

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC368032
Inspection date	4 March 2010
Inspector	Julian Mason
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	6 August 2009
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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 Cripins, 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 outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

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 medium to long-term placements for three young people between the ages of 11 to 17 years who may have a range of emotional and behavioural difficulties. The property is a large detached family size house in an established residential area close to a local town centre. The aim of the home is to offer individualised support designed to achieve stability and to prepare young people for a return home or independent living.

Summary

This was an unannounced interim inspection. The visit concentrated on the Every Child Matters outcome area for staying safe. At the time of the inspection, three young people were resident in the home.

At the last key inspection, the service was assessed as satisfactory. Following this inspection the overall judgement remains the same. This judgement will be reviewed again at the home's next full inspection when all key national minimum standards will be re-assessed.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

No statutory requirements or good practice recommendations were made at the last inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people's safety and protection is adequately supported and promoted because the staff team work in a way that matches the home's agreed policies and procedures for safeguarding. Staff in the home understand what circumstances and events require reporting to managers and external agencies who have wider safeguarding responsibilities for looked after young people. This includes making formal notifications about a range of significant events that can affect young people's lives in terms of their welfare and safety. The Registered Manager is following the home's child protection procedures as several referrals have been made to the local safeguarding team. These arrangements ensure that the home works in partnership with other professionals so any proposed actions are coordinated in a way that supports each young person's safety.

Young people benefit from living in a home where they are able to raise a concern or complaint. Many complaints are resolved quickly and informally avoiding the use of more formal procedures. Where formal complaints are made, records show that young people are listened to as part of the resolution process. The home's records also show that families and carers are able access this procedure if they have a concern about the young person's care in the home.

Young people's protection is further supported by safe recruitment, selection and vetting practices for all new staff. The service has a clearly defined system in place that ensures all

necessary checks are completed and are acceptable prior to any staff member starting work in the home. Other areas of the home's operation also promote each young person's safety and welfare. For instance, staff ensure they speak with young people in private when talking about personal matters and confidential information is stored securely. Staff are clear about what to do if a young person is away from the home without permission but these circumstances rarely happen at the moment. Acceptable standards of health and safety are maintained to ensure the home is free from avoidable hazards and environmental risks. Fire prevention systems are checked and serviced regularly to ensure they are all in good working order and can be used in an emergency.

Young people are provided with a range of support and guidance to help them with their behaviour. Staff can refer to a number of appropriately written policies and procedures that provide clear guidance about boundary setting and the help they can give to young people. The home's guidance is underpinned by formal training which most staff have attended. Although some bullying does occur in the home this is known to be unacceptable and staff intervene quickly to minimise the impact and effect this has on young people. Staff regularly talk to young people about bullying and clearly try and promote a home environment free of unwanted behaviour.

On occasions, some young people's behaviour is beyond the control or influence of the staff team and some events have been challenging and difficult to manage. Some of these circumstances have also resulted in damage to the home's environment. Consequently, the home's records reveal that physical intervention for some young people is a significant feature of the way in which staff are managing behaviour. Records show that staff are using this method as a last resort and to ensure everyone is safe. The Registered Manager monitors the home's practices in relation to behaviour management and frequent discussions are held in staff team meetings to review and evaluate the home's approaches to risky and dangerous behaviour. Although the incidents of physical intervention are high, staff are doing everything possible to minimise the impact this is having on the home.

Young people can earn additional pocket money through the completion of various tasks and activities which are outlined in a general reward programme. This approach is used to help staff and young people focus on achieving acceptable patterns of behaviour that can be praised and rewarded. The programme is slightly limited in its scope in terms of young people's different behavioural needs. Young people do receive enough support to help them try and improve their behaviour but the reward programme is sometimes not specific enough to help them consistently do this.

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 not judged.

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 meets the Care Standards Act 2000, The Childrens Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
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Recommendations

There are no recommendations.