

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

This children's home is owned and managed by the responsible individual. It is a detached house situated in the suburbs close to a large town, with links to public transport and community facilities. The ground floor has a lounge, with satellite television, a kitchen and dining room combined, a bedroom, bathroom and toilet facilities, and an office. The second floor comprises of bedrooms, bathroom, and toilet facilities. There is space for car parking on the home's driveway.

Five young people currently live in the home. All of whom were present during different times of the inspection and were able to speak with the inspector about their experiences of living at the home.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This was an unannounced full inspection focusing upon 25 key national minimum standards (NMS) under the Every Child Matters outcomes for children and young people.

The three recommendations made at the last inspection in March 2010 have been reviewed to see if they have been implemented.

Young people are very well supported to access healthcare professionals to meet their diverse needs. Keeping young people safe is given a high level of importance. Effective safety measures are in place to support young people. Great importance is given to the education of young people and this has resulted in each of them making good progress. The staff team have experience in working in residential childcare, and suitable training opportunities are provided to staff which ensures they are equipped to carry out their duties.

Shortfalls have been found in that formal supervision has not been provided to all staff at the required intervals. Pathway plans are not in place for young people over 16 years old and lockable facilities are required in each young person's bedroom.

Improvements since the last inspection

The setting has taken steps to address all of issues raised previously.

Controlled medication is now stored within two locked areas to increase the secure storage arrangements. The restraint book records have numbered pages to ensure all records can be accounted for in accordance with the national minimum standards.

Fire drills, including evacuation of staff and children from the building and a fire drill held at night, has taken place in a 12-month period and are recorded.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people receive a well balanced and nutritious diet. Diverse meal options are included in the menu. Young people take part in planning menus, cooking meals and snacks. They said they like the meals.

General and some specialist healthcare professionals accessible to young people. This allows staff to support young people specifically to meet their individual needs. Health information is recorded within each young persons case file to ensure they receive the required support. Young people said they receive a lot of support to attend health appointments from the staff. Therefore, the health needs of young people are identified and services accessed and provided which promotes their good health.

Administration, recording and storage of medicines and treatments is provided safely to the young people through the home's policies, procedures and the practices of staff. Staff are trained in medication administration and first aid. In addition, all staff have recently received training in supporting young people with diabetes.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The young people's privacy is well respected and information confidentially handled. Young people said the staff always respect their privacy. They knock on doors before entering their bedrooms. Some young people have keys to their own bedrooms to ensure it is their own private space. Young people spent time alone in their bedrooms during the inspection, showing their privacy is promoted. Records are securely stored.

High importance is given to dealing with complaints. The staff and the young people are fully aware of the complaints procedure. Two complaints have been made since the last inspection. The complaints information is recorded in full. Records show that prompt action is taken to investigate complaints and the outcomes of complaints are recorded. This indicates concerns raised are taken seriously.

The home has good links with the Local Safeguarding Children Board. The procedures are detailed and available for staff to refer to and use. All staff have received safeguarding training. They are aware of the procedures to follow when required. Young people said they feel safe living in their home. Good safeguarding measures are in place to keep young people safe and their welfare is promoted.

Young people are protected from bullying, through the home's policies, procedures

and the practice of the staff. Young people said bullying is not tolerated and no bullying is occurring. Clear information on bullying is available for young people to read. Staff advise young people on the issues relating to bullying. The staff respond promptly to deal with bullying situations and they monitor young people closely.

Staff talk to young people about keeping themselves safe and respond appropriately to protect them when they go missing without authority. Young people are aware of the circumstances when they will be reported missing. The number of incidents of young people being reported missing has reduced in the last two months. Staff have undertaken direct work with young people to support the individuals concerned. Staff continue to respond positively to young people when they return to try and ensure their future safety.

Managing behaviour positively continues to be a high priority in the home. This is promoted and encouraged consistently by the staff team. It is achieved by staff having clear boundaries, incentives and rewards in place to support young people's positive behaviour. This is working well for individual young people and having a significant positive impact.

The sanctions and restraint records record the required information. Young people commented that the staff are fair and few sanctions are given. Staff confirmed physical intervention is used as a last resort to manage behaviour which puts a young person at risk of hurting themselves or others.

Young people's safety is enhanced through the practices and support from staff. The home provides physical safety and security. For example, risk assessments are in place, which in the main cover the relevant areas in good detail and the supporting safety measures to be implemented with young people.

The fire records indicate that regular checks on the system and appropriate fire instruction and drills have taken place. Seven drills have taken place since the last inspection, one in hours of darkness including a full evacuation. Health and safety areas are monitored by the manager to ensure appropriate measures are in place to keep young people safe.

Staff recruitment files have not been checked on this inspection. Since the last inspection no new staff have been employed at the home. However, the service continues to implement suitable vetting and recruitment procedures. This helps to ensure any new staff employed are suitable to work with young people. The recruitment file will be checked at the next inspection.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The young people receive individual support from the staff and a number of professionals when they need it. This assists them to make progress in their lives and support their individual needs. These includes; links with education staff from the

school each young person attends, the looked-after-children's safe guarding officer, and a support team who work with young people to assist with mental health and emotional wellbeing. These professionals have frequent contact with the home to support young people individually and assist them to make progress in their lives.

Education is a high priority in the home. Young people receive a wealth of support to attend education on a full time basis or have other supporting education packages. They are making continued good progress and achieving success in this area. Personal education plans are in place for each young person. Staff have continued to build positive links with a variety of education settings and have frequent contact. These positive working relationships benefit young people.

The home has a selection of books and games. Young people have access to a computer and or laptop for education and leisure.

Great importance is given to encouraging individual interests, leisure activities and hobbies. Young people attend a variety of clubs and sporting activities. They currently have individual interests in sports, computer games, youth clubs, scouts, dance, playing musical instruments, music, socialising and meeting with friends. This pro-active approach by staff develops young people's self- esteem and confidence.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people's needs are assessed and information clearly documented within the care plan and supporting records. These outline what their needs are and how their needs will be met. Focused work takes place with young people on the areas where they need support. This approach has resulted in young people making good progress. Staff are able to verbalise the specific care they provide to young people to meet needs, showing a sound knowledge of their individual needs.

Young people's progress is a priority. The young people are positively involved in their reviews and have support from staff where needed. Statutory care reviews take place at the stipulated intervals. Review minutes are held on case files.

Staff actively encourage and facilitate constructive contact with family members and significant others for the young people. This ensures they maintain important links with their family, own identity and their community. Young people meet regularly with family and friends.

Positive empowerment is promoted within the home to assist young people to make decisions about their lives and the running of the home. All young people said they got on really well with the staff. They are involved in making decisions about personalising their own bedrooms, their education, holidays and plans for their future when attending their statutory reviews.

There are very good relationships between young people and the staff. This is

evident in the way young people and staff interact together, making plans for the day and the respectful way they speak to each other. Young people discussed appointments and activities with individual staff members. Positive and meaningful, two way discussions takes place between staff and young people in the home. These included negotiation, laughter, chatter and joking which supported their meaningful relationships.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The staff recognise the importance of promoting and developing the independent living skills of individual young people. They are supporting them in this area appropriate to their age and understanding. Young people are involved in a number of areas and undertake practical daily living tasks. These include; processing their own laundry, undertaking domestic chores around the house, menu planning, cooking meals and keeping their own bedrooms clean and tidy.

Although care plans of older young people include relevant areas not all have a completed pathway plan to reflect future planning for the young person when they leave care.

The accommodation is decorated and furnished to a good standard, providing a positive domestic environment for the young people to live in. The home is clean and tidy. There are good repair and maintenance programmes in place. Since the last inspection there has been an extension and changes to the layout of the building to bring an additional bathroom facility for young people and a number of areas have been decorated. Bedrooms are personalised and well-equipped with a good range of furniture. Young people commented positively about the home. They said this is 'their home' and 'it's cosy'. However, young people do not have a lockable facility within their bedrooms to keep private and personal belongings.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The Statement of Purpose accurately describes what services young people can expect from living there. A children's guide and information pack is given to young people to ensure they have full information about the home.

There are good communication systems in place. This is evidenced by regular staff meetings and daily handovers taking place. The staff say that they have staff members with 'a range of work and life experience', 'they work well as a team' and 'the manager is approachable'. These qualities assist them in providing consistent care to the young people. They spoke about their work with young people, showing commitment and a very child centred approach. Staff are well supported and guided in promoting young people's welfare. However, not all staff are receiving formal

supervision at regular intervals in line with the national minimum standards.

Young people receive care from competent and experienced staff who can meet their needs. The evening shift was worked by two residential care workers and the assistant manager to care of five young people. The people in these positions have a relevant experience to undertake their duties and care for the young people.

The target of 80% of the workforce being trained in the National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in caring for children and young people, or an equivalent qualification, has been achieved.

The staff have access to training in current childcare practices to ensure they are competent to meet the needs of the young people. Staff have opportunities to undertake mandatory and other training in a number of areas, such as, diabetes, attachment disorder, drugs and alcohol awareness.

The staff have a good knowledge of the young people's needs and are working with them to ensure the right support and care is being provided. Young people receive an individual service which is tailored to meet their personal needs.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. This is evidenced through practice, and the supporting policies, procedures and individual placement plans for young people. Young people living at the home are making good progress in their lives, in particular in enjoying and achieving and staying safe.

There are good monitoring systems in place to ensure the young people living at the home are well cared for and NMS and regulations are being met. Monthly monitoring take place by the manager provider to check how care is provided in the home and a detailed report made on the findings.

There is regular monitoring of young people's progress made through their individual care plans. This contributes further to the monitoring system. This ensures the young people living at the home are well cared for, and are making positive progress in their lives.

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 all young people have a lockable storage facility within their bedrooms for personal possessions and or medication (NMS 24.5)
- ensure pathway plans are in place and young people have their own copy (NMS 6.4)

- ensure that all staff and others working in the home receive at least one and half hours of one to one supervision from a senior member of staff each month. (NMS 28.2)