

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 provides residential care and accommodation for one young person. It is a semi-detached house with an enclosed rear garden. On the ground floor there is a living room with dining area and a kitchen. Upstairs there are three bedrooms. One bedroom is used by the young person, one is used as a staff sleep-in room and the other doubles as a staff sleep-in room and office. There is also a family-sized bathroom.

The home is situated in a residential area and is a short distance from the town centre with its shops and leisure facilities.

The young person currently living in the home participated in the inspection.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

The home received one hour's notice of this full inspection during which it was assessed against the key national minimum standards.

The home provides good quality care to young people and some aspects of the service are extremely good. Young people make excellent progress during their time at the home. They respond well to the consistent care provided by an experienced, qualified and well trained staff team.

The home operates in accordance with the Children's Homes Regulations and no actions were made. However, a number of good practice improvements were identified in relation to health care and keeping young people safe. Forms for parental consent to the administration of first aid treatment and non-prescribed medicines are not always properly completed and staff do not effectively monitor young people who have been assessed as competent to self-medicate or report to the prescribing practitioner when young people frequently fail to take medicines or treatment prescribed. Sanctions are not always recorded so the home does not have a true record of sanctions imposed. Despite the provision of safeguarding training, not all staff know the procedure to be followed should a young person make an allegation or disclosure of abuse. Advice from the fire safety officer is not followed within timescales and compromises young people's welfare. In addition, young people do not have a dedicated key worker, so they do not benefit from developing a trusting relationship with a named person.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were no shortfalls noted in the service at the last inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The home promotes healthy eating and encourages young people to try new foods including foods from other cultures. Young people learn to plan, shop for and prepare meals, taking account of budgets, nutritional value and good food hygiene. Meals are taken together at table and young people learn good manners from staff.

The home has a very good relationship with the local community nurse who carries out annual health checks and obtains young people's vaccination and health histories. Through this, young people have the opportunity to have any missed vaccinations and a detailed health plan guides the staff in how to promote health improvement. Young people receive dental, optical and other health treatment in accordance with their needs. Comprehensive records give very good information about young people's changing health needs and how these are being met.

Although parental consent to medication forms that are signed by a suitable person are held on file, these are not always completed properly so that it is not always clear what treatment is permitted. Medicines are stored securely in a locked medicines cabinet and safe administration procedures ensure that young people receive only the treatment and medication they need. The home allows some young people to hold their own medicines where they are deemed to be sufficiently responsible to do so. However, written risk assessments do not clearly identify the potential hazards and implications of not taking prescribed treatments. Staff do not routinely monitor whether these young people are taking the medicines or treatments prescribed and do not inform the prescribing practitioner when the young person ceases or refuses to take the medicine or treatment. This is a potential risk to young people's health.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people enjoy privacy in the home and staff respect this by only entering the young people's bedroom when invited. Bathrooms are fitted with suitable locks and young people confirm they are treated with respect at all times. The home stores young people's confidential information securely. Staff know that it cannot be shared outside of the home.

There have been no complaints about the home since the last inspection and the young person currently living there expressed satisfaction with the care provided. The placing social worker confirmed that the home is good and that she is very pleased with the level of care it provides. The home ensures that young people know

how to make a complaint and have the opportunity to do so. Young people have someone independent of the home that they trust and can contact as they wish.

Staff are trained in the home's safeguarding policy. However, not all staff are fully aware of how to respond appropriately to an allegation or disclosure of abuse and this could lead to children not being adequately safeguarded. Staff are trained to respond appropriately to incidents of bullying but there is no reported bullying within the home. Staff promote the welfare of young people who are missing from home by following good procedures and liaising closely with the local police. They examine the reason why a young person has gone missing so that any issues can be addressed.

The home trains its staff in managing challenging behaviour and the appropriate use of restraint. Physical intervention is rarely used and there has been no restraint at the home since before the last inspection. The staff team works very well together and provides good, consistent care with clear boundaries. Young people respond well to the structure staff provide. This has led to a reduction in their anti-social and challenging behaviours. A placing social worker commented that a young person has come on 'leaps and bounds' as a result of the security, stability and good behaviour management provided. Although sanctions are used to discourage inappropriate behaviour, they are not always recorded as a measure of control in the log book, as a result, there is not a true and permanent record of the control measures used.

Routine maintenance and regular checks of the premises, services and appliances ensure that the home is a safe place for young people and staff to live. Most shortfalls are quickly noted and addressed. However, the fire officer's recommendation to install intumescent strips on doors has not been addressed within the recommended timescale and this puts children's lives at risk. Visits to the home are recorded and monitored. Visitors who do not have an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check are supervised in the presence of young people. Outstanding staff recruitment procedures ensure that young people are protected as far as possible from coming into contact with potential abusers.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The home refers young people for specialist support in line with their needs and the requirements of the placing authority. An independent person, who is contracted by the provider, acts as a befriender and advocate to young people. This means that young people receive independent advice and guidance from someone who is not involved in the operation of the home.

Young people receive very good support with their education and those who attend the company's school make extremely good progress. For example, young people who have not attended school for several years are helped to catch up with their peers through one-to-one teaching and to take public examinations such as the General Certificate of Secondary Education. Some teaching takes place in the home where this is in the best interests of a young person. Staff encourage young people

to fulfil their potential and to attend a suitable college course post-16 years.

Young people enjoy relaxing with staff in the evenings, playing electronic games, watching television and chatting. They also enjoy trips to the cinema and the gymnasium.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff members support young people through good relationships. However, the home does not have a key worker system. There is no opportunity for young people to meet regularly with a named member of staff with whom they can build a trusting relationship and share their concerns, anxieties and past experiences.

Very good placement plans detail how staff address each young person's identified needs during their stay at the home. Each plan is based on the placing authority's plan for the young person concerned. Staff are familiar with the content and ensure that young people's individual needs are met. Social workers are pleased with the way the home supports young people to meet their needs. One social worker said she has recommended the home to others as she has been so impressed with the standard of care it provides.

Young people benefit from being looked after by staff who communicate very well with the placing authority and with parents. Decision making is transparent and through sharing information, all those involved with young people work together in their best interests. The home provides a high level of support for contact arrangements through enabling telephone calls, transporting young people home and through receiving family visitors at the home. Staff encourage young people to be involved in decisions about their day to day lives and their future.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

In accordance with their age and stage of development, young people participate in household chores and learn self-care and budgeting skills that equip them for future independent living. They live in homely and comfortable accommodation that is well appointed and kept clean and in good repair. The home is domestic in style and blends in with other properties in the vicinity so it is not easily identifiable as a children's home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Young people's individual needs are identified and addressed. They learn about other cultures and races through regular

theme nights and are encouraged to develop tolerance through understanding of difference.

An up-to-date Statement of Purpose accurately reflects the services provided at the home. Young people receive a welcome booklet on arrival that outlines the care they can expect to receive and details important names and contact details as well as the complaints procedure.

Young people are looked after by a staff team that is very well supported and supervised by a competent and experienced manager. The staff team is well trained and provides consistent, high quality care so that young people make very good progress in all aspects of their development. They benefit from good relationships with staff and thrive on the stability and security this provides. Social workers speak highly of the home and report that young people make exceptional progress there.

Effective and robust monitoring procedures ensure that the home provides young people with a good service that continually improves. Any shortfalls identified are quickly addressed.

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 holding their own medicines are assessed and monitored to ensure they are competent to do so and that any frequent failure or refusal to take prescribed medication or treatment is reported to the prescribing practitioner (NMS 13.7 and NMS 13.9)
- obtain and retain on each young person's file prior written permission from a person with parental responsibility for the administration of first aid and non-prescription medication (NMS 13.4)
- ensure that all staff know and understand how to promote the welfare of a young person who makes a disclosure or allegation of abuse (NMS 17.1)
- keep a record of the use of any sanctions in a separate, dedicated, bound and numbered book (NMS 22.10)
- implement the requirements of the local fire authority within the timescales specified (NMS 26.8)
- ensure that a key worker provides individual guidance and support to each child and regularly makes time available to the child to enable the child to seek guidance, advice and support on any matter. Where homes do not use key worker systems, this responsibility passes to the registered person or a nominated member of staff. (NMS 2.2)