

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC391993
Inspection date	22/06/2012
Inspector	Helen Walker
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	28/02/2012
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2012

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.

Service information

Brief description of the service

The children's home provides care and accommodation for up to six young people. The home is provided by a charity and is registered to care for young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements

Adequate: a service that only meets minimum requirements

Inadequate: a service that does not meet minimum requirements

Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be **good**.

Overall the home provides a good quality of care and the outcomes for young people are positive. Young people receive high quality support from staff. The staff team understand young people's individual needs and they promote access to education and health services. Staff value the importance of education for young people and work hard to maintain their school and college placements.

Young people benefit from a consistent staff team who are very caring and well trained. Parents and professionals consider young people who come to live at the home are well looked after and are kept safe. A young person said 'the best thing about the home is the staff'. Staff have a clear understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities. Young people say they feel safe, are heard and have opportunities to give their views about care in the home. They comment about times when bullying has occurred in the home. However, they feel staff deal with bullying properly and recognise bullying is unacceptable.

The manager provides effective management of the home and continues to improve outcomes for young people. This is supported by home's comprehensive monitoring systems which help to ensure good standards are maintained.

Four recommendations have been made as a result of this inspection. These relate to the routine locking of the internal kitchen door, the effectiveness of sanctions, the guidance and procedure for e-safety and that all young people have appropriate sex and relationships guidance.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure within reason, hazards are removed or avoided and comply with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, while not conflicting with providing a homely environment, in particular that the internal kitchen door is not routinely locked (NMS 10.4; Volume 5, statutory guidance, para 2.64)
- ensure sanctions for poor behaviour are not punitive but restorative in nature and effective (NMS 3.14 and Volume 5, statutory guidance, para 2.89)
- ensure the home's safeguarding policy includes access to procedures and advice in relation to e-safety (NMS 4.4 and Volume 5, statutory guidance, para 2.67)
- provide support and guidance as necessary on good health and personal care, in particular that this includes appropriate sex and relationships advice. (NMS 6 and Volume 5, statutory guidance para 2.58)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for children and young people are **good**.

Young people make good progress at the home. Staff support them to maintain regular contact with their family and develop appropriate friendships. This enables young people to build and maintain links with those who are important to them. Staff assist young people to gain an understanding about their life history and background so that they develop a sense of identity.

Staff provide good support to young people in relation to their health. They receive advice and information about a range of health matters such as the dangers of smoking, drugs and alcohol. The home's involvement with a range of health promotion agencies allows young people to have professional support to lead a healthy lifestyle. However, some young people choose not to take the advice and continue to put their health at risk by misuse of substances.

Young people have regular attendance at school. Teachers confirm staff are involved with young people's education. They have regular contact with the school and staff attend parent and review meetings. This helps young people to understand that staff value their education and see it as an important part of their life development.

Young people learn how to prepare meals and carry out routine household tasks in the home. They develop confidence in a range of practical skills that prepare them for leaving care. They have bank accounts and incentives to carry out household tasks such as cleaning their bedroom and washing their laundry. Young people readily undertake the tasks. During the inspection some of the young people enjoyed

preparing meals and baking.

Quality of care

The quality of the care is **good**.

Young people benefit from really positive and warm relationships with staff. They receive care from a consistent and experienced staff team who promote a family atmosphere in the home. Young people say they are able to talk to staff and feel they are listened to. Young people are aware of how to make a complaint and identify staff and external professionals they say they can talk to. Professionals involved with young people comment on their observation of the very supportive and caring attitude that staff have towards young people.

Young people's placement plans are specific to their individual needs. Young people confirm their understanding and involvement in compiling these. This helps them to understand the reasons for living in the home and to enable planning for their future. Additionally, young people attend their care review meetings and say they feel able give their views.

Staff work extremely closely with social workers and other professionals such as those in health and education. Young people's good health is actively encouraged by staff and health promotion agencies. However, arrangements to ensure younger children benefit from age-appropriate sex and relationship advice are not in place.

Staff are committed to improve young people's life chances through education. Teachers and social workers say staff fully support young people's education. Staff work had to develop working relationships with local schools and education advisors which has positive results. All young people attend local mainstream school; have a planned apprenticeship or college course start date. Education is seen as an important part of young people's life and school attendance is a daily routine of the home. Young people have staff support to complete homework tasks and have time set aside for this.

Young people are encouraged to participate in sports and leisure activities as well as choosing different hobbies and interests. Young people talk enthusiastically about staff taking them sea fishing and they say they are looking forward to their planned summer holiday. Young people's achievements are praised and rewarded which helps to develop their self-esteem and confidence.

Young people are provided with a healthy diet and access to prepare and make meals or bake in the home's kitchen. Staff prepare and teach young people independence skills in preparation for leaving care.

Young people live in a house that is homely, comfortable, well maintained and situated in a smart and pleasant residential area. Young people say they particularly like the location as this is close to their family and friends.

Safeguarding children and young people

The service is **good** at keeping children and young people safe and feeling safe.

Young people are looked after by competent staff who understand the need to keep them safe. They say they feel safe and that staff give good advice about looking after themselves outside of the home. Parents and professionals say they are confident that staff protect and keep young people safe.

Young people say there have been some bullying incidents which they are not happy about. However, staff are proactive to deal with bullying swiftly and young people say staff sort this out properly. Anti-bullying is strongly promoted and young people participate in workshops to raise their awareness about this behaviour. The home's current anti-bullying policy does not include information about cyber bullying. Therefore, staff do not have written guidance to help promote and raise the awareness of e-safety for the benefit of young people.

Staff follow comprehensive risk assessments to help them manage the behaviours displayed by young people. Positive behaviour is promoted by staff. Sanctions have recently decreased mainly due to staff emphasis on praise and reward. Young people consider sanctions are fair. However, there are times when the same sanction is repeatedly used as a means of addressing behaviour despite not being effective.. Young people's access to the kitchen is often limited as staff routinely lock the kitchen door. They have to ask for the door to be unlocked. This is not a homely approach to manage the risks associated with young people's use of the kitchen.

Staff follow the local police protocol for missing from home episodes. Such episodes have reduced and are not an issue at this time. Staff have training to help them recognise and support young people who put themselves in 'risky' situations. Staff comment on recent training about child sexual exploitation and say this was informative and relevant to their work.

The provider adopts a robust procedure to employ new staff and follows safer recruitment practices. This ensures, as far as possible, that young people who come to live at the home are looked after by suitable people. Good health and safety procedures enable staff to maintain a safe and secure home environment for young people to live comfortably.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of the children's home are **good**.

The manager is suitably qualified and experienced. This assists her to provide good leadership and effective management of the home. The staff team say they have good support from the manager in relation to their work and professional development. Staff are appropriately trained and the majority have a suitable childcare qualification. This helps them to meet the needs of the young people they care for.

Young people are looked after by a consistent staff team, most have worked at the home for a number of years. They benefit from high staffing levels, often on a one-to-one basis. This provides young people with continuity of care from staff they know and trust. A parent said they feel able to contact the home and have good relationships with staff.

The home has a development plan which shows the strengths and areas for development. This means opportunities to improve the quality of care and outcomes for young people are recognised. Key professionals from other agencies comment very positively on partnership working with the home. One professional said 'staff engage with young people really well and they are very, very supportive to them'. Another said 'they provide structures within the home, like parents'.

The one requirement and two recommendations made at the last inspection have been met. The home's Statement of Purpose has been updated. This includes full information to show how missing from home incidents are addressed. The manager's required monitoring record now gives comprehensive details about the trends and issues arising in the home. These are identified and action taken to improve outcomes for young people. For example, sanctions are fewer as a result of more positive behaviour management methods. Written records about young people missing from the home have improved and contain all relevant information about the incident.

The manager ensures the appropriate authorities are notified of any significant events relating to the protection of the young people. The home keeps detailed records about the care and welfare of young people. Staff support young people to engage and contribute to their file records. The records are up to date and stored securely.

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 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the *Inspections of children's homes – framework for inspection* (March 2011) and the evaluation schedule for children's homes.