

Inspection report for Children's Home

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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

The home is registered to provide care for four young people, of either sex, between the ages of 8 and 17 years with emotional and behavioural difficulties. It provides medium to long-term residential care and is owned by a private company. The home is located in a residential area that has easy access to local facilities and public transport. The house consists of a lounge, kitchen-diner, bathroom and there is a staff office on the ground floor. There are four young people's bedrooms, and a bathroom on the first floor. There are gardens to the front and rear of the house.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

This was an unannounced full inspection in which all key standards were assessed. All outcome areas have been judged as outstanding, with the exception of economic well-being which is judged as good.

This is an efficiently managed service where young people are looked after by committed, well trained and experienced staff. There are excellent arrangements to promote the safety, health and welfare of the young people. Young people are kept safe and encouraged to make more positive life choices through effective safeguarding systems, positive relationships with staff and excellent interagency liaison. Young people identify significant improvements in their health, behaviour and educational attendance and achievement.

Young people's views are valued and there is a clear focus on consultation and empowering young people in their placements. Weekly residents' meetings and key worker sessions enable young people to discuss their wishes and feelings in a safe and supportive way.

The quality of care provided is monitored closely by the manager and also by external managers who visit the home. There is a strong focus on service development, improvement and promoting positive outcomes for children.

No actions or recommendations are set as a result of this inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

The service was required to obtain minutes of young people's review meetings and this has been addressed.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

There are excellent arrangements in place for promoting and maintaining the medical needs and health of young people. Young people identify significant improvements in their health since living at the home, including healthier diets and healthier lifestyle choices. Young people are encouraged to have a greater awareness of and take more responsibility for their own health care arrangements. Young people say they are encouraged to give up smoking, take more exercise and they are supported with more complex health and medical difficulties.

Young people are supported by staff who have an excellent understanding of the health issues relating to young people, including sexual health, safer drug use and leading healthier lifestyles. Staff's knowledge and proactive liaison with local and specialist agencies, including drugs support services, the local GP surgery, mental health services and community health agencies is very good. This liaison gives useful consultation for staff and a variety of additional support to young people. Young people say they are given good encouragement and opportunities to have their health and medical needs improved and met. There is a clear focus on young people's mental and emotional health in conjunction with their physical needs.

Medical and health records are comprehensive and clearly show that young people's medical appointments are arranged, young people are encouraged to attend and their health is closely monitored. Staff have an excellent knowledge of the young people's medication requirements. The home's medication procedures are organised and effectively implemented to ensure young people benefit from safe practice and health needs are addressed. Staff training includes first aid, drug awareness, HIV and medication administration is also accessible to young people and they say they have greatly benefitted from this input.

Young people acknowledge they eat and enjoy healthier meals. Some of the significant improvements in young people's health are linked to the emphasis placed on healthy eating. Menus are discussed with young people at weekly meetings and they are involved in planning, shopping and cooking the healthy, balanced and multi-cultural meals that are available in the home. Young people are encouraged to develop an understanding of healthy eating and develop skills which promote their independence and life skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are protected by excellently planned and effectively implemented safeguarding arrangements. There are robust staff recruitment procedures and young people are kept safe by staff who are well trained in safeguarding children procedures, behaviour management and health and safety. The home's records and discussion with the young people and staff demonstrate a proactive approach to

maintaining positive working relationships with agencies, individuals and the young people to promote safety and encourage more positive lifestyle choices for themselves. Young people are empowered and have increased self-confidence to promote their own safety, understand risk taking behaviour and activities and look at positive alternatives.

Young people say they feel safe at the home and positively acknowledge that staff support and intervention have helped to promote personal safety and improve behaviour. Young people are particularly proud of not going missing from care so frequently and improving their relationships with staff and family, and making positive social associations and relationships.

Young people's behaviour is managed and has significantly improved with clear written behaviour management policies, procedures and placement care planning. Young people's behaviour and welfare is further protected and supported by staff who promote and implement effective risk and behaviour management strategies in their day-to-day practice. There are clear boundaries and an emphasis on promoting incentives and rewarding positive and improved behaviour. Young people have positive relationships with staff and do not want to disappoint with poor behaviour. They are particularly proud of the praise, rewards and incentives that they receive for their efforts and achievements. Young people are clear about what happens when their behaviour does not go so well and they feel the consequences are fair. Records are maintained and show good accountability for when sanctions and physical intervention are used in the home.

The privacy of young people is respected and they enjoy their own private space. Young people understand and are protected by the clear written complaints procedure and the additional information included in the young people's guide. Young people feel valued because the staff listen to them and take concerns seriously. There is an anti-bullying policy and young people say there are no concerns about bullying and they feel confident that staff will always do something because bullying is not acceptable.

The physical environment is well maintained and monitored in terms of health and safety, with comprehensive and detailed documentation. Fire safety procedures are checked, monitored and young people know what to do if there is a fire.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Young people's individual needs are identified and supported by staff who present a clear and enthusiastic commitment to developing individuality and enabling a clear sense of achievement. Staff have an excellent understanding of diversity and young people are encouraged to develop confidence in their personal identities, social relationships and educational capabilities.

Needs are assessed on an individual basis and support is afforded to each young

person. Staff are sensitive to young people's needs and their own ways of doing things. Young people receive support in individual key working sessions and staff also liaise with appropriate agencies in terms of more specialised needs. Records relating to one-to-one key working sessions show sessions are relevant to and fully include the young person and are consistent with the young person's placement care plans. There is consistent teamwork to meet the complex and challenging needs of the young people and this leads to a key strength where young people value their relationships with staff and accept their support.

Young people clearly benefit from the individual support they receive in terms of education, both in terms of attendance and being able to effectively contribute and achieve. Young people acknowledge they have not attended and have had previous difficulties within the education system. They also acknowledge that staff support, and positive reward and praise are key to the significant improvements they have made in their education. Young people have individual education plans which include a combination of college placement, activities, independence skills and work placement schemes. Staff are proactive and creative in finding and developing different opportunities to support young people in engaging with education and work experience. Plans for young people to enjoy and achieve take into account each young person's current needs, as well as their potential. As a result, young people see themselves as making excellent progress and look forward to how much more they can achieve in the future, including more qualifications, getting a good job and getting on better with people socially.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Staff have excellent knowledge of the young people's needs and provide consistent care on a day-to-day basis, resulting in significant improvement in the welfare, behaviour and safeguarding of all young people living at the home.

Young people are supported when they move into the home, they receive a young person's guide and they have settled well due to the support and commitment from staff. Young people are empowered to understand the reason for their placements, what has happened in the past and to feel part of the running of the home. There are regular young people's meetings and key working sessions which positively contribute to young people's placements, their plans for the future and the running of the home. Young people are looked after in a nurturing environment with excellent relationships and positive lines of communication between the staff and the young people.

All young people have comprehensive placement plans that contain detailed up-to-date information. These are monitored and updated by young people's key workers and the manager. Young people are well informed about their placements, the content of their care plans and how they are progressing. The manager also meets with young people on a one-to-one monthly basis to consult about how their placements are going. Consultation with and involvement of the young people is an

integral part of the home. Young people's views are valued and this is excellently demonstrated in lively, respectful and meaningful discussions between them and the staff and by their written comments and signatures in the records kept about them.

Young people are also very positive about how they are supported to maintain safe and meaningful contact with family and significant others. Contact arrangements are clear to young people because they are recorded in placement plans and discussed in detail. The staff team are well informed about how young people view the importance of their family and friendships and how these relationships can be best and positively facilitated.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people are proactively supported to develop the skills and knowledge to help them with their transition to adulthood. There is an established independence preparation package available in the home and staff focus on each young person's individual needs and situation. Young people say they are positive about developing skills and that the staff help them do more for themselves. They feel good about their abilities including cooking, domestic skills, education, getting a job and developing good relationships. Young people present as confident and positive about moving onto more independent living and value the support they are given by staff in developing their skills and confidence.

Young people live in a well-maintained and comfortable home. The home is furnished, decorated and maintained to a good standard and young people say it feels homely. They are involved in choosing the décor, furniture and keeping the house looking nice.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Young people are looked after by well trained staff who are effectively managed and are proactive in safeguarding and promoting young people's welfare and meeting their individual needs. The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Young people are cared for by staff who have sensitive insight into the diverse needs of the young people and respect for their individual backgrounds and experiences. Young people's records reflect each young person's history, individuality and progress. Records are well written, up to date and are kept securely.

The running of the service is internally monitored and there is a positive focus on continuous development and improvement of the services for young people. There is a strong focus on staff and team development to ensure young people's needs are consistently explored and met by all the staff on a day to day basis. An external representative from the organisation also carries out monthly monitoring checks.

Staffing arrangements are well managed. Young people are looked after by an experienced and well trained staff team. There is an effective and varied training programme and refresher training for mandatory and core training has recently been completed by all staff. There is excellent staff communication and team work including daily briefings and regular staff meetings.

The service has a detailed Statement of Purpose and young people are provided with useful information about the service in a written young people's guide and a welcome process with staff which helps them to understand what they can expect while living at the home.