

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Debbie Foster
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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 residential children's home owned and run by a charitable trust that has other children's residential services in the area. The house is a five bedroom bungalow, in a residential area. There is a lounge, with satellite television, a dining area, computer, kitchen, and toilet and bathroom facilities. The garden has a soft play area and sensory features. All areas of this home are adapted for wheelchair use. The home provides residential care for up to five young people, who have a physical and/or learning disability, who are placed by their own local authority.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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 under the Every Child Matters outcomes for children and young people.

Young people have taken part in this inspection.

Staff give high importance to guiding and ensuring a healthy life style is promoted with young people. This is being achieved through providing access to a wide range of health care professionals. The staff also receive training in a number of the relevant areas, such as, epilepsy and specialist feeding techniques. This assists staff meeting the diverse health needs of young people. Young people's welfare and safety continues to be promoted robustly by staff. Stringent protection measures assist in keeping young people safe. There are specific and detailed plans in place to ensure this happens. Young people benefit greatly from having a staff team who implement care for them consistently, ensuring they follow their individual care plans. The support young people receive to enable them to communicate and make real decisions about their own lives is a real strength. Staff work extremely well with each young person to meet their diverse needs. Comprehensive monitoring systems are in place. Each of these areas supports young people to make continued progress in their lives.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were no actions or recommendations raised at the previous inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are actively encouraged to eat a healthy and balanced diet. They make real choices on the meals they eat, through the use of pictures and responses to seeing their meals. Progress in changes to feeding methods has increased choices and options at meal times for some young people. The menu includes a variety of healthy food options. The diverse needs of young people are met by staff. This is achieved by the high importance the staff give to assisting young people to eat more independently. Young people have special eating aides where required. Food is prepared and support given to ensure young people can eat in a dignified way.

Staff have a wealth of knowledge on the health needs of young people and this is supported by specific medical and health information. Their health needs are rigorously pursued to ensure that their good health is promoted and maintained. The home has strong links with a wide selection of professionals to support young people. These include the speech and language therapist and consultants. This ensures young people's needs are very well met. Staff fully support young people to attend health appointments.

There is a range of policies, procedures and protocols relating to health care areas that offers guidance for staff working with the young people. This ensures that young people receive good care that actively promotes their well-being and health.

Young people are protected by trained staff who follow a very effective medication policy. The procedures for the storage, administration, recording and disposal of all medication are fully understood and followed by staff. There are excellent monitoring systems in place which ensure all medication in the home is administered correctly and safely. All staff benefit from being trained in the use of first aid and gastro tube feeding.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The children's welfare is promoted by staff, who give significant importance to protect them from harm.

There is high importance given to ensuring young people have privacy. Staff demonstrate a very good understanding of confidentiality. They can explain how this is achieved to meet the diverse needs of each young person. Young people are supported with personal care in a dignified way. This ensures young people's privacy is respected and information confidentially handled.

Staff explain the complaints procedure to young people on a regular basis. There is a

child-friendly format which includes the use of pictorial symbols. This assists the staff to communicate with young people to establish their complaint. It allows staff to respond effectively to resolve any issues young people may have. No complaints have been made since the last inspection. There is a recording system in place to record all complaints, the action taken and the outcome.

Young people's welfare continues to be robustly promoted. All staff have basic and advanced child protection training and receive regular refresher training. The staff can verbalise the procedures to show they are clear about safeguarding procedures to follow where required.

Staff are aware that bullying is not acceptable in line with the policy. Staffing levels are high, which enables staff to monitor young people closely. Staff said there are no incidents of bullying occurring in the home.

Young people benefit greatly from having a established staff team who implement consistent care and clear routines. Achieving socially acceptable behaviour is the key focus in the home. This includes positive reinforcement which includes frequent praise encourages individual young people appropriate behaviour. Staff are very clear on how they support young people with their behaviour. They receive suitable training in this area which is annually refreshed to ensure safe practices are used.

No sanctions or physical interventions have taken place since the last inspection. Staff said that physical restraint is only used as a last resort to safeguard young people and others. The sanctions and restraint records have a format which enables the required information to be recorded. They also include a section for young people to record their views and responses.

The home provides safety and security to those young people living there. Young people's safety is highly enhanced through the practices of the staff. Staff have a wealth of knowledge and understanding of the safety issues for each young person and how they should support them to keep them safe.

Fire records indicate that frequent checks on the system and appropriate fire safety training, instruction and drills have taken place. All health and safety areas are monitored by the manager on a monthly basis.

There are very detailed and specific risk assessments in place for young people. These cover areas, such as, the activities they take part in and the risks within their environment. They are reviewed and updated on a frequent basis. Therefore, appropriate measures are in place to keep young people safe.

Staff recruitment files have not been checked on this inspection as these are held at the head office of the service. These will be checked at the next interim inspection.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are provided with a wealth of support, that promotes their development. There are individual support services available from health, education and care, to ensure that all identified needs are met. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of young people's individual needs.

Education is a priority at the home. Young people are supported well in attaining their educational potential. The staff assist young people to achieve the goals set by school. There is frequent communication with the schools and the staff attend school reviews. All young people have an annual school review and minutes are held on their file. They have their own computers for leisure or education. Therefore, young people are well supported and encouraged to attend school to ensure they attain the necessary education that will assist them into adulthood.

Young people have a wealth of opportunities to participate in social, leisure activities and pursue their hobbies. Staff have developed further their community participation. This has developed further their identity, confidence and ability to do every day things which they enjoy. This is a real strength.

Young people enjoy a wealth of activities. These include music, using the sensory area, computer games, assorted toys, DVDs and visits to the local shops, youth groups, cafés. During the inspection young people chose how they wished to spend their time. They played music on the keyboard, spent time in the sensory area, listened to an audio story, played with water and sand and went shopping.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Young people's needs are assessed in great detail by the staff and supporting professionals. Individual plans of care outline in meticulous detail what their needs are and how they will be met and implemented. There is a person-centred plan approach. Staff can verbalise the care they provide to young people which reflects their plans of care and other supporting documents. These include the health booklet and risk assessments.

Care plans are being reviewed constantly to ensure the appropriate support is delivered to each young person. This in turn brings about updates to care approaches and changes to assist the individual young person meeting their personal goals. The daily recordings reflect and evidence the care plan goals and targets. This supports the progress being made by young people in moving positively forward in their life.

There is a positive system for reviewing the placement plans of young people at the home. This system includes participation in the statutory reviews and multi-disciplinary meetings. Statutory case reviews take place within the required timescales. This ensures that the young people's needs and development are reviewed regularly in the light of their care and progress at the home.

Tremendous support and encouragement is given to young people to make decisions about the things they do in their daily lives. Additional communication aids are used to assist young people making 'real' choices and making decisions. This enhances young people's lives significantly. Young people make decisions about the food they eat, daily routines, social and leisure activities. This is achieved through a variety of ways, using a switch system, gesturing, noises, go talk aid, and the use of signs and symbols.

Young people's contact with family is promoted and facilitated very well. Staff confirm that all young people keep in touch with people that are important to them. They see their family weekly, with visits to the home, overnight stays and enjoy family outings. Parents are kept well informed and consulted on their child's well-being by telephone and through contact visits.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

Some young people living in this setting may require support throughout their lives. Staff help to develop their self-help skills, for example, through enabling them to attend to some of their own personal care needs. The care plans contain details of the abilities of young people and support they require.

Transition work is ongoing for young people who are over 16 years of age. The plan includes details of health, emotional, behaviour, family, social, identity, skills, education and the progress made within these. The staff are supporting young people with areas, such as, identifying appropriate future placements. They are being proactive to ensure that this occurs.

The accommodation is decorated and furnished to a high standard, providing a domestic-styled environment for the young people to live in. This is balanced with specialist and sensory equipment in some areas to significantly enhance young people's daily life. These include, bathing equipment, lifting aides and a fully fitted sensory room for the young people to enjoy. Bedrooms are equipped with a good range of furniture, some of which is specialised to meet the needs of individual young people. Young people have been involved in personalising their rooms. These reflect their interests and hobbies.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The home provides any referring professional with comprehensive information about the home in the form of the Statement of Purpose. Young people are equally well informed through a good children's guide, which is available in a number of suitable formats.

The manager and senior team provide effective and efficient leadership within the home. Young people receive care from a consistent, competent and experienced staff who meet their needs extremely well. There are excellent communication systems in place. This occurs through formal supervision at regular intervals, two-weekly staff meetings and daily shift handovers. These support systems assist the staff team in providing a consistent care approach to young people.

Staff said the team has a real strength in their commitment to caring for the young people. They said that they are a strong team with a lot of experience, who enjoy working together. They spoke about their work with young people with such enthusiasm and focus on the needs of each young person.

All staff are trained in a wide variety of safety and childcare subjects. An ongoing programme of regular refresher training is provided in a range of subjects to enhance the staff team's competency to meet the needs of the young people. The target of 80% of staff having achieved National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People is met.

Staff training includes such areas as legislation relating to children, autism, equality and diversity, cerebral palsy and epilepsy.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Young people's cultural, religious and diverse needs are taken into account throughout the care planning and review process. Staff have an excellent understanding of individual needs and ensure that these are met on a practical level.

Robust monitoring systems are in place. These include monthly monitoring visits undertaken by the provider to check how care is provided in the home. In conjunction with this, the manager monitors in further detail the care and service provided to the young people. In addition, the operations manager undertakes three-monthly auditing. The staff monitor closely the progress of each young person. Therefore, there is excellent monitoring of the welfare, safety and quality of care provided for the young people in the home.

Young people's individual case files and other records are stored confidentially and are arranged in a manner which makes them readily accessible to staff. This upholds young people's privacy and confidentiality.

