

Inspection report for Children's Home

Unique reference number	SC391993
Inspection date	22/09/2010
Inspector	Stephen Graham
Type of inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	24/02/2010
--------------------------------	------------

© 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

The home provides care for up to six children and young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties aged between eight and 17 years of age.

The service is provided from a detached house set in its own grounds in the suburbs of the local town. The house provides well-furnished and equipped accommodation on three floors that is planned to suit the needs of the children and young people. There is good access to local public transport.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

The purpose of this visit was to conduct a full unannounced inspection which examined all key national minimum standards.

Children and young people living at the home benefit from good levels of care. They are encouraged to eat healthily and to contribute their views on menu choice. They are helped to access the health care services that they need. The staff team are given regular training and receive good support to help them keep children and young people safe. Children and young people receive good individual support, are involved in their local community and are encouraged to give their views about how the home is run. The staff team work hard to provide a homely environment for children and young people to live in. The staff team overall are well qualified and experienced and the home is well organised.

Five shortfalls were identified as a result of this inspection; these relate mainly to aspects of recording and documentation, most of which only impact in a limited way on the well-being and safety of children and young people. The required checks undertaken on new staff members are not always fully completed. The record of menus (as served) does not always clearly demonstrate the provision of a suitable and varied diet to each child or young person living at the home. The complaints records are not always sufficiently detailed to demonstrate that those received have been responded to fully within 28 days. The records of fire drills are not sufficiently detailed to clearly demonstrate the involvement of the children and young people living at the home. The current children's guide to the home is not presented in a form appropriate to the age and understanding of all of the children and young people in the home.

Improvements since the last inspection

To help ensure that the health needs of young people are met, written permission has been obtained for the appropriate administration of medication to each of them.

If a room search is ever necessary to help keep children and young people safe, the details of this are recorded clearly and are shared with the children and young people themselves. The manager ensures that any significant events occurring at the home are notified to Ofsted as required. If any child or young person is ever missing, the records of this are presented clearly and are completed in full detail. If sanctions are ever imposed, the manager ensures that these are compliant with the regulations and that staff are following their own agreed procedures.

To help ensure that children and young people can contribute positively to their care arrangements, an accurate and up-to-date placement plan is maintained for each of them. The admission and discharge register has also been improved to include all of the information required by the regulations.

To help ensure that children and young people live in a home which is properly organised, the Statement of Purpose now contains an accurate description of all matters required by the regulations. Staffing arrangements at the home now help to ensure that children and young people are enabled to maintain relationships with members of both genders.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children and young people living at the home receive good help from staff to meet their health needs. They are actively encouraged to be involved in menu choice and contribute their ideas to menu planning regularly. Children and young people who spoke to us confirmed that they can shop for food with staff and can also practice their cooking skills. The meals provided are varied and include healthy choices and examples of food from different cultures. However, individual records of the food actually eaten by each child or young person are not always fully complete so do not clearly demonstrate that they are eating a suitable and varied diet.

The staff team work closely with placing social workers and a range of health professionals to help ensure that children and young people receive good support and access to the health services that they need. The staff team can also access additional advice from specialist health advisors if this is necessary to meet health care needs. Regular first aid training is provided and staff team members also receive training and guidance to help ensure that they administer medication to children and young people safely. Detailed records are maintained to help monitor and demonstrate how individual health care needs are met. Children and young people who spoke to us confirmed that the staff team look after them if they are feeling unwell and that they are helped to see a doctor and other health professionals as necessary.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

There are good arrangements in place to help make sure that children and young people are cared for safely. The staff team follow agreed guidance to ensure that care records are kept safely stored. Children and young people are encouraged to share their views and add their own comments to their care reports. Arrangements are in place to allow room checks to be completed if this is ever necessary to help keep children and young people safe.

Visitors to the home are supervised by the staff team to ensure that children and young people are safe when visitors are present. Checks are completed on staff team members to ensure that they themselves are suitable to work with children.

However, not all of the information required is gathered and kept for reference on each staff file.

To help keep children and young people safe and protect them from abuse, the staff team complete agreed safeguarding training. Detailed guidance and reporting procedures are in place to assist them to protect the children and young people. Detailed risk assessments are completed for each child or young person to help further ensure this. There are agreed procedures in place to help staff record and respond to any complaints that may be received at the home. However, the log used to record these is not always completed in sufficient detail to demonstrate the length of time taken to investigate and respond to any concerns received. Children and young people who spoke to us confirmed that they received good advice and support from staff to help keep them safe. There are clear procedures in place which are used to help ensure that if a child or young person is ever missing they are found and kept safe, as quickly as possible.

The staff team maintain records of any instances of bullying occurring at the home. These demonstrate clearly how they respond when any such events occur and how they work to prevent any further instances. The staff team are trained in the appropriate use of physical restraint where this is necessary to help keep children and young people safe. There is agreed guidance for staff to follow if sanctions are imposed and a clear record of those sanctions applied to children and young people is maintained at the home.

Risk assessments are used by staff to help ensure that the home is a safe place for children and young people to live in. Routine checks are undertaken on the safety equipment in place to protect children and young people. The staff team help them to practice what they should do in any emergency. However, the records maintained of this do not clearly indicate which children or young people have benefitted from this.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children and young people living at the home receive good levels of close individual support. The staffing arrangements are well organised and work to support the care planning put in place for each individual. The manager at the home closely monitors the support provided to the children and young people each day. This helps ensure that the individual needs of each child or young person using the service are met. Regular written and verbal updates regarding progress with care plans are provided to each placing social worker. Children and young people are also encouraged and supported by the staff team to take part in a good range of social and recreational activities in their local community.

Children and young people also receive good help in meeting their educational needs. Those children and young people living at the home of school age are attending school regularly. There is a well organised programme of activities for those young people not in employment or education. The staff team liaise very closely with education staff to help children and young people maintain their engagement in education. Good records are maintained which helps demonstrate this. The home has good space, resources and equipment to help children and young people with their learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The care to be provided to children and young people coming to live at the home is agreed with their placing social worker and is recorded in good detail. Care plans are implemented and monitored daily by key workers and the staff team as a whole. The manager at the home also monitors these regularly to help ensure that they are being implemented effectively. Children and young people say that they can regularly discuss their plans with their key worker and their views are recorded. Regular updates on the progress being made in meeting them is provided to their placing social workers.

Key staff and the manager regularly attend care team meetings to discuss the care planning for each child or young person. They also provide detailed written reports to the formal review meetings organised for each child or young person living at the home. Children and young people themselves are encouraged to write down their views for these meetings and to attend in person. A range of professionals involved in the care of each child or young person also attend the meetings. This helps facilitate good information sharing and joint planning to further improve outcomes for the children and young people. The staff team members who attend make a record of the outcome of each meeting. However, some delays can occur in the receipt of the formal outcome reports from the meetings provided by the placing authority.

There are well organised arrangements in place at the home which help to ensure that when children and young people first move in, they are admitted safely. The manager completes detailed risk assessments and the staff team have detailed procedures to follow to help the child or young person settle in quickly and safely. Written agreements are made with placing social workers regarding contact arrangements for each child or young person. The staff team provide practical support where this is needed to help support children and young people maintain contact with family and friends.

Children and young people are encouraged by staff to share their views and ideas on how the home is run at regular house meetings. Good records are kept of the suggestions children and young people have made and how some of these have been implemented in the running of the home. Children and young people can also talk individually with staff or their key worker at any time and their views are recorded in detail in their care files.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

There are good arrangements in place at the home to help older young people to practice and develop their independent life skills. Children and young people are encouraged by staff to practise their self care skills and can help with shopping and cooking. Care files contain good evidence of the progress children and young people make in developing these skills. The staff team also support young people to obtain opportunities for work experience and training.

The home is decorated and furnished to a good standard. The staff team monitor the condition of the home and work to maintain a homely and comfortable environment throughout. Children and young people are helped by staff to personalise their own bedroom space.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

There is a Statement of Purpose in place which contains clear information about the service provided at the home. Children and young people also receive their own guide to the home. It contains good information about how the service is provided and informs children and young people who they should speak to if they need any further advice. However, not all of its content is presented in a form appropriate to the age and understanding of children or young people living at the home.

The staff team overall are well qualified and have good experience in working with children and young people. New staff members are provided with induction training and all staff are supported to access additional training opportunities. The manager monitors and adjusts staffing levels to ensure that children and young people are given the support they need.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Guidance and training for staff working at the home helps to ensure this. Children and young people are helped to participate in community-based activities. They also receive good support based on their individual needs and the staff team work closely with external professionals to help provide this.

The manager has good systems in place to help them monitor the home's records. Independent visits also take place to help monitor the care provided at the home. Children and young people's files are very well maintained and kept safely stored. They include all of the information needed by staff to care successfully for the children and young people.

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
27	ensure that all required information is obtained and maintained for reference within staff files. (Regulation 26(3))	30/11/2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the record of menus (as served) demonstrates the provision of a suitable and varied diet to each young person living at the home (NMS 10.4)
- ensure that complaints records are sufficiently detailed to demonstrate that they have been fully responded to within 28 days (NMS 16.1)
- ensure that records of fire drills are sufficiently detailed to demonstrate the involvement of the children living at the home (NMS 26.8)
- ensure that the children's guide to the home is presented in a form appropriate to the age and understanding of children in the home. (NMS 1.3)