

Inspection report for Children's Home

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You can obtain copies of The Children Act 2004, Every Child Matters and The National Minimum Standards for Children's Services from: The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Crispins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: www.tso.co.uk/bookshop

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 service is a children's home. It provides up to four placements to young people aged 11 to 17 years. It is near to the bus route servicing local villages and the local town centre, which is approximately five miles away. In the local community there are shops, schools, health, leisure and employment facilities.

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 to check on all key standards and related regulations under the Every Child Matters outcome groups for young people. This is an outstanding service.

Young people are encouraged to eat healthily and their good health is extremely well promoted. This is an area of outstanding strength. Complaints are well handled. There are very good child protection procedures and practices, which helps to safeguard the welfare of the young people. Behaviour management policies and practices are very good. Risk assessments are consistently well recorded and reviewed. Fire safety procedures and practice is good. Education and leisure needs are extremely well met and the home works closely with other services to meet the range of young people's individual needs. Approaches to care and support are individualised. This is an area of outstanding strength. Placement planning is excellent and placement plans are extremely well delivered, recorded and reviewed. The delivery of care and support is an area of outstanding strength. Staff are sufficient in number and they are very well trained, experienced and competent. The Registered Manager exercises highly effective leadership of the home's staff and operation, such that the home is organised, managed and staffed in a manner that strives to deliver the best possible outcomes for children and young people. There is excellent monitoring of the standard of safety and care provided in the home. The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were no actions or recommendations made at the last inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The excellent practice that contributes to young people enjoying healthy, nutritious meals that meets their dietary, cultural and religious needs is a notable area of outstanding strength. Young people are given choices about their food and the food served is both healthy and nutritious. Staff encourage young people to eat healthy foods and snacks. Staff are supported with training around food health, nutrition and hygiene. The staff have a good understanding of food issues that arise out of diversity. This is particularly well managed. The staff are aware of individual young people's likes and dislikes to ensure that they enjoy the food served. Young people's health is enhanced by the use of fresh vegetables grown in the garden. The menu planning takes account of individual young people's religious and cultural preferences. Themed cooking is used to introduce young people to new tastes and provide information about other cultures. Individualised learning opportunities reflecting care plan targets around health and life skills are planned and supervised on a regular basis. This includes shopping for, preparing and cooking meals. Records of young people's food consumption are kept to inform staff and other professionals about individual diets. There is a range of food health information available to support staff in meeting young people's needs. Health and safety audits are done regularly to help ensure that there is best practice in the kitchen.

Health promotion is an utmost priority at the home. The young people's health is closely monitored and record keeping is very good. Health care plans are used. There is good training and detailed written guidance for staff on a wide range of young people's health and medical matters. This makes sure that they understand about young people's health and what their responsibilities are. The manager keeps up to date with best practice and cascades information to the staff through the use of training materials and resources. Healthcare records are up to date and accurate, enabling staff to inform health professionals and parents of their children's health progress. The home has links with a wide variety of specialist health services and there is much evidence of these being used to meet individual young people's needs in a timely manner. Young people benefit greatly from the wide range of healthy activities offered. Staff plan and facilitate a number of activities that encourages individual interests and involvement in healthy activities. This helps to enhance many aspects of young people's health. Examples highlighted include street dance, walking, football, badminton, table tennis, swimming and trampoline. The young people are registered on personal effectiveness accreditation schemes, which include healthy activities and learning opportunities. This is an area of outstanding strength.

Staff are trained in medication matters to enable them to safely store, administer and record the medication that they are responsible for. Medication is securely stored and records are up to date and accurate. Medication audits are undertaken regularly. All staff have received training to enable them to provide first aid if necessary. Therefore, young people's health needs are met and their welfare is very well safeguarded by the home's policies and procedures for administering medicines and

providing treatment. Therefore strong measures are in place to safeguard young people's welfare.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Staff demonstrate a very good understanding of facilitating privacy for the young people. This is done very sensitively and safely. Details about young people's care is recorded and stored appropriately to maintain good levels of confidentiality. Each young person has their own bedroom and a key to lock the door if they wish to. Washing and toilet facilities have good locks to maintain privacy in a safe manner. Young people have access to a private telephone which is free to use for reasonable periods. This ensures that young people's privacy is respected and the payment method is convenient.

Strong measures are in place to receive and act upon any complaints. All staff have received training on complaints, to ensure that they know what to do if there is a complaint about the service. The young people know how to make a complaint. Staff have explained the procedure and there is also information in the resource room and young people's guide about how to complain. Staff are sensitive to young people's behaviour which may indicate that they are unhappy. The young people also have the support of an independent advocate who visits. The complaints records contain the required details. Therefore, complaints are well handled.

The young people's welfare is significantly enhanced by the organisations meticulous approach to child protection. The manager and staff have received child protection training and the provider has a good safeguarding procedure for staff to follow, in the event of any allegation or suspicion of abuse. Staff demonstrate excellent knowledge and understanding of the safeguarding procedures to promote and protect the young people's safety. There are good links with the Local Safeguarding Children's Board and other child protection agencies. All staff have received anti-bullying and awareness training. Therefore, the welfare of young people is very well promoted. They are protected from abuse, bullying and unauthorised absence. A robust response is made to any allegation or suspicion of abuse. This is an area of outstanding strength.

All significant events at the home have been notified to the relevant authorities including Ofsted.

Sanctions are relevant and reflect the age and understanding of the young people. They are reviewed regularly for effectiveness. Physical restraint is rarely used to manage behaviour. Staff are trained in the provider's policy and authorised techniques. The training is designed and delivered in a manner that ensures that as much as possible, incidents are managed without the use of physical intervention. Positive handling plans support this. They contain good, individualised details for staff to follow when managing young people's behaviour.

Consistently high quality written risk assessments are recorded to enable staff to know what action to take to minimise the risk to each young person during their known and likely activities. These are reviewed regularly. The manager takes a very proactive approach to managing risks, ensuring that staff practice and the home environment are as safe as possible. Staff talk in a determined manner about their commitment to ensuring that each young people's welfare is safeguarded. They use local knowledge and contacts to support their efforts. Other agencies are used to support and complement the work of the staff. There is very good evidence that this collaborative approach to minimising risks results in very good outcomes for young people. This is an area of outstanding strength.

All staff, regular visitors and young people have been involved in regular fire drills. All staff working at the home have received up to date fire safety training, to enable them to minimise the risks to young people in the event of a fire at the home. The fire safety check records are up to date and accurate. Therefore, young people's physical safety from fire in the home is well protected.

All staff have been appropriately recruited and undergone suitable Criminal Records Bureau checks. The manager has undertaken safer recruitment training to help ensure that staff are suitable to work with young people.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The staff appreciate that the individual young people may have needs arising from diversity. Young people learn about difference through meetings, events and activities. All staff have received training around equality and diversity. The promotion of equality and diversity at the home is outstanding. The records contain details of individual support services involved in the health, care, leisure opportunities and education of the young people. The home has very good links with a wide range of helping agencies, and the provider commissions services to fit the young people's needs in a timely manner. An information area in the resource room has details of local agencies that young people can access for advice and information. Therefore, the young people benefit greatly from receiving excellent individualised support appropriate to their needs.

Staff are enterprising in their thoughts and efforts to support the young people's ambitions in education. It is a very high priority and it is vigorously promoted. Some staff have gained teaching assistant qualifications to support their efforts. Staff make a lot of effort to encourage good attendance and young people are well prepared for the school day. There is space, resources and facilities at the home to enable the completion of home study or homework. A computer is available for the young people to use for educational purposes. Staff and young people celebrate achievements regularly and certificates of personal effectiveness are proudly displayed. The young people are members of the local and town libraries. Therefore, the education of young people is actively promoted as valuable in itself and as part of their preparation for adulthood. This is an area of outstanding strength.

The staff encourage and support a range of events that encourage participation, individual interests, and activities. Young people's involvement is supported by staff who explore their individual choices, likes and dislikes. They are imaginative in their approach and they review the success of their efforts. Staffing levels are adapted to facilitate and support activities. The staff have established very good links and relationships with community based activity providers. Examples of activities highlighted include visits to places of interest, holidays, street dance, ice skating, cadets and youth clubs. There is also a good range of books, DVDs and electronic games available in the home for learning and entertainment. All young people are members of the local and town libraries. Therefore, young people are able to pursue their particular interests, develop confidence in their skills and are supported and encouraged by staff to engage in leisure activities. This is an area of notable strength.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are able to move into the home in a planned and sensitive manner. The referral system enables the manager to fully assess the needs of the young people concerned, and take into account the likely effects of their admission upon the existing group of residents. All admissions to the home are planned and the child or young person and their family, where appropriate, are involved in that planning. Young people visit the home before they are placed.

Care plans are recorded along the lines of the Every Child Matters desired outcomes for children. The plans are very comprehensively written and clearly document the expected contributions of the staff team. Focussed one to one work is regularly undertaken to enable young people to seek guidance, advice and support on any matter. The daily records reflect the content of the care plan and the action taken by the staff to meet the identified needs of the young person. The staff recordings are constructed to clearly reflect the outcome groups which makes analysis and monitoring easy.

The young people's needs and development are reviewed regularly in the light of their care and progress at the home. There is a system for reviewing the placement plans of the children and young people at the home. This system includes participation in the statutory reviews, internal reviews of the placement plan and informal discussions with the child or young person in key worker sessions. Statutory case reviews have taken place within the required timescales to inform those working at the home and others of progress made by young people.

Key workers monitor the care plans and produce monthly progress reports for other professionals and parents. These help to provide consistency of care and promote young people's progress and achievements that may otherwise go unnoticed. The planning, recording and reviewing process is an area of outstanding strength.

Young people's contact is promoted and very well facilitated. Young people confirm that they can keep in touch with people that are important to them, and that they can have friends and family come to visit them.

Young people describe ways in which they are encouraged to make decisions about their lives and influence the way that the home is run. This includes daily one-to-one discussion, visits from the providers and young people's meetings. Aspects of routine such as coming in times have been questioned by the young people and they have successfully negotiated changes to it. Therefore, young people's views are genuinely sought and acted upon.

The young people have good relationships with the staff. They were observed enjoying friendly, respectful banter, as well as praise and encouragement from the staff. The manager makes every effort to achieve continuity of staffing so that young people's attachments are not overly disrupted.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are taught day-to-day life skills, according to their individual level of maturity and understanding. The young people can learn skills informally through taking part in the tasks of running the home, such as shopping, cooking, vegetable gardening and cleaning. They are also given guidance and support with social skills, laundry, clothing care and handling money. For others, this is done more formally using an independence programme of work linked to pathway plan objectives. The manager is tenacious in his determination to ensure that transition work is done jointly with the placing authority in a timely fashion so as to help ensure that transition planning is effective. Transition planning is recorded and implemented. Therefore, young people receive care which helps to prepare them for adulthood. This is an area of outstanding strength.

The interior and exterior of the home is maintained in a good state of structural and decorative repair. The home is kept clean and there are homely touches throughout. There is a maintenance and repair programme for the building, furniture and equipment. The garden is well maintained and safe. Therefore the young people live in a home that is clean, suitably furnished and kept in good repair and decoration.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

An up to date Statement of Purpose is available to inform professionals and members of the public about how care is provided at the home. There is a very good children's guide. It is available in a variety of formats. Before admission, the staff provide as much information as they can about the home to young people, so that they know what to expect if they come to live there.

There is a consistent staff team, which has been added to recently to fill vacancies and to broaden the range of skills and experience among its members. There are sufficient staff members at the home and systems are set up, to ensure that any shortages or crises can be managed. New members of staff receive very good quality induction training before commencing work with the young people. Staff refer to written guidance frequently during discussion and give examples of how it is implemented in practice. A particular strength of the team is their willingness and ability to network with other agencies in an effort to improve and develop their own delivery of care. Staff support and supervision is of consistently high quality.

All staff are trained in a wide variety of safety and childcare subjects. The induction programme includes best practice principles and safeguarding systems. An ongoing programme of refresher training is provided in a range of subjects, to enhance the staff's competency to meet the needs of the young people. There are good measures in place to ensure that part time workers are included in training. Young people receive care from confident, self assured staff that are competent, experienced and qualified to meet their needs. The service continues to provide good opportunities and support to enable the vast majority of staff to achieve at least a National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People. Higher education is available to all staff.

There is highly effective monitoring of the quality of care, welfare and safety of the young people in the home. The provider undertakes monthly, unannounced monitoring visits to the home. This is to ensure that the care of children can be adapted in the light of information about how the home is operating. Action points are identified to be followed up by the manager. The highly motivated manager maintains a system for monitoring and improving the quality of care provided in the home. Senior managers conduct unannounced inspections of the delivery of care. Ongoing discussions in team meetings about improving service delivery are well documented. Health and safety audits ensure that practices are to a high standard. This outstanding approach greatly enhances many aspects of young people's care and support.

The Registered Manager is confident and self assured. He exercises effective leadership of the home's staff and operation. The home is organised, managed and staffed in a manner that strives to deliver the best possible outcomes for young people.

Young people's individual case files are confidentially stored and are arranged in a manner that makes them useable by staff and yet accessible to young people. The young people know that they can have access to their records. The young people's individual case records reflect their development and progress.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Examples of outstanding approaches to promoting equality and diversity are detailed in all outcome areas.