

Inspection report for Children's Home

Unique reference number	SC375540
Inspection date	27/09/2010
Inspector	Jacqueline Malcolm
Type of inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	10/12/2009
--------------------------------	------------

© 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

The children's home is run by a local authority. It is registered to accommodate up to six young people, from 12 years to 17 years old, of either gender. The home provides care and accommodation to young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties on a long-term basis. It is located in a residential area and provides good access to public transport, shops, healthcare, education and leisure facilities.

It is a detached property with eight bedrooms. The house has a fitted kitchen, laundry room, dining room and a lounge which runs from the front to the rear of the home. There is a conservatory which has been built on to the property. There are six bedrooms upstairs, five of these are for young people the other two are for staff. There are two bathrooms upstairs. Downstairs, there are two more bedrooms, one for a young person and the other for a member of staff. To the rear of the house there is a well proportioned garden that is suitable for young people to use.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

At this unannounced, full key inspection, the main focus was to find out how well the home meets the needs of young people living there and to report on the progress made in addressing the actions and recommendations made at the last inspection.

Young people receive a good service. It is well managed and effectively run by a team of competent, experienced and committed staff who are well supported and supervised. The home offers a welcoming, safe and consistent environment for young people. This environment enables young people to prosper and develop skills to enable them to live healthy, safe and independent lives. Staff work collaboratively with a range of organisations to encourage positive outcomes in all aspects of young people's lives, within realistic risk management systems. Young people enjoy living at the home and appreciate the care and support that staff provide to help them progress in life and stay safe. Positive and trusting relationships are developed and young people know that they can approach staff with their concerns.

There are some shortfalls identified in the following areas: health promotion with respect to smoking; sanction and restraint records and transition plans.

Improvements since the last inspection

The home has taken appropriate action to address the three actions and three good practice recommendations made at the last inspection. An application has now been submitted to Ofsted to register the manager. This means that there will be continuity

of leadership and accountability in the home.

Regulation 33 reports are maintained in the home and are received in a timely manner. This ensures that the manager can promptly deal with any issues raised to improve the quality of care. A leaving care worker has not yet been allocated to a young person who was admitted to the home at 16 years of age. A pathway plan is yet to be developed. In the meantime, staff are promoting independence and ensuring that all young people are developing skills in this area. This action will remain, however, until the matter is suitably addressed.

Good practice recommendations with respect to the formal approval of the Statement of Purpose by elected members, ensuring young people of school age have a personal education plan and ensuring appropriate placements are made have all been addressed. These improvements enhance young people's opportunities to prosper.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people enjoy a healthy, balanced diet that promotes their good health and well-being. Young people say that they know what constitutes healthy eating. They say they are encouraged to eat plenty of fruit and vegetables and confirm that there is enough to eat. Staff demonstrate a good awareness about healthy eating and regularly consult with young people about meal choices. This helps them to develop healthy meals. These are varied and nutritious in content. Alternatives are available should young people want something different to eat. Meals served meet the young people's cultural needs and they have opportunities to eat food from different countries that are home-made or in the form of takeaways. For example, South Asia, Mexico and Italy. Actual meals are recorded so that the consumption of healthy and balanced meals is monitored. Suitable dining facilities ensure that young people and staff can dine together and promotes a sociable environment.

Young people's health needs are clearly identified in health plans and services are provided. Staff are clear about their responsibilities to ensure that young people are registered with key health professionals. For example the doctor, dentist and optician. Specialist health services, such as child mental health services are accessed for young people who need this support. Staff accompany young people to attend their health appointments if they want this. The clinical psychologist from the looked after and adopted children's support team is also in regular contact with staff to advise about any child behavioural issues. Health needs assessments are carried out by the looked after children's nurse and immunisation checks identify any missing treatments needed. Young people are supported to develop good hygiene standards and advice and support is provided to educate young people about drugs, alcohol and sexual health issues. These measures ensure that young people are fit and healthy and can get health advice and treatment if they need it. There are a number of young people who smoke. Information is available to help young people stop smoking and there is a smoke cessation representative in the staff team. However, it

is not clear how staff actively discourage young people from smoking or engage in discussions about this issue. This does not fully protect the health of young people when insufficient action is taken to help them to stop smoking.

Medication administration and management is good and medical consents are in place. Staff are appropriately trained and are aware about their responsibilities to ensure the safe administration and storage of medication. Young people who self medicate are appropriately risk assessed. Administrative errors are appropriately reported on and there is a robust monitoring system. Overall, the arrangements are safe and accountable.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The arrangements to protect the safety and welfare of young people is good. Young people's privacy and confidentiality is well respected. Young people have access to a phone that they can use in private and some have a mobile phone. Young people have their own rooms and they have privacy when using the bathroom facilities. There is sufficient space in the home for young people to spend time in the company of others or to have time alone. Young people are aware that their room may be searched if there is a risk to their health and safety. Information about young people is securely stored. These measures ensure the young people are well safeguarded.

Young people know how to use the complaints procedure if they are unhappy about their care and treatment. Staff provide appropriate support to make a complaint and complaints are concluded to young people's satisfaction.

Young people are protected by staff who are trained in safeguarding matters. Staff are guided by procedures and good staff practices that safeguard children's safety and welfare. Staff work collaboratively with a range of safeguarding agencies to ensure ongoing communication and support for young people who are at risk of harm. For example, staff contribute to meetings when young people are deemed to be at risk of sexual exploitation. Individual and group work sessions are established by external agencies with the aim of working with young people on keeping themselves safe. Young people confirm that they are helped to keep safe, feel looked after by staff and can talk to them. Bullying behaviour is actively discouraged and young people are aware of this. Most young people say that they have not been bullied or witnessed this behaviour in the home. Young people who reported that they have been subjected to bullying say that staff intervene.

Incidents of unauthorised absences are effectively managed and they are dealt with on a multi-disciplinary basis and within clear reporting protocols. These measures contribute to the safety of young people.

Young people's behaviour is effectively managed and a range of behaviours are risk assessed. Positive relationships between staff and young people are noted. Staff are trained in a behaviour management technique. This includes de escalation practices

to promote positive behaviour. Rewards and incentives are used to promote good behaviour, which are known and understood by young people and recorded in their placement plans. Sanctions are imposed as a consequence to negative behaviour and young people comment positively on the fairness. However, the effectiveness of sanctions imposed is not clear. No young people have been restrained by staff. One restraint on a young person has been conducted by the police and the details of the restraint is not clearly recorded. The system for recording restraint does not meet the children's homes regulations.

Young people are protected from hazards to their health and safety. Appropriate checks on the fire prevention systems and appliances are regularly undertaken and young people are involved as appropriate. For example, fire drills. Visitors to the home are verified and staff who work with young people are checked to ensure they are safe to work with them.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people's individual needs are well met and supported. Young people have key workers and they can support other staff in the team. Support is also provided by professionals from social, education and health care services and services related to sexual health, drug, alcohol, missing from care and safeguarding promotion.

The arrangements to encourage young people to enjoy and achieve is good. Young people's education is actively promoted and staff encourage attendance. All young people attend an educational provision and there is good communication between the home and these provisions. Staff are kept informed of the progress that young people are making. Staff have copies of educational documents and personal education plans to ensure that they are aware about young people's attainment levels and targets. Some young people are supported by a team of educational workers who can help with subjects and student support mentors also offer a valuable service. Young people have access to laptops with firewall protection to prevent inappropriate access or contacts with inappropriate material or people who may pose a risk to them. Staff are trained in internet safety so that young people are protected. Young people who choose not to attend school are encouraged to attend and incentives are in place to promote this.

Young people are encouraged to pursue their own leisure activities individually or as a group. Young people are involved in a range of activities, such as swimming, cinema, meals out, beauty and pampering evenings and annual holidays. These activities promote social inclusion and help young people develop their social skills.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people's individual needs are well met and supported. Young people have key workers who also support other staff in the team. Support is also provided by professionals from social, education and health care services and services related to sexual health, drug, alcohol, missing from care and safeguarding promotion.

The arrangements to encourage young people to enjoy and achieve are good. Young people's education is actively promoted and staff encourage attendance. All young people attend an educational provision and there is good communication between the home and these provisions. Staff are kept informed of the progress that young people are making. Staff have copies of educational documents and personal education plans to ensure that they are aware about young people's attainment levels and targets. Some young people are supported by a team of educational workers who can help with subjects and student support mentors also offer a valuable service. Young people have access to laptops with firewall protection to prevent inappropriate access or contacts with inappropriate material or people who may pose a risk to them. Staff are trained in internet safety so that young people are protected. Young people who choose not to attend school are encouraged to attend and incentives are in place to promote this.

Young people are encouraged to pursue their own leisure activities individually or as a group. Young people are involved in a range of activities, such as swimming, cinema, meals out, beauty and pampering evenings and annual holidays. These activities promote social inclusion and help young people develop their social skills.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The home provides a homely environment for young people to live in. Improvements have been made to the décor and furnishing in consultation with young people and the decoration is close to completion. There has been some building work undertaken to merge the lounge with a smaller neighbouring room. This provides more space for young people to sit together or engage in different activities. All of the young people have personalised their own rooms and this provides them with additional space and privacy. Young people recognise that they live in a nice home and staff ensure that it is maintained to a good standard.

Young people, irrespective of their age are actively encouraged to develop independent skills and they confirm this. Young people are encouraged and supported to get involved in budgeting, shopping, cleaning their rooms and improving their own self care skills. These activities help young people to cope when they move into adulthood. Young people who have moved into their own accommodation continue to be supported by staff who visit them. This is good practice and ensures consistency and a familiar contact that may help counter

isolation. Not all young people planning for independence have a pathway plan or an allocated worker. It is not clear how staff are expected to support young people when formal plans are not developed and implemented.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The statement of purpose and young people's guide clearly detail the services that young people can expect to receive. This was reviewed in June this year and approved by the elected member a month later.

The home is well managed and staff are aware about their role and responsibilities to safeguard and protect young people. Staff are experienced, skilled, motivated and sufficient in numbers to care for young people. They are a well retained team who are familiar to all of the young people. Staff are supervised and supported to undertake their work and feel that they work very well as a team. Staff are trained in a range of areas, such as safeguarding, behaviour management and related issues, medication management, first aid and healthy eating; this training helps them care for young people and meet their needs. The number of staff who have attained the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) in caring for children and young people at level 3 exceeds the national minimum standards. This is commendable and demonstrates that young people are cared for by staff who are well trained and supported to meet their needs.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Young people's individual needs are well met. Needs are identified and incorporated into young people's care plans and there is a strong commitment to promoting the best outcomes for young people. The staff team is well represented in terms of gender, age, experience and positive role models and they are trained in equality and diversity issues, which raises their awareness. Young people are encouraged to develop their skills and talents and their inclusion in community activities is actively promoted.

There is good external monitoring of the home and the reports made of the visits are submitted to Ofsted and made available to the staff team. There are systems in place for the manager to monitor the quality of care in the home and address issues raised as a result of the external visits. These measures ensure a productive system that identifies the strengths, areas for development and action taken to remedy and improve the quality of care and outcomes for young people who live at the home.

Young people's files are in good order, show the progress they are making and are regularly audited. Young people are encouraged to read the information written about them.

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
6	ensure there is a pathway plan for young people, specifying the support and assistance they will need to receive to enable a successful transition into adulthood. (Regulation 11).	30/11/2010
22	maintain an accurate and up to date record of measures of control used, as set out in Regulation 17	29/10/2010

Recommendations

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

- promote an environment where young people are actively discouraged from smoking and provide them with opportunities to discuss these issues openly and honestly with staff and their peers (NMS 12.6)