

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Susan Mullin
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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 one of five children's homes owned by a private company. It is registered to provide care for two young people of either sex between the ages of 8 and 17 years with emotional or behavioural difficulties. However, the home only provides care for one young person at any one time, unless the two children are siblings and it is considered appropriate for them to share a bedroom. Admissions to the home are usually planned but emergency admissions are accepted.

The home is a semi-detached mews type property built in 1999. It is situated in the residential area on the outskirts of a town. The home is in close proximity to a variety of shops and local leisure facilities and amenities. The young person resident at the time of the inspection was not present to participate in the inspection process.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This was a key unannounced inspection of the service to assess compliance with the national minimum standards for children's homes. The home was assessed under the headings of Every Child Matters. Being healthy, staying safe, achieving economic well-being and organisation received a judgement of good, whilst positive contribution and enjoying and achieving received a judgement of outstanding. Overall the home was judged as good.

This is good provision as effective monitoring ensures young people progress well while at the home. The management team is committed to improving practice and regularly review the individualised packages of care, to ensure they meet the identified needs of the young people. No actions have been raised at the time of this inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

No actions or recommendations were made at the last inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The young people's health and dietary needs are very clearly identified and met. The staff promote choices of healthy food and fruit so that young people are well informed and aware of the benefits for their health. Young people are provided with

healthy nutritious meals through well-balanced menus. Young people's food choices are always taken into account and they confirm that they are actively encouraged to help plan menus, buy food and prepare meals.

Young people have a detailed, easily understood, accessible health plan which records how their specific and general health needs are met. The plan is implemented soon after admission and is reviewed on a regular basis, to ensure it remains up to date. Staff actively encourage young people to take an interest in looking after their own health and to lead healthy lives. This means that young people establish good routines for regular health care checks at local health provisions.

Young people's health needs are met and protected by effective medication policies, procedures and practice guidance which are implemented well. Staff receive training in the safe handling and administration of medication and first aid and have a good understanding of the correct procedures to follow. Their competence is re-assessed regularly. The management undertakes monthly audits to ensure medication policies, procedures are put into practice effectively, to further promote the well-being of young people in their care.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people have a key to their own bedroom, they are able to personalise their own room to reflect their individuality and identity. The privacy of young people is respected. All confidential information is handled appropriately and storage of information is secure. Young people are provided with a mobile telephone and a budget to purchase credit for the phone is provided. This supports the aims and objectives of the home in promoting and preparing young people for independence by supporting them to effectively budget their expenditure including telephone calls.

The organisation's complaint's procedure is included in the Statement of Purpose and the young person's guide. It is also explained to young people as part of their introduction to the home. No complaints have been received by the home or Ofsted since the last inspection. Policies and procedures are in place to promote and safeguard the welfare of young people. Staff receive training and are aware of their duties and responsibilities to respond to any issues of safeguarding effectively. This training is updated on an annual basis and forms part of the mandatory core training for all staff working at the home. In addition, staff support young people to be aware of promoting their own safety and well-being as part of the planning for independence. Positive links have been established with local professionals concerned with the safeguarding of young people.

Bullying is not an issue at the home. Staff work closely with the young people to ensure that they are aware of all aspects of bullying and the impact that this can have for individuals. Guidelines are in place for staff regarding the action to take if a young person is missing from the home. There have been no recent events of this.

Young people are supported to develop appropriate behaviours through encouragement, support and consistency. When a young person presents behaviour that is inappropriate, this is discussed with them to enable them to have a good understanding of how their behaviour impacts on themselves and others. All staff have attended appropriate up-to-date training on physical intervention. However, there have been no occasions when this has been used, as there is a clear agreement and understanding in place with young people to promote acceptable behaviours.

Risk assessments, policies and procedures are in place to support the maintenance of a safe environment for young people, staff and visitors. The risk assessments are detailed and provide clear action to be taken. Regular servicing of equipment is undertaken including fire equipment. The fire evacuation procedure is known to staff and young people. All visitors to the home are also required to read a copy of what to do in the event of a fire. Regular fire drills are held and records maintained to demonstrate that these are held at different times to ensure that staff and young people are aware of the procedure to follow at all times.

Suitable procedures are in place for the recruitment of staff however, there have been no new staff employed in the home for some time. The home benefits from a well-established team that have been working within the company for several years.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Excellent case management and overview of individual needs, ensures young people receive effective support. This support is closely linked with identified needs and is provided in one-to-one sessions or within general daily living. Arrangements in place deliver both leisure and enrichment activities to young people daily. The range of activities available ensures that young people can take part in daily leisure and learning experiences both in the home and in the local community.

Staff ensure the young people are supported in the community according to their individual needs to provide them with a range of activities. Staff ensure the activities provided during education holidays, in the evenings or as work experience help young people gain confidence and develop their skills for future employment. Young people report in a survey that they enjoy activities both in the home and in the wider community. Education and learning is an integral part of life in the home and staff work hard to ensure young people have an educational provision, which is enhanced by work experience sessions.

Pocket money records are well maintained and young people can earn extra money. A reward system is in place that encourages good behaviour and acknowledges achievements. As well as enabling young people to work towards a specific goal, which may be something they have previously found difficult to achieve such as saving money for a particular item for themselves or a present for a family member.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Staff ensure young people's plans identify reasons for admission to care and include individual development strategies that reflect religious, cultural and ethnic needs and how to meet them. Comprehensive placement plans reflect the specific needs of the young people. On admission the staff focus their work through the care and health plans to ensure young people's individual complex care needs are firstly recognised then action taken to support them.

Young people are able to maintain constructive contact with family and friends. Systems are in place to support them maintain regular contact with important people in their lives. Families are encouraged to maintain contact and can visit. Young people are encouraged to telephone family and friends (where appropriate) on a regular basis. Staff ensure that any restrictions are followed to ensure young people are protected.

Young people receive support and encouragement to make decisions about their lives at the home and their immediate future. Staff ensure consultation with the young people is integrated into everyday practice. Young people are able to contribute to their assessments and how any needs identified are to be met and what activities they wish to do. Each young person can access counselling as a part of their placement when needed.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Staff support and encourage young people to develop independent living skills. Staff work effectively to engage young people and motivate them to take part in community life and contribute to communal living arrangements. Young people take part in the daily household tasks such as, shopping, preparation of meals, laundry and tidying their own rooms. Staff enable the young people to access local services such public transport and the bank.

The home is a well-maintained, semi-detached property with a small rear yard. Staff encourage young people to personalise their own rooms and respect the communal space and facilities. As a result young people can enjoy their surroundings and relax in comfort within the home. The home is located in an urban area with easy access to a range of community facilities and resources for health, education, recreation and leisure. The home meets the requirements for accommodation and provide a safe secure environment for young people.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home's Statement of Purpose is reviewed on a regular basis and includes all areas as required by the standard. The young person's guide is informative and a copy is given to young people on admission.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Staff ensure all young people have equal access to services and opportunities. They provide services which meet each young person's specific needs and reflect their individual identities.

Staff are supported through monthly team meetings where they discuss ongoing issues for individuals and how best they can meet identified needs of the young people. Staff are involved in a range of training courses to promote their ongoing development. 100% of the staff team have completed training up to a National Vocational Qualification at level 3. Staff receive good levels of supervision, which support the development of their competence, knowledge and skills in working with young people. The manager ensures there are sufficient numbers of staff working in the home to meet the needs of young people.

The monitoring systems in the home are effective in supporting improvements in the quality of care provided to young people. The manager is competent and committed to improving the home in the interests of young people. This has a positive effect on staff practice. As a result young people are living in a home where staff help them to have good outcomes in all areas of their lives. The records and young people's files are well managed and easily accessible when young people request to see them.