

Revelstoke Road

Inspection report for Children's Home

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| Unique reference number | SC032715 |
| Inspection date | 30/05/2007 |
| Inspector | Trevor Jarvis |
| Type of inspection | Random |

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|--------------------------------|---|
| Setting address | Revelstoke Road, Red house, Sunderland, SR5 3SD |
| Telephone number | 0191 553 5435 |
| Email | |
| Registered person | City of Sunderland Council |
| Registered manager | |
| Responsible individual | Helen Paterson |
| Date of last inspection | 06/12/2006 |



About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection was to assess the quality of the provision provided. The inspection was carried out by a team of inspectors who were independent of the provider.

This report describes the findings of the inspection and the standards of the provision. It also includes recommendations for improvement and a list of actions to be taken by the provider.

The inspection findings and what they mean

| Area | Findings | What this means |
|---------------------------|---|-----------------|
| Leadership and management | The provider has a clear vision and mission statement. The management team is committed to the provision and has a good understanding of the standards required. | Good |
| Staff | The staff are well qualified and experienced. They have a good understanding of the standards required and are committed to the provision. | Good |
| Provision | The provision is well planned and delivered. The activities are engaging and challenging. The staff have a good understanding of the standards required and are committed to the provision. | Good |
| Partnerships | The provider has good relationships with the parents and the community. The staff have a good understanding of the standards required and are committed to the provision. | Good |

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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

Revelstoke Road Children's Home is a large detached house owned by the local authority's housing department situated on a housing estate in the north of the city. It is a well maintained building that blends in well with neighbouring houses. The home is within walking distance of local amenities and public transport. It offers a setting with up to seven medium to long term places for young people with complex needs whose lives have been thrown off course.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

The inspection took place on a day when no one knew the visit was going to happen. It went ahead on Wednesday 30 May 2007 lasting eight hours. The inspector was shown around the home and observed a shift handover meeting. He talked to young people and staff and saw how they all got on together. He also had a meal with the young people and checked the home's paperwork. Currently, there are seven young people living in the home.

The home's main strengths are:

The outcomes of Every Child Matters have become the bedrock of plans for all young people in the home making sure that the staff can demonstrate improvements with measurable outcomes.

Young people have security, stability and are accepted and cared for. They feel safe and are learning to avoid dangers to which they are vulnerable.

The atmosphere in the home is warm, friendly and supportive.

Young people seek out appropriate relationships with staff and other young people. They are learning that there are people who can be trusted, and there are steady and healthy relationships, which will last. They talk - even chatter - and are affectionate and caring towards each other.

The current group of young people are doing outstandingly well and it will not be long before a number of them are ready to move on and enjoy living in more independent settings.

The home received four compliments in March 2007. Two made by the Leaving Care Service and two by Every School Day Counts in respect of the young people and staff.

Young people said such things as, 'there is a lovely set of kids in here... staff always have time for you... the best thing is being with staff.'

Staff members said, 'its class here...it's really settled down.'

The home's main weakness is:

The home's statement of purpose was recently amended to allow young people to be placed in an emergency. The admission of one young person did however breach the Statement of Purpose as it took the home over number to eight young people. This causes a lot of disruption and upheaval to everyone living and working at the home.

Improvements since the last inspection

Some young people said how much they enjoyed the recent outdoor camping expeditions into the Northumberland countryside organised by staff members.

The anti-bullying policy and guidance implemented at the home is to be rolled out across the other children's homes across the city.

The whole building has been redecorated since last October 2006.

Staff feel they have benefited from a team building session held at an outward bound centre.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Staff encourage young people to eat a balanced diet. The food is of good quality and sufficient to meet the needs of the young people. Young people ask for a different meal if they do not like the planned meal. Staff try to involve them in the preparation of menus and in going for the weekly shop. Young people can and do help themselves to snacks, such as beans on toast, fresh fruit and drinks.

To prevent ill health and disease all young people benefit from regular medical check-ups, dental check-ups and sight checks and specialist help when necessary. Staff encourage young people to develop healthy lifestyles and promote their physical health, mental health and emotional wellbeing. Relevant health education leaflets are available within the home, including HIV and Aids, family planning, alcohol and substance misuse. Staff make sure young people have specialised guidance and support as necessary and key workers routinely focus on health issues during planned sessions.

Young people know that the rules do not allow smoking on the premises. Staff discourage any smoking, which sometimes takes place in bedrooms. Staff offer guidance on related health risks and they give support to young people wishing to give up the habit. Drinking alcohol and the use of drugs is not permitted in the home. Staff provide advice and guidance on the risks associated with drug and alcohol misuse. If staff identify specific concerns, they make a referral to the relevant support service. Staff assess young people's levels of awareness and risk linked to sexual health on arrival. In-house advice and support is available from information and leaflets readily available within the home. Again, if staff identify specific concerns, they make a referral to the appropriate service. There are examples of

young people who may still not always come in on time and who still drink but with staff guidance are becoming much more aware of their own safety and they do not drink to excess as they did previously.

Young people choose their own toiletries and personal hygiene products buying them as and when required. Young people explained how they are seeking more money to cover the cost of personal items. Staff discreetly monitor standards of personal hygiene and provide guidance and encouragement as necessary. They record any specific concerns in the care plan. Staff encourage young people to take regular exercise.

Good systems for storing and giving out young people's medicines are in place to make sure they get any prescribed treatment. No young people are currently taking prescribed medicines.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is not judged.

There have been no complaints or child protection investigations since the last inspection

The home has clear systems in place that safeguard young people from harm. The staff know what they should do if they think someone is being abused. Staff have had training about this. Young people feel that staff build constructive, nurturing relationships with them and are concerned about keeping them safe

The staff team have lots of experience and skills in dealing with any young people with complex problems. They regularly face young people who attempt to manipulate and control the behaviour of everyone around them. Staff repeatedly show that it is possible to gradually engage with young people and build positive relationships. The current group of young people are secure in their placements at the home, accept and understand rules, expectations and boundaries.

Young people learn that they can stay and work through problems rather than running away from them realising that staff care and nurture them.

Staff guide young people through the process of learning to take responsibility for themselves and their actions, to recognise inappropriate behaviour and to develop ways to modify it. The home is tolerant of emotional and behavioural difficulties, and flexible enough to cater for a variety of individual needs. However, staff stress that not all types of behaviour are acceptable. Standards are set and clearly defined so that each young person has a full understanding of what is expected. Staff deal with any serious misbehaviour fairly and consistently so that every young person feels safe and secure in the home.

Wherever possible, the home makes use of a system of rewards and positive reinforcement to encourage responsible behaviour. Young people like the

individualised system of 'points making prizes.' On occasion, certain privileges may be withdrawn and sanctions, for example supervised spending applied to underline the seriousness of a young person's actions and to highlight potential consequences. Staff effectively reduce the number of crisis's arising, manage physical behaviour and help young people develop their own coping skills and only use approved physical interventions as a last resort. Staff provide guidance to young people when they first arrive at the home on the use of restraint and the feelings this provokes in both young people and staff. All staff receive regular training in how to respond to challenging behaviour.

Young people's safety within the home is protected by careful use of the visitor's book and suitable procedures for the recruitment and checking of staff.

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.

The home is clean, comfortable. Young people prefer to furnish all rooms in a contemporary style and they particularly like the laminate flooring, new curtains, poles and pictures on walls. Young people have their own private, recently decorated bedroom and door key. They share a lounge, dining room, toilets and bathrooms. The young people have access to a wide range of recreational equipment. They openly show pride and see it as their home. There is no signs of damage or vandalism.

Young people said how pleased they were that staff used some of their own ideas for the recent redecoration of the sitting room. Photographs of young people on walls including the recent camping trip are a feature of the home.

Staff and young people are currently examining the possibility of putting up a signed handprints decoration on the staircase wall. The manager makes sure that any necessary repairs are carried out promptly. There is an ongoing programme of redecoration and refurbishment. It was noted that the kitchen needed overhauling.

Organisation

The organisation is not judged.

The statement of purpose describes the number of young people but since the last inspection the manager was instructed to admit one young person. This breached the statement of purpose as it took the home over number to eight young people. In such circumstances the home is unable to provide a bedroom. The disruption and lack of privacy to everyone concerned cannot be exaggerated.

Staffing levels on the day of the inspection were sufficient to meet the needs of the young people in placement. The staff spread the pressures and demands of caring for the young people with complex needs and behaviours across the whole staff group. The general staff team view is that they could achieve even more with reduced numbers of young people.

The manager recognises that the home's most valuable asset is, without question the staff. The young people also express this view. Staff demonstrate enthusiasm, resilience and skill to work with this challenging group. They build appropriate relationships with young people who have never been able to trust anyone, least of all themselves. Staff teach young people that grown-ups can be reliable, can take care of them and show them patience and understanding. One young person said, 'my key worker has brought me on through lots of difficulties... this is someone I can trust.'

Staff have ready access to support from each other as a matter of course. In addition, there are the usual arrangements for regular monthly supervision. Support through line managers informs the work of staff with the young people. Young people also benefit from a range of staff skills.

Staff team and young person's house meetings occur on a regular basis. There is always plenty to discuss and everyone is encouraged to contribute their views on the running of the home.

Formal staff training underpins all the work in the home helping the way staff understand and respond to the young people's needs.

The home has very good systems to monitor the daily lives of young people. Detailed reports provide an indication of the kind of care the young people receive. Every month someone who does not work at the home comes to check that staff are looking after young people well. This person completes a report, which is sent to the home. The person always speaks to young people as part of these visits. The provider and manager follow up any recommendations that are identified during the visits.

Young people have an individual file, which contains information about them. Staff keep this in a safe place but it can be seen by the young person.

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 |
|------|--|------------|
| 1 | ensure that the children's home is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its statement of purpose and specifically must provide accommodation for no more than seven young people. | 22/07/2007 |

Recommendations

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

- consider the young people's request to increase the personal allowance payment.
- consider refurbishing the kitchen within the next six months.