

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Sarah Oldham
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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 a single occupancy children's home, which provides care and accommodation for young people aged from 11 years old up to 17 years old, of either sex. The home is situated within a town and is within easy access of public transportation and local amenities.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This was an unannounced inspection and all the key national minimum standards were inspected.

This is a good service and provides good outcomes in all of the Every Child Matters outcome areas. Young people benefit from good relationships with staff who provide clear guidance and act as positive role models. Young people are supported to maintain healthy diets and actively involved in the planning, budgeting, shopping and preparation of meals to support them with planning for independence. Young people are supported to attend education to enable them to have the opportunity for pursuing their chosen careers. The home works closely with a range of outside agencies in order to meet the full range of young people's needs. Staff are supported within their roles by an experienced manager and have the opportunity to further develop their skills through ongoing training. However, on occasions, not all of the current information from placing authority's is in place. The manager and staff at the home actively pursue this and maintain records of all requests made and the responses received. In addition, some risk assessments are not in place in relation to young people managing their own medication

One young person was present and participated in the inspection process.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection the Registered Manager was required to ensure that external monitoring of the home was undertaken in a timely manner and the reports of these visits were forwarded to Ofsted. Systems are now in place and reports undertaken are detailed and provide a good view of the home and how it is functioning. In addition, three recommendations were made, two in relation to medication and one in relation to policies and procedures. The recommendations relating to ensuring that records are maintained of medication, treatment and first aid has been addressed. Clear records are in place for young people regarding medication and these are clearly recorded and signed by staff. However, risk assessments for young people managing their own medication are not routinely in

place for young people who have recently been admitted to the home. The service has updated policies and procedures in place that have been ratified by the organisation and contain appropriate information for staff. Staff are aware of the policies and procedures and the expectation that these are followed. This promotes the welfare of the young people living at the home.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Staff at the home ensure that the health care needs of the young people are identified as part of the initial referral process. This enables young people to receive appropriate care and support to have these met. Young people are registered with a doctor, dentist and optician and are encouraged and supported to visit as needed. Staff are proactive in promoting health care needs and provide information to young people regarding health, healthy eating, smoking cessation and exercise. All young people receive an information pack with this information in when they arrive at the home.

The home has clear and comprehensive policies and procedures with regard to the storage and administration of medication. Each young person has their own medication record that is completed as well as a central record of medication. Staff encourage, where appropriate, young people to manage their own medication. However, at the time of the inspection, not all self administration risk assessments were in place. This does not demonstrate that staff have fully assessed those young people who administer their own medication to ensure that they are able to do so.

Staff work with young people to plan menus that provide choice and healthy options. Copies of menus are maintained and these clearly reflect the young people's choice. One young person who spoke with the inspector said 'the food is really good and I enjoy being involved in the planning and shopping for food'.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff are aware of the importance in promoting privacy, dignity and confidentiality for young people. All documentation is securely stored and computers are password protected. Young people have their own bedrooms that they are able to lock, these locks can be overridden in the case of an emergency.

Information about how to make a complaint is provided within the Statement of Purpose and the children's guide. Staff also ensure that young people understand how to make a complaint and provide access to independent advocates. The young people say that they feel confident that any complaint that they make will be addressed.

Staff receive training on the promotion of the welfare and safety of the young

people. This includes responding to any unauthorised absence appropriately and supporting young people with any issues they may have with regards bullying. There have been no recent issues with young people missing from the home. Staff have a clear understanding of the procedures to follow if this does occur and previous records inspected demonstrate that the procedures were effectively followed. This ensures that young people's safety is effectively supported.

Young people who are absent from the home without permission are protected in accordance with written procedures and responded to positively on their return. Records are maintained of when incidents have occurred. However, there have not been any incidents since the previous inspection.

Young people are supported to develop socially acceptable behaviour through the encouragement of positive behaviour and the establishment of positive relationships with staff. Behaviour management training is provided to all staff, including de-escalation strategies and the use of physical intervention. Placement Plans and risk assessments identify behaviour management strategies, many of which have been discussed and agreed with the young person. Great emphasis is placed on acknowledging achievements across a range of areas and positive reward systems are in place to celebrate these.

Risk assessments are carried out in relation to the premises, grounds and activities and a system of review is in place. The fire detection system is tested regularly and fire evacuation drills take place at different times. However, a night time drill has not recently taken place. Fire safety training is provided for staff and a fire risk assessment is in place. The boiler is serviced on an annual basis and electrical equipment is tested appropriately. These measures contribute to the safety and welfare of the young people.

Suitable procedures are in place for the recruitment and checking of staff. Records of visitors are maintained and proof of identification is requested where appropriate. These practices reduce potential risks to the welfare of children living at the home.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children receive an excellent level of individualised support in line with their needs and wishes, including support from external professionals. Staff encourage and support children to be involved in discussions about their daily lives and plans for their future. The home does not currently have a key worker system in place. Young people can and do approach any member of staff with personal worries. They also have access to an independent visitor.

The involvement of all children in the life of the home is promoted and staff nurture positive friendships between children. The individuality of children is acknowledged and they are encouraged to pursue individual activities and interests outside of the home where possible. These include trips to local leisure and sports facilities and

local shopping areas.

Staff are very positive in their approach to education and its value for children. Very active practical and emotional support is provided to children to encourage them to attend school, either mainstream or the company's registered school facility. Time is set aside for homework on a daily basis and staff also offer assistance and encouragement.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have detailed placement plans which set out how their individual needs are to be met on a day-to-day basis. Sampled plans evidence consultation with children in the compilation and review of their Placement Plans. Staff are aware of the importance of ensuring that the plan is kept under review.

Children are supported with their individual contact arrangements and these are appropriately recorded. Any restrictions on contact for the protection of the child are made clear.

Staff encourage children to contribute their ideas and suggestions in relation to the day-to-day running of the home. This includes menu planning, furnishings and décor as well as activity plans.

Admissions to the home are planned with some placements occasionally being made at short notice. Children report that staff help them settle in and explain the day-to-day routine of the home. A welcome pack is provided and staff support children by going through key information with them. Memories of a child's stay are collated through monthly reports, achievement records and photographs and children are supported throughout the planning process for moving on.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The daily life of the home provides a range of opportunities for young people, appropriate to their age, to develop knowledge and skills within an emotionally supportive environment. For example, helping to shop for food, clothes and toiletries, help with cooking and general tidying of their room. Tasks within the home are shared between male and female members of staff and emphasis is placed on the nurturing role of both male and female staff; this promotes positive role modelling.

The home provides pleasant, domestic-style accommodation that is furnished and maintained to a good standard. A programme of redecoration has recently been completed and the purchasing of new furnishings in the lounge and dining room ensures that it is comfortable and homely for young people. Externally there is a small rear garden area enabling young people to have an area to sit in when the

weather is fine. Local parks near by provide additional areas for young people to play in and spend free time.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home has a Statement of Purpose that contains information about the aim and objectives of the home. This is reviewed on an annual basis or sooner if there has been any changes to staffing or facilities. This document is made available to parents, carers and placing authorities to enable them to have information about the home. There is also a children's guide in place. This is provided to the young people, detailing the services that the home provides. They are also provided with an information pack as part of the introduction to the home. Young people say that this is very helpful and informative.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. All the home's recording systems take account of potential needs in relation to young people's diversity, such as, identity, race, culture and religion. Staff have a good understanding of the importance of promotion of equality and diversity and the impact this has on young people. This ensures that the home provides an environment where the value of equality and diversity is understood, promoted and celebrated.

A comprehensive induction programme is in place for all new staff and covers basic training, including child protection, promotion of positive behaviours and physical intervention techniques. Staff receive formal supervision on a regular basis and staff spoken with find this very useful. In addition, informal supervision is provided and staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Staffing levels at the home are good and the staff team in place provide a consistent level of staffing for the young people. This ensures that young people benefit from a well supported and stable staff team providing continuity of care from members of staff that they know and have developed positive relationships with.

There are quality assurance systems in place to monitor the performance of the home against its Statement of Purpose so that standards of care are maintained. This includes the manager monitoring the necessary records and visits to the home by an independent visitor to undertake comprehensive assessments of how the home is functioning. Reports from these visits are maintained at the home and provided information about how well the home is delivering care and support to young people living there. They enable the manager to have an overview of how the home is running and bring to light any issues that require action to be taken to improve the care and support provided for young people. Copies of these reports are also provided to Ofsted in accordance with the Children's Homes Regulations 2001.

Young people's care files are detailed and maintained to a good standard. All staff at the home are required to read these files to ensure that they have the appropriate information and knowledge to provide individual support to young people.

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 young people keeping and administering their own medication are assessed by staff as sufficiently responsible to do so, and are able to lock their medication somewhere not readily accessible to other children (NMS 13.9)
- include the provision of a night time fire drill. (NMS 26.8)