

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Mark Kersh
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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 is a children's home that is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to six young people of either gender. It is owned and run by a private organisation. The property is a semi-detached house, situated on a busy main road. There is good access from the home to public transport and local amenities, such as shops, leisure facilities, schools and colleges.

There is sufficient private and communal space in the home. Accommodation is spread over three floors, with storage and laundry facilities in the basement. On the ground floor, there are two lounges and a dining kitchen. The young people's bedrooms, bath and toilet facilities are on the first and second floors. There are two bedrooms on the second floor, one of these doubles as a staff office.

There are currently six young people living at the home. Three young people were present of which one contributed to the inspection.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

At this unannounced full inspection, all key standards were inspected. This home provides outstanding care to young people. The care provided is of high quality and the home meets all of the required standards and regulations. Young people clearly benefit from the services provided to them, and they thrive and make excellent progress in this home.

Young people's individual health needs are very well met. Young people are safeguarded and protected and they know the rules of the home. Participation is a strong feature as is consultation ensuring young people's views are sought and acted upon.

Care planning documentation is detailed, individualised and has targets and outcomes to achieve, all of which are kept under regular review. The home is very well presented and provides young people with sufficient space for privacy.

Staff are experienced and provide young people with consistency and everyone is treated equally. Staff provide young people with excellent support and are well supported themselves by the management team, who have a strong focus and commitment on maintaining high standards and excellent quality of care.

There are no actions or recommendations made as a result of this visit.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were no actions made at the previous inspection. The recommendation made at that visit has been addressed. This was in relation to staff qualifications; the majority of staff have now completed the relevant qualification.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Young people's health needs are met exceptionally well. Each week they are fully involved with the planning of meals, all of which are provided in accordance with their individual dietary requirements. Young people enjoy the wide range of healthy, wholesome and nutritious meals provided for them. Healthy eating is well promoted and mealtimes are organised to be pleasant, friendly and sociable occasions.

Young people are encouraged by staff to look after themselves and to show pride in their appearance. Health and personal hygiene are actively promoted. Young people are supported to lead healthy lifestyles and there is much information readily available to them to support this. Physical exercise is routinely promoted by staff. Young people receive medical assistance when they require it, and have access to the full range of local health services to promote healthy outcomes for them. All young people are registered with doctors, dentists and opticians, and professional health services are used to meet young people's identified specific health needs.

The procedures for the administration of medication are stringently followed to ensure all medication is stored securely, administered safely and recorded accurately to ensure accountability. All staff have completed first aid training and there are appropriate provisions for staff to administer first aid and non-prescribed medication. The outcomes for the promotion of young people's health, social and medication needs are excellent.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Young people have their privacy respected and staff encourage them to respect the privacy needs of others in the home. They are encouraged to be polite, well mannered and considerate. Staff demonstrate well their understanding of keeping information confidential and all records in respect of young people and staff are stored securely for this purpose. Young people can make and receive telephone calls in private.

Young people understand the home's complaints procedure and say they feel they are able to raise their concerns and complaints with staff. Regular young people's meetings enable young people and staff to discuss any issues relating to the care they receive in the home, and these are promptly acted upon, without having to go

through the formal complaints procedure.

Staff ensure young people are protected and kept safe from harm. Young people's welfare and safety are actively promoted through daily discussions and formal key working sessions. Staff support young people to develop an awareness of personal safety. Safeguarding issues are promptly responded to and excellent links are maintained with agencies responsible for ensuring young people remain protected and safe. Staff seek the advice of these services should any suspicions of abuse arise. There are currently no safeguarding issues or any incidents of bullying within the home. Significant events and notifications are rare, but the process for reporting serious matters to appropriate agencies is clearly understood by all staff.

There are some current issues with young people being absent from the home without authority. However, staff keep in regular contact with young people at these times and ensure they return to the home safely. Following each instance young people are seen by an independent person to establish any reasons they may have for leaving the home without authority.

All staff are trained to manage young people's behaviour safely. Restraint is only used where absolutely necessary to protect young people from injury or to prevent damage to property. Sanctions used by staff for inappropriate behaviour are fair and understood and agreed by young people. The impact of each sanction is carefully considered, recorded and monitored to review the effectiveness of the sanction imposed. Young people are given incentives and rewarded for positive behaviour. Individual behaviour patterns are risk assessed and recorded. Individual behaviour management plans enable staff to identify safe and effective strategies to manage young people's behaviours consistently and safely.

The procedures for fire safety ensure young people, staff and visitors are safe from risk from fire. Young people live in a safe environment where safety systems are tested regularly by staff and serviced by professional contractors. There are regular fire drills, testing of the alarm system and comprehensive fire and building risk assessments, which are used by staff to ensure environmental safety.

The robust recruitment of staff is high priority for the manager to ensure people are suitable to work with young people. Recruitment practices are rigorous and ensure staff are vetted and police checked prior to commencing work in the home. A recently recruited member of staff confirms the above procedures were followed before they commenced work in the home. The home operates a signing in and out system, and visitors are asked for identification and briefed in respect of the fire evacuation procedure and assembly point. Young people are not left unsupervised with visitors to the home.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Young people receive excellent support from staff and have access to a wide range of outside services to support them with any identified need. Such services include counselling, children's rights, drug and alcohol support and sexual health. Young people are fully aware of these services and have access to much information about them through leaflets and posters displayed for them. Regular key worker sessions take place in which young people are fully involved and staff and the manager evaluate any discussions arising from these sessions to ensure needs and outcomes are met.

Education and training opportunities for young people are well met. Young people are encouraged and maintain excellent attendance at these settings and staff continue to liaise with these provisions to ensure young people achieve and outcomes are met. Young people have access in the home to a wide range of learning materials, for example, books, arts and craft, newspapers, magazines, computers and the internet. These provisions are used by young people for recreational and educational purposes.

Young people are provided with positive opportunities to enhance their social skills. They attend local leisure facilities and groups and clubs and participate in sporting activities. Their participation and involvement in community based activities ensures they receive the same opportunities of other young people. Young people are actively encouraged to pursue their individual interests and hobbies and there are sufficient funds available to met individual and group needs.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Young people's placement plan trackers are well written, informative and clear. Their needs are carefully assessed and their plans are regularly reviewed and updated to meet changing needs. Statutory reviews take place within recommended timescales and where emergency admissions occur, planning meetings to identify individual need are promptly arranged. Young people confirm their involvement in the reviewing process. A strong focus is placed on consulting with young people, their placing authorities, parents and any other significant people in their lives. Questionnaires are regularly completed in respect of the care the home provides, all of which are evaluated and changes implemented through suggestions made. Completed questionnaires were very positive in respect of the services the home provides.

Staff are proactive in providing support, which enables young people to maintain contact with their families and friends. Young people are supported by staff and contact officers where contact is an emotional issue for them, or when contact needs to be supervised. These measures ensure young people stay in touch with the

significant people in their lives.

Systems are in place to establish at the point of referral the suitability of a placement and any likely impact this may have on the resident group as well as any impact on the referral. Following admission a planning meeting takes place and initial placement plan trackers are updated to show outcome targets and strategies to achieve these, including any needs arising from cultural or religious needs. Consultation forms are in place to ascertain the views of young people when they leave the home, these forms are also sent to placing authorities and families. Progress has been made in this area as some completed forms have been returned to the home.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

Young people receive care and support from staff that enables them to prepare to live independently. Excellent preparation is in place for this between young people and their key worker, and takes into account individual young people's age and understanding. Independent living programmes are introduced to young people before the school leaving age and allow them to gradually take responsibility for areas of their own care in preparation for adulthood.

The home is maintained throughout in excellent order and the décor and furnishings provide a comfortable environment. Young people have decorated and furnished their own bedrooms which include their own personal possessions. Young people have access to kitchen and laundry areas and assist staff with the upkeep of the home. The home provides sufficient space for young people and washrooms and toilets are sufficient to meet the needs of young people, staff and visitors. Young people actively contribute, keep tidy and take responsibility for the exceptional pieces of information displayed for them throughout the home, some of which has been designed by them.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The home's Statement of Purpose document is well written and is made available to those who require it. The children's handbook summarises the key policies and procedures and informs young people of the services they can expect to receive while living in the home. Young people confirm they receive this information and say it provides them with useful information and is easy to read and understand.

The promotion of equality and diversity is excellent. Young people have the opportunity to experience positive life experiences, for example, life and culture within other countries of the world. They have individual opportunities provided for

them to develop their own unique identities, interests and hobbies. Issues to do with culture, religious needs and identity are handled sensitively. There is a wealth of information for young people and staff to access in respect of equality and diversity. Staff provide quality and individualised care to young people with a diverse range of needs. Staff are experienced, non-judgemental and led by young people. This enables them to provide quality and focused care where the needs of all young people are equally met.

Young people benefit from the care provided by an experienced staff team who provide them with continuity and consistency. The staff group meets the requirement in relation to qualified staff, with the majority of staff having completed their National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in the caring for children and young people. All staff have completed mandatory training and refresher courses are available which cover changing legislation. New staff complete a comprehensive induction and are shadowed by experienced staff. Staff who provide young people with excellent support also receive support themselves, through monthly supervision and new staff receive supervision fortnightly.

The home's performance is consistently monitored each month by a representative of the organisation and during such visits the views of young people, their families and staff are ascertained. The management team monitor the administration systems of the home. Any actions or recommendations identified during these processes are consistently met, ensuring the care and support provided to young people and staff remains high.

Young people's individual case files are set out well and provide a good account of the services they receive and the progress they make. Young people have access to the information written about them. Young people's achievements, celebrations, participation and pictures in activities and outings are kept in individual keep safe boxes, so as when young people leave the home they can look back on their time spent there.