

Inspection report for Children's Home

Unique reference number	SC020171
Inspection date	30/11/2010
Inspector	Rachel Ruth Britten
Type of inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	25/11/2009
--------------------------------	------------

© 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

This service is a children's home for boys and girls aged from 11 to under 18 years. Medium to long term care is offered for young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is situated close to leisure facilities and shops. There are regular bus and train services to nearby towns.

Each young person has their own bedroom situated on the first floor and there are two bathrooms and a games room. On the ground floor there is a lounge, dining room, kitchen, the education room and two offices. There is a good size garden area to the side and back of the house and car parking at the front. Six young people live in this home, all of whom were present during the inspection.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

The purpose of this unannounced interim inspection was to reassess the outcomes for young people under the national minimum standards relating only to staying safe. There were no previous actions or recommendations made at the last interim inspection in November 2009. The home continues to safeguard young people well overall through sustained good practice and organisation. Four new recommendations are made to address shortfalls identified. These shortfalls have no serious impact upon the outcomes for young people.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable. There were no actions or recommendations 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 good.

Young people live in a safe, secure home where gas, electric, hot water, fire and vehicle safety are robustly assured. Visitors' identity is checked and staff are carefully

selected, vetted and trained, so that young people are well protected and cared for by suitable people. Young people have their own bedrooms which they can personalise. The pleasant communal rooms, furniture and equipment are also kept clean and safe. The home, vehicles and drivers are suitably insured, but the organisation's insurance document does not name the home and its address. This oversight does not impact on young people because the insurance is suitable despite this small detail.

Young people enjoy appropriate amounts of privacy to use their bedrooms, the two bathrooms, and other areas of the house, based upon risk assessments and placement plans which consider each young person's history, needs, behaviour and where they are likely to be at risk of harm. Measures based on these safety needs are put into place in the home. For example, there are always staff of both sexes on duty; lounge doors must be left open when the room is in use; and bedroom doors are alarmed at night. In addition, all bedrooms and lounges are kept locked by staff during school hours to prevent young people being distracted away from their education programmes. The arrangements for use of the phone and any restrictions about use of mobile phones are also based upon each young person's individual situation. However, insufficient efforts are made for young people to work towards being responsible for their own room key. This unnecessarily compromises their privacy and confidentiality.

Young people clearly know how and where to complain. Information about this is given to them when they arrive and they have free access to forms which they can use if they feel unhappy about the way they are being treated. Young people have used the complaints procedure recently and are content with the outcome. Documentation indicates that procedures are robustly followed to address complaints promptly and without delay. All staff have completed child protection training and demonstrate high levels of commitment to keeping young people safe and minimising the risk of abuse or allegation. This is particularly apparent with regard to reducing and counteracting instances of young people going missing without authority. Staff and managers identify that some young people are at very significant risk on these occasions. They, therefore, prioritise their efforts to avoid, prevent and reduce this behaviour, whilst taking care both to agree the arrangements with placing authorities, and not contravene children's rights.

Young people state that they feel safe in the home and that staff treat them well. Policies and procedures to counter bullying are working in practice and young people state that they are not being bullied or allowed to bully others. They say that this is because staff provide close support and supervision to them at all times. Young persons individual risk assessments adequately address the likelihood of bullying or being bullied. However, the home's generic risk assessment of bullying does not clearly address the times, places and current scenarios when the risk of bullying is at its greatest. This holds staff back in employing consistent strategies to counter bullying, for example, when the group dynamic is altered by new residents arriving.

Young people are being given good support to develop socially acceptable behaviour. Recent new staff training on restraint and positive behaviour management is

welcomed by staff who are clearly committed to young people. Weekly individual behaviour goals and financial incentives are proving successful for some young people. As a result, young people are taking more personal responsibility for their learning, personal hygiene, involvement and conduct. They feel empowered when their good behaviour is noticed and they are given the trust and responsibility to spend time pursuing sports, hobbies or being out with friends. However, there have been a series of instances of absconding and behaviour leading to restraints following a number of new admissions. In addition, one occasion necessitating calling the police to the home was not notified in accordance with Schedule 5. Nevertheless, logs of incidents, restraints, missing from home, and daily logs are robust and fully cross-referenced. Young people are usually involved in using the records to learn from incidents. There has not, therefore, been a significant impact upon young people resulting from this oversight.

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?

Recommendations

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

- ensure that individual young people's wish for privacy and confidentiality is

consistent with good parenting and the need to protect the child, in particular regarding the practical details of the way children's rooms are entered (NMS 9.1)

- ensure that all significant events relating to the protection of children are notified to the appropriate authorities, including serious incidents necessitating calling the police to the home (NMS 20, Regulation 30, Schedule 5)
- ensure that the generic risk assessment regarding bullying is reviewed regularly and identifies the times and places where the risk of bullying is at its greatest and the actions to reduce or counteract this (NMS 18.5)
- ensure that certificates of insurance specify the name and address of the particular home (NMS 26.9).