

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Lynne Busby
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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 children's home provides care and accommodation for five young people of either sex between the ages of 15 and 17 years. The home provides medium to long term care for young people who are being prepared for independence. It is a detached house located on a housing estate within easy reach of the city centre and with easy access to local community and leisure facilities.

At the time of this inspection there were three young people in the home and two gave their views at the inspection.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This is an announced inspection to assess the key standards under the five outcomes of Every Child Matters and the additional outcome of organisation.

The overall judgement for the home is good but outstanding practice was seen in being healthy, enjoying and achieving, economic wellbeing and equality and diversity. The home is well managed and staff demonstrated a commitment to supporting young people to achieve their full potential in all areas. Young people were positive about the care they received; some said they are ready to move on into independence. Staff are knowledgeable about the young people's individual needs which they cater for well. There is good record keeping in place and staff meticulously record practice and the progress of young people. Young people said information is shared with them and they can give their views on records kept.

As a result of the inspection there is only one recommendation regarding the decision making record when referrals to the home are made. No assessment of the effects the admission may have on the existing group of young people is currently recorded.

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.

Young people's health needs are identified and assessed. Staff use this information to ensure the young people receive good health care. There is excellent support for young people. They are empowered to access services to keep themselves healthy. Guidance is available for young people on health issues such as sexual health and drug and alcohol misuse. Clear records are kept demonstrating that young people are supported to attend a range of medical appointments such as dental, opticians and doctors. Healthy lifestyles are promoted and excellent key working sessions are undertaken covering young people's individual health issues.

There is an effective medication policy, that covers all aspects of administration, storage and disposal of medication that is followed in practice by staff who are trained. Medication records are clear and a robust system is in place for monitoring medication.

Young people are encouraged to prepare healthy meals. All young people are learning to become independent and they complete their own menus. Fresh vegetables and fruit are available. Staff encourage young people to exercise by going to the gym and following their own interests such as dancing. Young people's health needs are fully met.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people are safeguarded because staff consistently follow clear policies and procedures which are based on best practice. Young people said that their privacy is respected and staff knock on their bedroom doors. Young people are encouraged to respect each other's privacy. Staff are aware of confidentiality and know when to share information. Room searches are only conducted if there are safeguarding concerns.

There is a complaints procedure in place and young people clearly know how to make a complaint. The young people said they feel listened to and that complaints are taken seriously. Complaints have been recorded and demonstrate they have been addressed without delay.

Staff have a clear understanding of child protection and how to safeguard young people. The Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures are accessible to staff and all staff have received appropriate training. There is a whistle blowing procedure which provides staff with guidance on reporting concerns. Young people have attended a workshop in the home on internet safety. Young people say staff talk to them about risk taking behaviours and how to keep themselves safe.

Young people say they 'feel safe in the home' and there are no issues with bullying. The staff deal with any issues that may arise and the homes ethos is that bullying is not tolerated. There are procedures in place for when young people go missing without authority. Young people do go missing for periods of time but staff contact them to ensure they are safe and well and encourage them to return to the home. Young people said 'they are asked if they want to see their social worker when they return to the home and staff check they are safe and well. The staff have introduced an incentive scheme to try to reduce the number of times young people go missing without authority and they believe this is having some impact.

Young people benefit from clear and consistent boundaries, the system of rewards and sanctions encourages young people to improve their behaviour. Staff have had training in care and control which includes restraint. Young people are rarely restrained which indicates this is only used to safeguard young people. There are individual behaviour profiles for young people and strategies are identified in how to deal with challenging behaviours. Sanctions are clearly recorded, and young people can earn back privileges if behaviour changes; this is good practice. Young people say that sanctions are fair.

Young people live in a safe and well maintained environment and regular fire drills are held. The risk of young people being exposed to unsafe people is minimised by a good recruitment and selection process.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are provided with excellent support that promotes their development. Staff engage with young people on direct work, based on their individual needs and where necessary specialist services are sought. Staff are aware of young people's needs with regard to their culture, religion, background and identity. Staff ensure young people's individual needs are identified and take into account the young people's views and aspirations. Young people say they can talk to their key workers and most members of staff if they have concerns.

The manager and staff promote education to motivate young people to achieve successfully, The staff attend school meetings and work closely with local schools to ensure young people attend. Young people have personal education plans which identify how their educational needs are going to be met and how staff can best support them. Young people are supported to move on to college and to take up apprenticeships where appropriate.

Young people are able to promote their particular interests which helps develop confidence in their skills and they are supported by staff to engage in leisure activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The young people are enabled by good practice of staff to contribute effectively to their care. Each young person has a clearly written placement plan that identifies their needs and any potential risks. The plan gives young people an opportunity to sign it and they say they are aware of future plans that are in place. The young people attend their reviews and have an opportunity to make their wishes and feelings known. There are clear contact details recorded and young people are provided with practical support to ensure contact with family is maintained, where possible.

The homes referral system enables the manager to fully assess the needs of the young people concerned. However, the records do not indicate that the impact on the existing residents is taken into account. This does not demonstrate that all young people's needs can be met. When young people are admitted to the home, staff ensure they are welcomed and given a children's guide that includes what they can expect. Young people can visit the home prior to being accommodated. Young people leaving the home have an opportunity to celebrate the time they have spent in the home. Therefore, young people are able to move into and leave the home in a planned and sensitive manner.

Young people's views are valued and opportunities for them to have their say are available through key working sessions, reviews meetings and day-to-day informal discussions. The young people's meetings also give them an opportunity to have their views listened to.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

The young people are given excellent support to make the transition to adulthood. This begins well before the pathway plan and is an integral part of the homes practice. Young people shop, prepare and cook their own meals. They have their own storage facilities in the kitchen. They also do their own laundry and look after their own rooms. Staff promote independence with support in tasks like budgeting for clothes and toiletries. They help young people to take responsibility for their own budgets which will give the young people more accountability.

The home is well maintained, decorated and furnished to a very good standard both internally and externally. There is a lounge and dining room and a separate domestic kitchen. Young people all have their own rooms, which they can personalise; they clearly take pride in the home. Bathrooms are close to bedrooms and are lockable for privacy. There is space for young people to have meetings in private and there is an

accessible telephone. The home is situated in a location that takes into account transport, education, health and leisure facilities.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home is well managed and run in the best interests of the young people living there. There is a clear Statement of Purpose that reflects practice and facilities in the home. There is a young person's guide that is part of a welcome pack for young people who are accommodated. The policies and procedures are accessible to staff.

There is an experienced dedicated staff group. The target of 80% of staff having achieved National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People is met. The organisation provides a variety of training and there is an ongoing programme of refresher training. New members of staff complete a comprehensive induction and are subject to a six month probationary period. Therefore, the young people are receiving care from competent qualified staff who have the knowledge and skills to meet individual needs. The staffing is adequate in numbers to meet the needs of the young people.

There is a quality monitoring system in place to promote the raising of standards. This includes monthly monitoring visits, an internal monitoring system completed by the manager and a clear written development plan.

The young people's files contain relevant information about their progress and history and these are well kept with comprehensive recordings on all aspects of their care. Young people sign their records which are shared with them. All records are held securely.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Equality and diversity is embedded in practice throughout the home, from meeting individual needs to staff training and record keeping. The staff demonstrate a good understanding of the individual needs of young people who may come from differing backgrounds. Young people are encouraged to participate in wider community activities.

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 the needs of the young person concerned, and the likely effects of their admission upon the existing group are taken into account and a record of the

decision is kept. (NMS 5.7)