personal information and by staff being careful with how they communicate about young people with parents and other professionals.

Concerns or complaints made by young people living at the home are acted upon appropriately by care staff. The home has a clear and effective complaints policy which is summarised in the young person's guide to the home. Young people know how to complain and who they can complain to. They have access to an appointed independent advocate should they require help or support in making their concerns known.

Adherence to the registered provider's policies promotes the safety and welfare of young people living at the home. Policies comply with regulatory requirements and good practice in areas of child protection, including countering bullying. Young

people live in a caring, friendly and safe environment where staff are proactive in ensuring bullying does not happen. Young people are well educated about the detrimental effects oppressive behaviours can have. The home has direct access to guidance provided by the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Staff are trained and able to recognise signs of abuse and how to respond to any child protection concerns.

The home has a written policy and staff guidance confirming what action should be taken if a young person goes absent from the home without consent. Procedures follow a regional joint protocol, specifically developed to ensure that young people's safety is promoted.

Staff base their management of behaviour on the active encouragement of acceptable behaviour, by providing consistent boundaries and by praising positive behaviour. Discussion of the house rules takes place at the time of a young person's admission and information is written in the young person's guide. Staff treat the young people with respect and as individuals thereby encouraging good behaviour and a minimal need for the use of sanctions or behavioural controls. Staff are trained in behaviour management which includes the safe use of physical restraint using an approved intervention; however not all staff training is recorded as being up-to-date. This weakness has the potential to compromise the safety of both staff and young people. The views and opinions of young people are sought as part of this process, to develop and improve feasible behaviour management plans.

The home demonstrates its awareness of potential dangers to looked after children by producing risk assessments for all aspects of safety in the living environment, for example, the risk from fire and hazards, or from young people's behaviour and recreational activities. These assessments are reviewed regularly and take into account daily tasks and any changes affecting the home such as staffing levels or changes in occupancy. Young people living in the home are encouraged to take the risk of fire seriously and play a compliant part in responding to regular fire precautionary tests, evacuations and drills.

The compliance of the registered provider's insurance liability is lessened by the absence of detail about the home on the certificate being displayed. This detracts from confirming that children and staff at the home are comprehensively safeguarded by the local authority.

The home has effective procedures in place for monitoring all visitors to the home. No unauthorised person can access the building or young people living there. Staff personnel files were not available during this inspection as they are held centrally by the provider. Staff on duty said that practice was safe because no staff started working with children without going through a rigorous selection process or ahead of all statutory checks being completed.

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 satisfactory.

Young people receive good support to enable their needs to be addressed because the placement is well organised and staff receive training to improve their knowledge and practice.

The home's Statement of Purpose includes the information prescribed by Schedule 1 of the Children's Home Regulations, detailing the home's operation and its services, however at this inspection this information was not up-to-date. The young person's guide provides clear information about the rules of the home.

Staff are currently being well supported by their manager and other senior staff within the authority. Improvements to the frequency of staff supervision and team meetings more adequately focuses and supports their care role. Staff practice is embedded by having access to comprehensive policies, procedures and guidance. Most staff have attended all statutory training and additional courses to help them provide for young people's particular needs in an individualised manner.

Young people receive good levels of supervision and support because the staffing rotas are well organised and the home is adequately resourced. Staff are made accountable for providing good care because importance is placed on the quality and consistency of day-to-day care. There is a diverse mix of gender and background within the staff team to promote young people's identity and wellbeing.

There is a process to regularly monitor the operational efficiency and quality of care being provided by the home. The content of the in-house monitoring remains generally at a good standard. Independent monthly monitoring takes place through the use of local authority Regulation 33 visitors to confirm that the home is operating

within the scope of its Statement of Purpose; however this process is erratic and, because of this, its usefulness or corporate accountability is undermined.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The home operates in a way that demonstrates a clear recognition of the varied and different needs young people have. Each young person has a plan of care in place identifying individual needs relating to ethnicity, race, religion, culture, gender, disability and language. Staff knowledge has been further improved because training relating to promoting equality and diversity has been accessed.

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/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Std.	Action	Due date
22	ensure that all staff have in date statutory training in physical restraint Regulation 17 (national minimum standard 22.8)	31/05/2010
33	ensure that Regulation 33 visits are carried out to the required frequency. Regulation 33.1 (national minimum standard 33.1)	31/05/2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure that a certificate of insurance is provided in respect of liability which may be incurred by the registered provider in relation to the home that specifies the name and address of the home. (Regulation 36.3.e) (national minimum standard 26.9)
- ensure that the statement of purpose contains all of the matters listed in Schedule 1 and presents an up to date and accurate reflection of the service being provided (Children's Home Regulations 2001, Regulation 4,5, Schedule 1).