

Colombo Road

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Trevor Jarvis
Type of inspection	Random

Setting address	7 Colombo Road, SUNDERLAND, SR5 3SD
Telephone number	0191 5535443
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Registered person	City of Sunderland Council
Registered manager	
Responsible individual	Helen Paterson
Date of last inspection	20/11/2006

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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

7 Colombo Road is a children's home run by Sunderland Social Services Department. The building, a large detached house is situated in the middle of a housing estate in the north of the City. It looks like an ordinary house in the neighbourhood. The accommodation is within walking distance of local shops and public transport. The home provides up to eight medium to long term residential places for a mixed group of young people who have experienced disruption, control problems at home, difficulties at school or who have been harmed.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

The home was not told that there was going to be an inspection and when it would be done. It was done in May 2007.

On the day the inspector talked to young people, the manager and staff and looked at how they all talked to each other. He was shown around the home. The inspector had a meal with young people and checked the home's paperwork. This helps the inspector write this report about how good the service is at different things it does.

Colombo Road is being run well with a group of committed staff who have worked at the home a long time. They are keen to raise standards and leadership and management remains good. Very good relationships and detailed knowledge of young people's needs by care staff has a positive effect on young people's attitudes and behaviour.

The young people are kept safe and their rights are respected. They seemed to particularly enjoy talking and discussing issues with the inspector and proved to be able and confident when talking about what was happening or how they were feeling.

Improvements since the last inspection

The home has introduced a novel way of involving young people and getting their views by forming a Council which happens once every two weeks. There are carefully laid out ground rules and young people joining in create a talking piece, in this case, a stick. It is only when holding the stick that anyone can speak. There is a strong emphasis on respect and confidentiality and young people helped by a facilitator have really become very involved and sensitively respect each others feelings. The home has made strong links with The KITE Project at NCH (A voluntary children's

agency) which is offering staff training and guidance in a number of therapeutic and groupwork skills.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people said that they really like the food at Colombo Road. Looking at the menus there are lots of different types of meals and the home serves healthy food. Young people can help themselves to snacks, fresh fruit and drinks. Young people can always ask for vegetarian food. Young people who live at the home plan the menu together every week and are encouraged to help with the weekly shop.

Staff help the young people stay healthy. The records for young people clearly described their health needs and who had responsibility to make sure that good health was maintained. The staff member with special responsibility for health confirmed that all young people received health checks at regular intervals and ongoing appointments for specialist treatment were being kept with outcomes recorded. Key workers routinely focus on health issues during planned sessions. Staff make very effort to make sure young people have lots of exercise and sporting activities and a group were planning to attend a leisure centre during the evening of the inspection. Young people confirmed that they choose their own toiletries and personal hygiene products. These are bought as and when required.

The home has a plan about helping young people with medicines and if they are ill. Staff have had training on this. Medicines are kept in an area not accessible to young people. They are secured in a locked cabinet used only for medical supplies. When a prescribed or not prescribed item is given to a young person it is recorded on their personal medical form and countersigned by two workers.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The home has information about how young people can complain about their care. Information about how to make a complaint is given to all young people. This means that young people's ideas about how the home is run can be better heard. Young people said they are happy to talk to the staff or manager about any worries they have about the home. Young people talked to the inspector about their day and they all were open and friendly and were clearly happy and relaxed at the home. They said that they liked living at the home and that the staff listened to them, took what they said seriously and were there for them when needed.

There have been two complaints since the last inspection both sorted out in a timely and satisfactory way.

The home has information on abuse and on what staff should do if they think someone is being harmed. All staff have had training about this.

Staff had a good understanding of the policies and procedures about physical intervention. Whenever physical intervention is used to manage extreme behaviour this is all written down properly. All staff completed refresher training this week. The home has only had to use restraint techniques on average once a month since January 2007.

Where there is wilful and deliberate disregard and intent to break house rules permissible sanctions are used, although staff are constantly seeking ways to cut challenging behaviour and reward good behaviour.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

These standards were not assessed on this occasion.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is not judged.

These standards were not assessed on this occasion.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

Colombo Road is clean and comfortable. Young people each have their own private bedroom and door key. The young people share a lounge, dining room, toilets and bathrooms.

The building is well-maintained and the furnishings are comfortable, homely and contemporary. It was confirmed that there was an ongoing programme of redecoration and refurbishment. All young people's bedrooms are to be redecorated over the next two months. The sitting room has recently been redecorated and young people were really pleased that their own ideas had been taken up.

Motivated by this responsibility, the manager explained that the young people have themselves, successfully applied for a grant from the Youth Opportunity Fund (Relax and Grow) to refurbish a previously little used room at the back of the home. They are thoroughly enjoying the opportunity to take part in converting this room into an attractive chill out room. Young people have chosen the colour scheme, fixtures and fittings and furniture including a state of the art music system. They are also

planning to buy a range of materials for artistic and creative pursuits. The home's activities co-ordinator has successfully applied to the S.E.E.D. Project for a grant to obtain seeds and plants for the home's front and back garden. The grant also includes the help of a gardener to help the young people complete a garden 'make over'.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The young people are supported by a team of well-trained and competent staff with a good range of experience among its members. They know what their job is and have been given information about the home's rules and policies. Staff are also given training. It is proving difficult for the manager to make sure that at least 80% of staff has achieved their NVQ Level 3 in the Caring for Children and Young people. This is because of the restrictions on the number of training places being allocated to the home. The problem is made worse by the number of staff currently on temporary contracts who are not part of the priority training programme.

Young people at the home told the inspector that they really like the staff team. The staff support young people well, and the inspector noticed that they treated people with respect.

On the day of the inspection, the manager and three staff were working which was sufficient to meet the needs of the young people. The number of people working can change, depending on which young people are living there. Sometimes the home uses relief staff. The manager uses people who have already worked at the home to come so that young people have the same people supporting them.

Each member of staff meets with a senior once a month to talk about any issues and training. Staff team and young people's house meetings also occur on a regular basis where everyone is encouraged to contribute their views to the running of the home.

Good systems are in place to monitor the daily lives of the young people currently living in the home. These are detailed and comprehensive and provide a good indication of the good level of care on offer. Action points are identified and followed up by the provider and manager. Young people are always spoken to as part of these visits.

The manager of the home meets the qualification standards. Although on still on secondment to a specialist young people's project two days a week she continues to develop effective systems for running the home and these form part of the daily operations in a way that avoids an institutional approach.

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):

- The registered provider should look again at how to make sure that residential staff members at Colombo Road obtain the necessary qualifications to care for young people.