

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 children's home is registered to accommodate up to four young people aged 10 to 18 years. The detached home is situated in a residential area near the city centre. It is close to local community facilities and the city centre is accessible by bus.

Three young people were living here at the time of this inspection.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

This full inspection was unannounced and all key standards were assessed. The home provides an outstanding service to the young people who live there. Young people have made excellent progress and enjoy stability at their home. The home continues to provide excellent support to young people in education, maintaining contact and developing interests. Young people's welfare is promoted and they live in a safe and homely environment. Young people are very positive about living in the home and comment favourably about many aspects of their care. This inspection has repeated one recommendation.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection one recommendation was made to ensure the shower room is refurbished, this recommendation is repeated.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are fully involved in planning, shopping and preparing meals; choices are always taken into account and they are encouraged to eat a wide range of healthy food. Meals are pleasant, sociable communal occasions with opportunity for social interaction between young people and staff. Staff are trained to follow health and safety guidelines when preparing food. The young people enjoy their involvement in planning and preparing meals. Young people are also included in the washing up and clearing away rota which is negotiated to fit their own activities. A independent reviewing officer comments 'the home clearly evidence through the review process that they ensure the health of young people and promote the development of young people taking responsibility for their own health, the emotional support is as evident as the physical which includes good hygiene throughout and appropriate provision of healthy foods.'

Young people are encouraged to take an interest in looking after their health and lead healthy lives. Health promotion is active and young people are proactively encouraged to make healthy lifestyle choices. Young people readily discuss the benefits and downfalls attached to these choices. Specialist services are engaged as necessary for physical and emotional well-being. Each young person has a clearly written placement plan that covers all aspects of their living and clearly details medical, optical, dental and therapeutic involvement. A positive self image, confidence and good self-esteem are consistently promoted. First aid training is completed and updated by all staff. Medication records are up-to-date and accurate.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

There are comprehensive policies and procedures in place which promote privacy and confidentiality well. Respect between staff and young people is evident and good manners are positively reinforced. Information is held securely. Young people know how to access their records and are able to contribute meaningfully to their own records.

The home has an established procedure for young people who want to raise concerns. However formal complaints are rarely received and the last recorded complaint was in April 2006. Young people are encouraged to discuss their feelings and resolve difficulties quickly. Healthy discussions were observed between young people and positive interactions between staff and young people. Young people know how to complain. Detailed information is given to the young people and includes useful telephone numbers.

Comprehensive policies and procedures are in place to help protect young people. There is clear guidance for staff and they show very good awareness about keeping young people safe. This includes raising concerns about practice outside of the home. Young people report that they feel well cared for and appreciate staff support in resolving difficulties in these settings. Young people show good awareness of their own safety.

Bullying is not reported to be a problem. Staff are vigilant and quickly address behaviours that could compromise a young person's safety. Young people show good awareness and readily discuss wider bullying scenarios.

Young people are very rarely absent without permission. Staff procedures are clear and staff and young people keep in contact via their mobile phones.

Young people are encouraged to behave in a socially acceptable way. Staff build close relationships with young people and use positive reinforcement to promote self-esteem and positive behaviour. Unacceptable behaviour is challenged and young people are clear of the sanctions and consequences of poor behaviour. Young people generally think the rules are fair. However, they feel confident to discuss any

proposed changes to the way the home is run.

Young people live in a safe and homely environment. Safety systems are tested regularly and comprehensive risk assessments are in place and reviewed appropriately.

Young people are protected by policies, procedures and guidance for vetting staff and visitors. Recruitment of the right individual for the job is a high priority. The recruitment practice for the most recent appointment both meet and exceed the national minimum standards.

A reviewing officer states, 'staff at the home clearly demonstrate their knowledge of relevant care plans and ensure that safety is a priority they appropriately promote self awareness and encourage young people to be aware of their own safety needs.'

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The young people benefit from excellent individual support, the staff team are consistent and placement plans are well written and individually personalised. The care plans are very clear and detailed. Young people maintain a good relationship with all staff and are regularly consulted about their care. A placing officer confirms, 'the service provides a very caring, thoughtful, normalised home environment with meaningful relationships that are developed and sustained'. The home uses therapeutic methods of working with young people, with the home's proprietor providing individual therapy. This is supervised by an external consultant.

Young people are encouraged and well supported to participate in education; regular attendance is encouraged and rewarded. Learning support is available and is used both within the school, college and home learning environments when needed. This support is fully discussed and agreed with the individual young person. The support, which includes facilitating transport, financial and moral support, is exceptional. Support for out of school activities is carefully planned to ensure young people are enabled to participate. Young people have worked hard and have been recognised for their efforts and achievements.

Young people are well supported to pursue a range of leisure interests. Emphasis is put on helping young people integrate and participate in community based activities. The young people in the home recently enjoyed a successful foreign holiday and one young person was able to participate in a music festival with friends. A placing authority reports, 'it is clearly evidenced that each young person is encouraged to enjoy hobbies try new things, staff fully support education and allow young people to grow and develop through having the relevant support to enjoy education. Professionals are informed of progress on a regular basis. The service remains flexible and approachable; they promote a child centred approach in their care'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Young people's placement plans are well written, their needs are comprehensively assessed and plans reviewed regularly. Young people are encouraged to discuss, understand and contribute their views; they readily communicate their opinions about their plans. Two young people have compiled their own dvd's and used them to inform their reviews. These are exceptional alternative records made by the young people about their lives. Communication with placing social workers is frequent. The placing authority confirmed this 'Regular reviews are held to monitor and review strengths, progress and future development'. Young people have been invited by the placing authority to design a template for other young people to have their say and one young person has been appropriately consulted to assist professionals at a national event.

Encouragement and support by the staff team and the placing social workers enable young people to keep in touch with significant adults and friends. Each young person is encouraged to openly discuss ways the staff team can support them to maintain constructive relationships. Staff are proactive in providing the correct level of support to young people.

Young people are admitted to the home in a planned and sensitive manner. Policies and procedures are in place to ensure admission to the home enables young people to visit prior to admission. Rooms are decorated to reflect individual taste and young people are encouraged to bring their possessions and make it their home. The guide for young people is informative and helpful.

Young people are constantly consulted about decisions that affect their lives and indicate they are happy to speak up for themselves. Young people report they continue to be very happy at their home and could not identify any improvements needed. The ethos of the home in recognising and valuing difference is evident; young people are encouraged to both show respect and challenge injustice.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people are taught life skills that are age appropriate. They are routinely involved in daily tasks and encouraged to choose and shop for clothes and personal items. They are supported to use budgeting skills and the value of money is frequently discussed. A pathway plan contributes to the overall placement plan.

Equal opportunities, cultural values and social and sexual relationships are frequently discussed; school and college work, films and books widen these debates. Individuality is celebrated and individual choice respected.

The location of the home is convenient for all local amenities including schools, shops

and bus routes into the city. The large domestic style home is located in a residential area. It is well maintained with a warm homely environment with good facilities. Young people clearly view the home as 'their' home and are fully involved with plans to refurbish or amend the facilities. Individual bedrooms reflect individual taste and communal areas are full of photos and mementos that reflect young people's experiences. The shower room is operational but still needs refurbishment.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The home's Statement of Purpose is a well organised document and contains detailed policies and procedures. It is readily available to all those who need it. Young people's guides are given to them on arrival at the home and checks are done periodically to ensure they are still available. Both young people are clear how to access external support.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. The service has detailed policies and procedures in place that promote an understanding and encourage anti discriminatory practice, anti oppressive practice and anti racist practice. The registered provider effectively discusses and challenges both the staff and young people on these issues. Young people living in the home are well attuned to the needs and feelings of young people with disabilities.

Young people receive the care they need from competent staff. The majority of staff are qualified or currently participating in NVQ level 3 Caring for Children and Young People. There is a clear staff training matrix detailing training undertaken or planned. The importance of equality and diversity is recognised and the home continues to embed this in all their policies, procedures and daily practices and external relationships.

The young people continue to benefit from care provided by a small group of regular staff. The management of the home remains under the direct management of the proprietor who is in full time day-to-day charge and continues to work in the home regularly. The deputy manager remains at the home and a senior care worker is undergoing training for the manager's role. Young people continue to thrive and their stability and progress remain excellent. Regulation 33 visits are conducted regularly by another member of the company's management team. One new member of staff has been appointed since the last inspection and the part-time housekeeping role has proved successful. No agency staff are used staffing the home. If needed, cover is provided by staff known to the young people. Young people and placing social workers confirm good support arrangements for activities both within and outside of the home. The young people and placing authority report they cannot think what could be done better. Young people say, ' everything is 10/10 '. The independent reviewing officer commented, 'it is an outstanding provision for young people that maintains good communications with each agency ensuring best outcomes. It is hard to identify any area of improvement. If there is an award they deserve it. The

provision made for the young people is bespoke thus ensuring each can maximise their potential.'

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 the shower room is refurbished. (NMS 24)