

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 is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to six children and young people of either sex, aged between 11 and 17 years of age. The home accepts planned and emergency admissions of young people for short- or long-term care.

The home has six single bedrooms though one may be used as a staff sleep-in room. Downstairs there are two lounges, a bathroom, kitchen/diner, two of the bedrooms and a staff office. There are laundry facilities and storage in the cellar. Upstairs are four bedrooms, another bathroom, class room and manager's office.

There are separate living facilities available for up to two young people, which provide an opportunity for semi-independent living in preparation for leaving care.

There is on-site parking and surrounding gardens. The home is close to local community and leisure facilities and there is access to public transport.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This was an unannounced key inspection covering all the outcome areas below.

The overall quality of care is good. The statutory requirements and good practice recommendations from the last inspection have been complied with.

The health, safety and welfare of young people is promoted well. Young people benefit from good individual support and a well-managed home. There are a small number of shortfalls in relation to national minimum standards that have not impacted significantly on the outcomes young people experience.

Five good practice recommendations are made as a result of this inspection: improve certain aspects of the physical environment; improve placement plans and management of admissions; provide young people an opportunity to talk to someone independent of the home when they have been missing; and ensure all staff have a yearly appraisal.

Improvements since the last inspection

There is no longer any closed circuit television (CCTV) monitoring of young people in the home. This complies with regulatory requirements and means that young people's privacy and dignity is promoted better.

Staff have had further training in physical intervention and records of the use of any such intervention have improved. This helps ensure staff know how to safely intervene and better records allow for more robust monitoring of practice.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The arrangements for health promotion contribute towards good healthy outcomes for young people living at the home.

Individual health care plans based on assessments of young people's needs enable staff to understand and monitor young people's health needs. Young people are registered with a doctor, dentist and optician and are supported to have regular appointments to check their physical health. Staff give young people good advice about issues that have an adverse effect on their health, such as smoking, alcohol and substance misuse. The home provides a qualified therapist for the benefit of young people and there are links with a range of agencies outside the home, so that young people can access any additional support they may need.

Staff also promote healthy lifestyles by ensuring young people are provided with a healthy and balanced diet and that they take regular exercise. Young people help to plan menus, shop and cook, which develops their independence skills. They learn about foods from different cultures and religions through from a varied, diverse menu and additional planned theme nights.

The home has an effective system for the safe storage and administration of medicines, which protects young people and ensures they get the medicine they need at the right times. Medicines are kept secure and records are well kept and monitored by the manager. Staff are also trained in first aid procedures so they can help young people in the event of an accident.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Safeguarding is a priority in the home and young people are protected by good, safe care practices. Staff are trained in safeguarding issues, understand their responsibilities and how to keep young people safe.

There is a clear procedure, followed in practice for when young people are missing from the home. Staff support, encourage and advise young people well to minimise the risks of such incidents occurring. There are well-developed links with the local police for when a young person is missing and young people usually return to the home the same night. Young people are not always given the opportunity to talk to some one independent of the home about why they have been missing, in case there is something about the home or staff they want to talk about. On this occasion this

shortfall was not judged to have impacted on young people's welfare.

Young people are encouraged to develop good socially acceptable behaviour. Staff do this through discussion, providing positive role models and encouraging young people with the use of incentives. Staff are trained to respond positively to challenging behaviour and clear records are kept of all incidents; especially those that lead to any form of discipline or require a physical intervention. These measures are appropriate and physical intervention has rarely been used since the last inspection. This demonstrates young people are being cared for safely. Young people also agree the rules are fair. All staff have been trained to intervene safely and better records are kept of these interventions. This complies with the recommendations from the last inspection. The manager and registered provider regularly check incident records as an added safeguarding measure to ensure staff are caring for young people well.

Young people are free from bullying in the home. Staff work hard to ensure this is the case and encourage young people to treat each other well and respect their differences.

Young people benefit from having their privacy respected and personal information about them kept confidential. Use of CCTV within the home, which compromised young people's privacy, has now ceased as required at the last inspection. This helps to promote young people's privacy better. Complaints are well-managed, as a result young people feel confident that they are listened to and their concerns are taken seriously. Staff will support young people to make complaints, including finding an advocate to help young people if this is necessary.

Health and safety matters are suitably managed. There is a range of risk assessments regarding the physical environment, activities and young people's behaviour. These are reviewed regularly, staff know and implement the necessary safety measures to keep young people free from harm. Staff and young people take part in regular fire evacuation drills so that they understand what to do in an emergency.

The home itself is kept appropriately secure and there are good procedures for the vetting of staff and visitors. This ensures that unauthorised individuals are not able to gain access to young people in the home and only suitable staff are employed to work there.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people receive good individual support based on their assessed needs and placement plans. Staff have a good understanding of the needs of young people they look after and there is an established key working system. This helps ensure young people are understood and have regular time to discuss issues, anxieties and achievements with staff on a one-to-one basis. Staff also have developed links with

agencies outside the home helping to ensure that young people receive additional support when they need it.

Staff promote the value of education and daily attendance at school or college is an expectation in the home. There is a well-equipped school room on site for young people who are waiting for a school or college placement to start. Care staff have built up relationships with local schools and work well together with schools to support young people to achieve.

Young people have good opportunities to develop their interests and to take part in activities outside the home. Examples of these include boxing, membership of a local gym and fishing. Involvement in these and other activities, helps young people to develop relationships in the local community, promotes exercise and helps them to learn to structure their leisure time.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Overall there are satisfactory outcomes and opportunities for young people to contribute positively to their development, make decisions about their lives and the running of the home.

Admissions are adequately planned to ensure that young people's needs are met. Some admissions to the home are planned involving the young person and their family where appropriate. Young people may visit the home before they move in and their needs are assessed before admission helping to ensure the home is the right place for the young person to move to. In these cases young people are able to move into the home in a planned and sensitive manner. However, the impact on young people moving into the home both on current residents and on the young person is not adequately assessed. The home also accepts emergency admissions which do not always allow for effective planning and decision making about admissions.

Young person's needs are continually assessed during and after admission. This information is used to develop individual placement plans. These plans are of adequate quality and outline the support a young person will receive based on their needs and backgrounds and potential risks to their welfare. Placement plans include specific needs based on culture, religion and disability but lack the detail required by the minimum standard and do not evidence well how all outcomes for young people are promoted. Young people are involved in developing their placement plan and have one-to-one time with staff to talk about their achievements and any anxieties. Young people also take part in more formal reviews of their care involving other health and social care professionals and family members where appropriate.

Staff are aware of the importance to young people of maintaining positive contact with their families and friends. They provide practical and emotional support to make sure that young people can keep in touch with people outside the home who are

important to them, monitor the quality of contact visits and make sure that family and friends are welcome in the home. They also support young people to make positive relationships in the local community, which helps them to feel settled in the home.

Staff talk to young people about the daily life of the home and young people help to choose many things, such as menus, furniture, activities and holidays and the colour scheme of their rooms. This helps them to develop their skills and self-esteem and enables them to see that their views are taken into account when decisions are made about their life.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people benefit well from the support and arrangements to help them develop independent living skills and prepare for the transition to adulthood. The home has a separate semi-independent unit specifically for this. Young people who live in the main home are also supported to budget, shop, cook meals and do their laundry. Staff help ensure young people know about their local and wider community and understand that they are part of a diverse community. Young people are supported to use community amenities, they receive career guidance and help to go to college. All round there is a positive impact for young people with good opportunities to develop life skills, boosting their confidence and self-esteem.

Young people benefit from living in a comfortable homely environment, that is safe and well maintained. Generally the quality of décor and furnishings are of a high standard. Notable exceptions are the kitchen and door handles throughout the home. There are plans to completely refurbish the kitchen. Overall the home provides young people with a good standard of private and communal space which is suitable for the needs, number and ages of young people who are accommodated.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

There is good management of the home and care of young people who live there. This helps ensure the home is run in the best interests of the young people and is mainly providing them with good outcomes.

Young people are looked after by a competent and diverse team of staff who are experienced and appropriately trained and who have a good understanding of their needs. Not all staff have an annual appraisal and plan for their professional development. This could lead to some training and development needs being overlooked. Care staff are supervised and supported by a manager and senior carers who are experienced and qualified. The number of staff on duty at any one time is sufficient to meet the young people's needs. Care staff have, or are working towards, the recommended qualification to work with children and young people.

Suitable management systems ensure that the care of young people is of good quality and is properly monitored. This includes regular checks by the manager as well as those done by an independent visitor on behalf of the registered provider. These help ensure that any issues are identified and responded to promptly.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Staff demonstrate a strong commitment to ensuring that young people receive a service that is tailored to meet their individual needs. Care records are suitably kept to reflect the individuality of young people, their needs, development and achievements. Staff encourage young people to engage in community activities and help them to understand about matters, such as cultural and racial differences and beliefs. There is a good balance in the staff team in terms of gender, age and ethnicity, which reinforces positive experiences and role models for young people.

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 on return to the home if a child is not seen by their social worker or some one independent of the home to consider the reasons for the absence. Where this is not possible the reasons are recorded and agreed with the placing authority (NMS 19.4)
- ensure young people's individual placement plans include the detail required by this standard (NMS 2)
- ensure the needs of children being admitted to the home and the likely effects of their admission upon the existing group of residents are taken into account and recorded in decisions on admission to the home (NMS 5.7)
- ensure the home is decorated and furnished to a high standard, in particular ensure the plans for the kitchen refurbishment go ahead and improve the quality of door handles throughout the home (NMS 24)
- ensure all staff have an annual appraisal of their performance which includes the agreed training needs to be met as part of their individual development plans. (NMS 28.7)