

Inspection report for Children's Home

Unique reference number	SC392549
Inspection date	25/01/2011
Inspector	Bill Drumm
Type of inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	19/08/2010
--------------------------------	------------

© 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

The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three young people of either sex, aged between 8 and 17 years old, who may be experiencing a range of social, emotional and behavioural problems.

The home is a terraced cottage with an enclosed rear garden. The ground floor comprises a kitchen/dining room, lounge, a room used as the manager's office and a single toilet. On the first floor there are four bedrooms and bathing facilities. Three bedrooms are used by young people, the other bedroom is used as a staff sleep in room. Each young person has their own single bedroom.

The home is close to local shops. Bus routes are nearby if young people wish to visit the larger towns in the area for access to larger shops and leisure facilities.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This was an unannounced key inspection of the home and all of the outcome areas for young people were inspected. All outcome areas were found to be good and overall, this is a good service.

Members of staff care about the young people who live at the home and are fully committed in helping them to achieve their maximum potential. Members of staff and the young people who live at the home enjoy relaxed, informal relationships. Young people appeared comfortable in approaching members of staff with their concerns or anxieties.

Members of the staff are knowledgeable, skilled and committed to providing a high standard of care to young people. Monitoring processes are good and help to ensure standards are maintained with any shortfalls being addressed quickly.

As a result of this inspection three recommendations have been made. The home's restraint procedures do not fully comply with national minimum standards, and the opinions of parents and social workers,, about how the home can continue to improve, are not routinely gathered. In addition, the independent visitor to the home does not interview the parents or relatives of the young people living there to ensure their welfare is safeguarded.

Three young people currently live at the home, all of whom were present at the time of the inspection and directly contributed to the inspection process.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection, the home's manager has reviewed and up dated the home's countering bullying risk assessment. In addition the procedures for a child being absent without authority have also been reviewed.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Members of staff ensure young people have easy access to fresh fruit and vegetables. One young person who returned an inspection questionnaire said: 'we have different menus with choices and healthy options'; another young person spoken to said: 'there's always a fruit bowl with things in it and we can help ourselves'. Nutritious meals are provided and young people participate in the planning of menus, shopping for food items and meal preparation. The home ensures that young people living there are able to follow the diet of their choice. The home also ensures that young people are able to sample food from different countries and cultures, including from within the British Isles. Young people living at the home enjoy a healthy, well-balanced diet and healthy eating is promoted.

Young people living at the home have their individual health care needs identified. Each young person has a healthcare plan which outlines what their physical and emotional needs are and what support they may need. One young person said: 'I've not been ill but if I was they'd take me to the doctors'. Another young person said: 'I've been to the doctors and I've seen the dentist'. Young people are supported and encouraged to attend all meetings and appointments with healthcare professionals. One member of staff said: 'the looked after nurse is told whenever we get a new young person living here and she comes to see them when she can'. Members of staff have all attended first aid training. The health care needs of young people are well promoted.

All members of staff have undertaken training in the safe handling and administration of medication and the home has policies and procedures in place relating to the safe handling and administration of medication. At the time of the inspection, no young people are taking prescribed medication. Young people living at the home are fully protected by the home's medication administration systems.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Members of staff were observed to be pleasant and friendly towards all the young people living at the home. Each young person has their own bedroom which they are encouraged to personalise and to keep clean and tidy. One young person spoken to during the inspection said, 'I have a big room with a desk in it'. The home has policies and procedures in place, which explain what action members of staff should take when it is necessary to search a young person's bedroom. Room searches are

only undertaken in exceptional circumstances. Personal information relating to each young person is stored securely to prevent unauthorised access. Young people living at the home are treated with dignity and respect.

There are policies and procedures in place for dealing with complaints in an effective and timely manner. The young people's guide provides clear information to young people about the complaints process. Young people speak openly, freely and honestly with all members of staff and make their needs known. One young person who returned an inspection questionnaire said: 'when I'm worried about anything I can tell somebody, my key worker or other staff'. All members of staff have received training in the complaints process and young people know how to complain if they are unhappy with any aspect of living at the home.

Young people living at the home are fully protected from exploitation and abuse. A copy of the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures is available in the home. In addition, copies of the safeguarding procedures from the authorities that have placed children at the home are also retained there. One young person said: 'I feel safe here, I like it a lot'. There has been no child protection referrals made since the last inspection. All members of staff working at the home have undertaken training in child protection and the welfare of young people is promoted effectively.

The home has policies and procedures in place with regard to countering bullying, and all members of staff have received training in countering bullying. The young people's guide to the home includes clear information for young people about what action they should take if they feel they are being targeted by bullies. Young people have produced a range of posters and other information about what to do if they experience bullying. This information is clearly displayed throughout the home. One young person who returned an inspection questionnaire said: 'I was bullied, another person hit me. I told staff and they dealt with it'. The manager of the home has written a countering bullying risk assessment. The risk assessment outlines the times, places and circumstances where bullying might occur. In addition, the anti bullying co-ordinator for the local authority has visited the home to offer both support and advice. Any suggestion that bullying has occurred within the home is taken very seriously and young people are fully protected from bullying.

There have been no occasions since the last inspection when young people have been absent without authority. The home has effective policies and procedures in place with regard to what action members of staff should take if a young person is missing. Procedures comply with national minimum standards and provide clear guidance for staff action, particularly when a young person returns to the home after being missing. Young people are responded to positively on their return.

The home has policies and procedures in place relating to the safe holding or restraint of young people, and members of staff have received appropriate training. Written procedures do not make it clear that young people have a right to be examined by a medical practitioner following any holds or restraints used on them. Restraint records are retained within a separate bound and numbered book used specifically for that purpose. The written records meet national minimum standards

and regulation. There have been a small number of holds used within the home since the last inspection. The home also has policies and procedures in place, which relate to the sanctions members of staff are permitted to use to help young people modify their behaviour. Sanction records have been completed appropriately. Members of staff, spoken to during the inspection confirmed that they had all undertaken training in the safe holding of young people and that this training is regularly reviewed and kept up to date. Young people living at the home are assisted to develop socially acceptable behaviour.

Young people are protected from fire and other hazards within the home. There are good systems in place to ensure that young people, members of staff and visitors to the home are kept safe and free from hazards. Fire drills are carried out at regular intervals and these include some undertaken at night. Risk assessments are undertaken on the known and likely activities carried out by young people. Risk assessments are thorough and help to protect young people from the risk of accident or injury.

There have been no new appointments to the staff team at the home since the last inspection. Written records show that thorough and detailed checks are carried out to ensure that all members of staff are suitable to work with young people. Young people living at the home are provided with physical safety and security and are protected from being exposed to potential abusers.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people living at the home have their own key worker and they receive help and support when they need it. Meetings between key workers and young people take place at frequent intervals and full written records of those meetings are retained. The progress of each young person is regularly reviewed and members of staff offer help, guidance and support to help them improve their behaviour and increase their life chances.

Young people living at the home attend school on a full time basis. Their attendance there is monitored closely and they are actively supported and encouraged by members of staff to attend. The home's manager is in regular contact with school to help ensure any issues or problems are quickly identified and appropriately resolved. In addition, young people living at the home are actively encouraged and supported to develop new hobbies and interests. Young people who completed inspection questionnaires said: 'We go on lots of activities', 'I do construction at school and the staff helped me', and, 'I get extra help when I need it'. The education of young people is actively promoted.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Where possible, planning and placement meetings take place prior to the admission of any young person to the home. Meetings held prior to admission help to ensure all essential information is available and that the placement has the greatest chance of success. One young person spoken to during the inspection said: 'I like it here, a lot better than the last place I lived'. Each young person has their own placement plan, which outlines clearly what their needs are and how they will be met. In order to help ensure that needs are met, the manager and members of staff undertake individual risk assessments of each young person and devise more detailed care plans following admissions. Young people living at the home are appropriately placed.

Written records retained within the home show that the needs of young people are reviewed at regular intervals and within agreed timescales. The changing needs of young people are highlighted and appropriate action taken. The home's manager, members of staff and young people regularly attend these meetings. One young person said: 'I go to review meetings and I say what I think'.

Contact with friends and family is discussed at each young person's planning meeting, prior to admission. Where appropriate, young people are fully supported and encouraged to maintain regular contact with their friends and families. Restrictions on contact between young people and their families are discussed prior to admission and are written into the young person's placement plan. The reasons for these restrictions, if any, are both known and understood by the manager and staff at the home.

The admissions procedure for the home is good. Where appropriate and possible, arrangements are made for the young person and their carers to visit the home before a placement is agreed. Members of staff work hard to try to make young people feel welcome and to understand what it will be like to live there. One young person spoken to during the inspection said: 'I was given information when I arrived. It's upstairs'.

Meetings take place between members of staff and young people about how the home is run and what improvements can be made. Written records outlining the content of these meetings is retained in the home. In addition, the home's manager undertakes a formal consultation exercise with each young person on a regular basis. The formal consultation helps to identify what works well and what can be improved. However, the opinions and comments of family members or placing social workers are not formally recorded. Young people are actively encouraged to raise issues, which affect their lives.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

At this time, no young people living at the home, because of their age, were eligible for formal pathway plans. However, young people are supported and encouraged to learn activities for daily living and to be able to do as much as they can for themselves. Young people who returned inspection questionnaires said: 'I cook and bake things', and, 'I help around the house'. Young people receive the care they need to prepare them and support them into adulthood.

Young people enjoy homely accommodation that is decorated, furnished and maintained to an extremely high standard. Members of staff help to maintain the building and to keep it clean and tidy. Young people living at the home are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms and are encouraged to keep their home clean and tidy.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Members of staff support and enable young people to participate in community-based activities on an equal basis and to develop their own identity. All members of staff have attended equality and diversity training. The Statement of Purpose and young people's guide have recently been reviewed and accurately describe what young people can expect from living at the home. Young people know what services they can expect from the home.

Young people are looked after by members of staff who are very well supported and properly managed. All members of staff receive regular, formal supervision. The manager makes herself available to talk with members of staff should they need to do so. Staff meetings are held at regular intervals. Written records retained within the home show that staff meetings are well attended and that all members of staff take a full and active part.

Young people receive the care and services they need from well-trained, competent staff. The home's rotas ensure that, where possible, there is always a mix of both male and female staff on duty. Staff sickness and holidays are covered by existing staff members being flexible in their work patterns. Agency staff are never used within the home. Consistency of care is provided to young people and there are clear arrangements in place for members of staff to deputise in the absence of the manager.

A record of all training received by members of staff is maintained within the home. Young people are looked after by members of staff who are well trained and competent to meet their needs. The care of young people living at the home is monitored regularly, although the opinions of family members or relatives on the care young people receive are not routinely gathered. A system is in place to ensure

performance is monitored and any patterns or issues requiring action are highlighted.

The needs of young people are recorded to reflect their individuality and daily records are maintained. Information relating to the care that young people receive is stored securely. Young people and their parents are able to access this information within the home if they request it.

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 where there has been a physical intervention, the young person will have the right to be examined by a medical practitioner (NMS 22.13)
- ensure that the views of parents and placing authorities are taken into account in the development of the home (NMS 8.11)
- ensure that the opinions about the welfare of young people are regularly gathered from family members and relatives. (NMS 32)