

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Joanne Vyas
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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 outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

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 home that provides medium to long term placements for young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. It is registered to take up to four young people within the age range of eight to 17 years. Four young people currently live in this home of whom all were present and two participated in the inspection.

The home is situated in a residential area and is close to bus routes and local amenities. The house is an older property and has a lounge, dining room, reception room and a resource room, toilet and an open plan kitchen on the ground floor. All bedrooms are on the first floor and are single. The staff office is also situated on the first floor as well as the young people's bathroom. There is a garden to the front and rear as well as a patio area.

Summary

At this full unannounced inspection all key standards were inspected.

This is a good service. Young people's welfare is enhanced by the positive relationships that exist between staff and young people, and between young people and their peers. There is a strong focus on meeting the needs of each individual young person including supporting and encouraging them to value their cultural and religious backgrounds. The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding throughout the standards inspected. Staff work closely with a wide range of outside agencies in order to meet the full range of young people's needs. A professional said: 'This home is definitely one of the best children's homes I've worked with. They seem to do a very good job working with some very vulnerable young and challenging people.' The Registered Manager has a strong commitment and focus on improvement. However, minor improvements can be made to the health care plan by fully identifying health care needs. Healthy eating should be encouraged and all complaints, including 'grumbles', should be addressed.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

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

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Staff know what the young people like and do not like to eat. Cultural preferences and specialist diets are catered for. Young people are encouraged to shop for and prepare meals. A social worker said, 'Young people regularly shop for food with staff and are involved in meal planning and preparation.' Currently, meals are more often than not unhealthy options such as pizza and chips. Although it is appreciated that the school holidays have begun so staff have less time to spend preparing healthy meals and the young people have access to fruit and juices, young people should be encouraged to eat more healthy meals.

Staff are usually focused and committed to ensuring a high-quality provision for health care for young people living at this home. They are generally proactive and responsive to the

emotional and health care needs of the young people. All young people are registered with doctors, dentists and opticians. They have access to a variety of health care professionals including mental health services. Each young person has a health plan which is up-to-date and states separate health needs including those arising from cultural needs. However, on one occasion, the medical needs of a young person were not fully identified resulting in an inaccurate health care plan. Although the staff team did not fully implement the plan, this could have been detrimental to the young person's health.

The safe handling of medication is well managed in this home. The home mostly use prescribed medication. Staff receive training in the safe handling of medication and audit medication each time it is given. Medication is accurately recorded, received and disposed of appropriately. The medication cupboards are secure. All accidents are recorded and first aid is given as required. All staff are trained in first aid and renew their training as appropriate.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The safety and rights of both staff and young people are protected. Staff are concerned about keeping young people safe and are competent in their knowledge of protecting them. Young people said that staff make them feel safe. Staff receive training on safeguarding young people as part of their induction and then at regular intervals. They have a good knowledge of the bullying policy and a young person said that staff help them if they are being bullied. Another young person said when asked about bullying in the home, 'No, we're like a family.' There are very few incidents of young people going missing from the home and staff are competent in their knowledge of the procedures to ensure young people return to the safety of the home in a supported manner.

Concerns raised by neighbours have been promptly and appropriately resolved. A 'grumbles' book for young people has been recently introduced. Young people are fully aware of this book and how to make a complaint if they wish. However, a 'grumble' had been written in the book but not addressed, although it is unclear when the 'grumble' was written as there is no date recorded. The young people are also able to voice any concerns they have in their key worker meetings, house meetings and informally, on a day-to-day basis with staff.

The privacy of young people is respected by staff. The living arrangements provide space where they can relax and easily find privacy away from others if they wish. Staff ensure the privacy and dignity of the young people such as by knocking before entering bedrooms. All records are kept confidentially. Young people's issues are not discussed openly.

Staff view young people positively and young people are relaxed around staff. Staff are given training, which includes de-escalation as well as physical intervention. Physical intervention is used as a last resort. There has been no physical intervention carried out in this home since the last inspection. Staff spoke about calming young people down by going out for a walk or taking them into another room and talking to them. The behaviour management plans are comprehensive. Sanctions are applied fairly and appropriately and young people are clear about the rules and what sanctions they will be given if they break the rules. Staff effectively manage challenging behaviour in a calm and professional manner.

Young people are protected by robust recruitment procedures and monitoring of visitors. Safety checks are completed and staff only commence employment when they have a satisfactory

Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) disclosure and two satisfactory references. All visitors sign into the building and must show identification.

The home has comprehensive risk assessments for all aspects of safety of the premises and grounds including fire and young people's behaviour and activities. These assessments have taken into account the daily activities in and outside the home. All staff are given fire safety training and fire drills are carried out regularly. Fire safety equipment is checked as appropriate and a detailed record kept. Young people are protected by good health and safety procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Staff are positive in their approach to education and its value for young people. Professionals said: 'Staff also liaised with college attending PEPs, setting up meetings and travelling there at short notice to support when their behaviour was challenging' and 'They have also appreciated the help and support the staff have given them with their school work.' Young people have Personal Education Plans (PEPs) which set specific, realistic and achievable targets for all the curriculum subjects. Where appropriate, young people also have a Statement of Special Educational Need (SEN). Religious and cultural preferences are well supported.

Individual support is comprehensively detailed in each young person's placement plan. Observations and discussions with staff demonstrate that staff ensure each young person's individual needs are fully met. Young people said they like living at this home. They are encouraged to value their own culture, language and religion by a diverse staff team. The practical individual support is reflected in the variety of planning documentation that is in place. This includes identifying any religious and cultural needs a young person may have. The staff know the young people well and are very knowledgeable of their individual needs and the implications this has for their care. A member of staff spoke about what, for them, is the best thing about the home. They said, 'Its when something positive comes out like getting a young person to go to college, go out more with friends and be more confident.'

Staff provide a variety of activities for young people including trips out to local places of interest, the coast and theme parks. They also have various activities within the home such as a computer, games, books and DVDs. Activities are well planned, risk assessed and carried out to ensure the young people are able to enjoy the activity safely. For example, two young people wanted to go rock climbing on the day of the inspection. Staff decided that as this was to be their first experience of rock climbing, they would take one in the morning and one in the afternoon to ensure each young person had the staff's full attention and therefore get the most from the experience. Both young people thoroughly enjoyed the experience and proved to be very good at rock climbing. They are also looking forward to their annual holiday abroad. Young people are able to pursue their particular interests, develop confidence in their skills and are supported by competent staff to engage in leisure activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The statement of purpose clearly sets out the home's admission policy. Young people are supported during the admission process and when leaving the home. Staff carefully consider group dynamics when admitting a new young person.

Staff provide a good standard of care to young people and meet their individual needs with the knowledge and understanding they have of them. A comprehensive assessment of need, placement plan and risk assessments are in place for each young person. However, young people who have been recently admitted do not have any of the Looked After Children documentation supplied by the young person's placing authority. However, the Registered Manager has written confirmation that missing information has been brought to the attention of the relevant local authorities. Parents, where appropriate, and social workers are consulted about the care plans and subsequent reviews but this is not evidenced on the plans. However, the Registered Manager has noted this as action to be taken in his last Regulation 34 report. Social workers receive regular updates on the progress made by young people and said, 'Weekly progress reports and emails are very useful.' Key worker sessions are held regularly to discuss young people's progress and any issues. Any changes to the care plans are effectively communicated to the team. A record is made for each young person documenting their mood, activities, behaviour and other relevant information under the Every Child Matters outcome headings.

Statutory reviews have not taken place within the required timescale. However, the Registered Manager has written confirmation that missed or late reviews have been brought to the attention of the relevant local authorities. Young people are encouraged to attend their reviews.

Staff encourage and support young people in maintaining contact with families and everyone else who is significant to them. Staff facilitate contact with parents, providing transport where necessary. Plans detail the role of contact in promoting cultural identity and experiences.

Young people are given the opportunity to make choices and decisions throughout their daily lives within the home. A member of staff said, 'Young people are consulted on all matters from shopping lists to décor to placement plans.' A professional said of the young person they are involved with, 'They have been assisted to participate and articulate their views effectively.' Young people recognise that staff are supportive in helping and guiding them towards making positive decisions for themselves. They are relaxed in the company of staff and are quick to approach them with any issues they may have.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Staff encourage young people to carry out a variety of tasks independently or with support. These include cooking, shopping and cleaning. Each young person's placement plan clearly identifies independence work young people are encouraged to carry out. Staff provide a consistent and committed approach to enabling young people's successful transition into adulthood.

Young people live in a homely environment with good quality furnishings. There is a large amount of communal space. The young people have good facilities. Their bedrooms are personalised to ensure they meet their individual needs. The home is clean, tidy and well maintained.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

There is a clear, up-to-date statement of purpose that reflects the practice and functions of the home. Parents are provided with a comprehensive admissions pack. The commitment to promoting equality and diversity is explicit in this information.

Staff training is supported by the organisation. An annual programme covers mandatory training which all staff are expected to undertake. The majority of staff have qualified in a National Vocational Qualification Level 3 in the Care of Children and Young People. Staff that haven't yet qualified are currently completing the course.

There are good staffing levels to meet the needs of young people. A record of staff shifts is maintained on the home's rota and this shows there is a balance of gender and cultural backgrounds of staff wherever this is possible. Staff handover meetings ensure that each shift is appropriately planned and issues arising from earlier are competently communicated.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Evidence supports a strong commitment to improving equality and diversity in practice. The quality and detail of young people's plans also supports this commitment. Young people receive an individual service in the home which is designed to meet their personal needs. All staff have in-depth knowledge of the young people they are working with to ensure their needs are consistently met.

It is clear that the Registered Manager ensures effective monitoring of the home. A senior member of the organisation also visits the home on a monthly basis and reports on the conduct of the home. The home has a development plan which has been discussed and implemented at all levels.

Young people's records are kept in good order and reflect most of the information necessary for staff to care and support them throughout the placement.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, The Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
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Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure children are provided with food that is wholesome and nutritious (NMS 10.3)
- ensure that children's health needs are fully identified (NMS 12.1)
- ensure all complaints are responded to and a written record is kept of the action taken and the outcome (NMS 16.3).