

Inspection report for Children's Home

Unique reference number	SC399586
Inspection date	20/01/2011
Inspector	Robert Curr
Type of inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	26/08/2010
--------------------------------	------------

© 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

This setting provides up to two medium to long-term placements for young people aged between 11 and 17 years. The accommodation consists of three single bedrooms and spacious communal areas for eating, studying and relaxing. The home is in a residential area, approximately eight miles from the city centre and is close to public transport.

Both young people completed questionnaires and assisted in the inspection process.

Summary

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

This was an unannounced full inspection and all of the key standards were checked.

This is a satisfactory service. Young people enjoy healthy nutritious meals. Detailed health care plans and risk assessments are completed to enable staff to promote the welfare of young people. However, elements of some risk assessments are not clear or individualised.

Young people's education is encouraged and promoted. Leisure needs are well met and a multi-disciplinary approach ensures young people's views are taken into account when planning their future.

A policy on equality and diversity is in place. Conversations with young people and written records acknowledge that they have a wide range of needs arising from diversity which staff understand.

The staff team have a genuine concern for the people they support. However, young people's welfare is not enhanced by a full complement of trained and competent staff. Staff are not fully supported through clear and comprehensive supervision and the aim to have the appropriate number of staff who hold a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) is not met.

Improvements since the last inspection

This is the first inspection since the service was registered.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people say that they have a good choice of food and help staff to plan the menus. Staff ensure that young people have an understanding about eating well and maintaining a proper diet. For example, young people are actively encouraged to participate in all aspects of healthy eating, from devising menus around their individual needs and being helped by staff to prepare their own meals. This helps promote their health in the short-term and equips them with information to help them make healthy choices in future.

The home has good systems for the management of healthcare and the promotion of healthy lifestyles. Young people benefit by their health needs being identified at an early stage of their admission and they have regular access to appropriate health services such as doctors, dentists and opticians. Staff have recently started working with specialist colleagues in managing young people's physical, emotional and psychological well-being. Young people commented that staff are very supportive where their health needs are concerned. However, there are not sufficient staff trained in first aid to ensure consistent support at all times.

Young people are safeguarded by the systems which are in place for the storage and administration of medication. Staff are trained to administer medication correctly and share the responsibility of stock control. This was found to be accurate and tallied with the amount of medication in stock.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff are conversant with child protection procedures and copies of appropriate safeguarding procedures are kept in the office.

Young people do not benefit from a consistent approach to develop behaviour that is socially acceptable. There is clear evidence that physical restraints are used. These measures of control are used in order to prevent young people from causing themselves or others significant harm. Although staff use individual behaviour support plans to encourage and support them, there is no evidence that all staff used in the home are trained in the appropriate management of challenging behaviour, in particular, the use of physical restraint. This does not offer a consistent approach to managing physical interventions. Staff spoken to can describe ways in which they engage with young people to effect change and appropriate policies and procedures are followed when young people are absent or reported missing, to encourage a safe and timely return. The quality of written incident records is generally good.

Risk assessments are in place for young people which identify their vulnerability, although any risks they may pose to others in relation to bullying are limited. Some of the risk assessments that relate to specific instances of bullying do not indicate

times, places or circumstances in which the risk of bullying is greatest.

Young people say that staff respect them, and that there are no members of staff with whom they feel uncomfortable. There are clear procedures covering privacy and confidentiality. All young people have their own bedroom and bathroom arrangements ensure young people's dignity is maintained. Case records and other confidential information is stored securely.

Young people confirm that the staff team is readily available to discuss concerns and complaints as they arise and they are satisfied with the responses given. There has been one complaint from a neighbouring house that has a satisfactory outcome. Staff have not had formal training in relation to the complaints procedure.

Systems are in place to ensure all statutory health and safety checks are carried out within the required timescales. Clear and accurate fire safety records are held. Monthly fire drills take place and checks on fire fighting equipment are up to date. However, not all staff have undertaken a fire drill practice at the recommended frequency.

The Registered Manager ensures that all staff employed undergo appropriate checks to ensure they are suitable to work with children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Two young people said that their key workers set up regular meetings for them to 'contribute to our care plans'. It is evident that key workers have developed positive relationships with the young people.

The range of activities is very good. Young people enjoy outings to the cinema, ice skating, meals out and other outside activities. Young people also confirm they are supported in their interest in dancing.

Educational achievement is valued and young people are well supported with accessing a variety of educational placements. Staff make good use of the local education provision. School and educational attendance is strongly encouraged, even with people who have a history of poor school attendance and exclusion. All staff strive to overcome this issue and have developed ongoing contact with the educational establishments. All young people have access to computers to undertake schoolwork or pursue leisure interests. The consistent approach to education offered to the young people has resulted in them engaging in their individual education programme. This is certainly improving young people's prospects in later life.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Care planning is based on securing as much information as possible about young people when they are admitted to the home. With the involvement of young people, effective plans are compiled which are clearly linked with outcomes and targets to be achieved. The swift implementation of these plans helps to avoid drift and delay in securing for young people the services and interventions they need.

Young people confirm that staff listen to what they have to say. Participation in young people's meetings and statutory reviews and contact with external visitors are some of the formal means by which young people can express their thoughts and comments.

Young people say that they talk to staff all the time about how they feel, and that things change as a result of these conversations. Young people feel that contact arrangements are managed well, and staff listen to what they have to say about this. They feel well supported in maintaining links with their family and friends. Documents show that any safeguarding issues in respect of contact are taken into account.

There is continual appraisal of young people's development, well-being and progress through day-to-day observation and interaction. Formal reviewing processes are in place and young people are encouraged to attend or contribute to their reviews. This enables them to influence decisions made about their lives. Young people's meetings are held regularly so that young people are listened to and involved in the running of the home.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people receive good emotional support and are actively encouraged to develop self-reliance skills, to deal with increased independent decision making and taking more responsibility for themselves. Plans show young people have opportunities to engage in a wide range of tasks and experiences to help them prepare for later life.

Each young person has their own bedroom which they personalise as they wish. There are rooms for young people to use as a group or on their own if they want privacy. Young people say they are happy with the home and like living there and that there are no areas that they feel need improvement.

Records show that routine checks regarding fire and electrical equipment safety are in place, and environmental risk assessments are regularly undertaken. The house and garden are well presented. Young people choose to respect the home they live in. There is no apparent damage to or hazards in or around the property.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The Statement of Purpose and children's guide contain a range of information for young people, staff and professionals. However, daily records and recent incidents indicate that one individual is in need of support and help around a learning disability. This is not in line with the Statement of Purpose and was discussed at length with the manager. The management team place young people's needs, safety and well-being at the centre of its operation.

Not all of the staff team are competent, well trained and supported. There are staff that have not been given basic training in matters such as safeguarding, managing challenging behaviour and first aid. This does not ensure a consistent approach.

Staff confirm this and say they enjoy working at the home. The staff are in varying stages of achieving a qualification at NVQ at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People. Currently the overall qualification recommendation is not met.

Regular staff meetings ensure that staff are aware of key issues within the home. However, supervision sessions are not provided at the recommended intervals to provide support and guidance in safeguarding and promoting young people's welfare.

The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Staff receive training on equality and diversity but it is not yet evident that these values are integrated within the day-to-day running of the home. However, young people say they feel respected by staff. Young people's records clearly demonstrate that focused attention is placed on meeting their diverse needs in a way which is suitable and acceptable to them. The staff team is reflective of the community in which young people live, and is balanced in terms of age and gender.

There are systems in place for monitoring the quality of care within the home. Independent visits are also undertaken monthly and the frequency of visits meets the standard. Although reports make clear recommendations, there is no evidence that young people are consulted as part of these visits and the reports do not contain their views. Therefore it is not clear whether young people can actively contribute to the quality of their care during independent visits.

The samples of young people's individual files inspected show these to be well organised and provide young people with an accurate record of their development, achievements and experience at the home.

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
31	ensure all staff working in the home receive appropriate training to meet the needs of the young people living in the home, in particular, first aid, safeguarding, behaviour management, complaints and working with children with disabilities (Regulation 27)	28/02/2011
1	ensure that the children's home is conducted in line with the Statement of Purpose (Regulation 4)	28/02/2011
28	ensure all persons employed receive appropriate supervision. (Regulation 27 (4) (a))	28/02/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure that risk assessments in relation to countering bullying include the time, places and circumstances in which the risk of bullying is greatest, and the action required to reduce that risk (NMS 18.5)
- ensure the identified staff members take part in a fire drill at the recommended intervals (NMS 26)
- ensure a minimum ratio of 80% of all care staff complete a National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in caring for children and young people or an equivalent. (NMS 29.5)