

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Sarah Urding
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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 children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to six young people aged between 12 and 17 years old.

The house is detached and is situated in a residential area on the outskirts of a town. It is within easy reach of schools, shopping and leisure facilities. There are two communal lounges, a dining room and large kitchen on the ground floor. Young people have individual bedrooms and share bathrooms. There are separate staff bedrooms and bathroom facilities. The house has an enclosed garden to the rear and a smaller garden to the front.

Summary

This was an unannounced full inspection. All key standards were inspected.

This is an outstanding service. Young people are safeguarded because staff care about them and empower them to make safe choices. Staff work seamlessly with external agencies to promote safety, health and participation. Young people's good health is promoted by staff who promote healthy lifestyles in line with religious and cultural needs. Staff actively encourage young people to maintain positive relationships with families and welcome young people's friends in to the home. Young people and staff share positive, relaxed relationships. Staff are committed to young people throughout their time in the home and beyond. The staff team are experienced and demonstrate that they work together consistently well to improve service delivery. Areas for further improvement relate to individual plans for independence, reviewing the locking of internal doors and producing the guide to the home in formats that young people can understand.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Improvement in the home is marked and outcomes in all areas have improved because of focus and commitment from the team to meet the needs of individual young people. Training has improved which enables staff to meet a diverse range of needs. The environment is safely managed and notifications are appropriately made. This safeguards young people. The numbers of staff with a National Vocational Qualification(NVQ) level 3 do not yet reach the standard. However, the home is committed to improving training provided to staff.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Individual health needs are very well met in this home. Young people's health is thoroughly assessed on admission and staff follow clear health care plans. There are excellent links with teams providing mental health support to the young people and who also serve as advisors to the staff team, informing their understanding of issues such as post traumatic stress disorder. Young people are registered with doctors, dentists and opticians and staff support them to attend appointments.

Young people live in a multi-cultural home and their individual dietary needs arising out of this are very well met. Young people learning independence skills are supported by staff to prepare their own meals together and this social occasion is clearly enjoyed. Staff provide well balanced home cooked meals for young people who are younger. Staff ensure that young people from different cultures can enjoy meals originated from their own countries and have developed links to ensure that recipes are available for them to use. Staff also promote integration and understanding of different cultures with the young people who are learning about each other. An interpreter is used frequently and has taught some of the young people from different countries about how to prepare their meals. This practice is outstanding.

Medication is safely managed and an accountable system is in place. Staff are knowledgeable about a range of medical conditions that young people have and about the potential side effects of their medication. Medication is consistently administered as prescribed and safely stored.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Staff respect young people and have developed strong and positive relationships because they listen well and take an interest in meeting their needs. Young people's privacy is respected and they can make private phone calls. Staff achieve a good balance between allowing young people personal space and ensuring they are safe.

Staff play a strong parenting role with the young people and are committed and focused about their safety. The arrangements for child protection and complaints are managed effectively. Young people say that they are safe and staff tell them how to be safe. The team has strong links with safeguarding agencies and concerns are promptly raised.

Staff are proactive about managing risky behaviours. There are clear plans in place to ensure that risks are well assessed and minimised. Staff work consistently well to behaviour management plans and are well trained in this regard. Staff actively ensure a safe return home when young people are absent without authority. Staff demonstrate real concern and do all that they can to ensure that young people feel able to come home. Practice enables young people to make safe choices and is outstanding in this regard.

Staff manage incidents of bullying very well. They strongly advocate on young people's behalf and ensure that any incidents external to the home are resolved to young people's satisfaction. There is a clear zero tolerance approach to bullying which all young people are aware of and there is no reported issues of bullying within the home at the present time. Young people are confident that staff will support them should bullying occur. Staff are proactive about ensuring integration of different cultures in the home which promotes harmony.

The environment is safely managed and all health and safety checks are carried out in a timely fashion. The risk of young people being exposed to potential abusers is minimised because of safe recruitment processes that follow best practice guidelines and the safe management of visitors to the home.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Staff meet a diverse range of individual needs exceptionally well. Their approach is open and they share a commitment to ensure an understanding of young people. Staff do not make assumptions about cultural or religious needs and practice is impressive in relation to the promotion of religion, race, culture and gender. Staff actively seek out ways to mirror young people's own backgrounds or experiences and have developed a range of resources to inform their practice. Their training is focused to meet the needs of individual young people and staff are committed to furthering their understanding of individual needs. Staff work with unaccompanied asylum seekers as well as young people from this country and they show a deep understanding of the needs of all young people and meet these well. Staff are outward looking and proactive in ensuring identity is promoted and difference is celebrated. They have been proactive in securing cultural support networks for all young people and a very positive approach to understanding other cultures is conveyed within the home. Practice in this home is worth sharing.

Staff display a similar commitment to promoting young people's educational needs. Young people of school age have good attendance and staff strongly advocate on their behalf within school so the best possible outcomes are achieved. There are clear plans in place outlining educational need and staff are clear about individual learning needs. Staff ensure young people are fully supported in their learning environments and continue their learning beyond the school day in relation to a range of social issues. Young people feel well supported.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are at the forefront of practice in this home. They are actively consulted and involved fully in decision making about their lives and about how the home is run. 'Living together' meetings allow young people to share views, experiences and learn about each other which promote cohesion in the home and tolerance. Interpreters play a strong role in the home and staff not only ensure young people's views are heard, they give them choice about who they feel most confident to convey their views.

There are clear placement plans in place that are reviewed in a timely fashion. Young people and staff are actively involved and show clear understanding about meeting identified needs. This remains a focus for all staff whilst at work.

Contact is also actively promoted. Staff show expertise in building relationships with families and make clear recommendations for ensuring that young people get the most out of contact with family. Friendships external to the home are encouraged and young people's friends receive a warm welcome from staff. Young people feel comfortable bringing their friends home which raises their self esteem and promotes identity.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Staff go the extra mile to ensure that young people are supported in their life beyond placement. Strong links are maintained and outreach packages and meals back at the home ensure that young people fare well once they leave. This is excellent practice and reduces the risk of isolation. Staff also ensure that young people who leave the home are occupied in training or work and will encourage their attendance. This increases young people's life chances.

Independence programmes within the home are developing well. Staff support young people in preparing them for independence and pathway plans are in place. However, individual plans for independence are not yet fully implemented and this may result in needs being missed.

The environment is welcoming, warm and well decorated. Young people clearly take pride in their surroundings as the home is well looked after. There are good facilities and plenty of space to engage in different activities. Young people are fully involved in contributing to décor and facilities. Facilities throughout are safely maintained. However, the practice of locking some internal doors prevents free movement throughout the home.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

There is a clear statement of purpose in place that reflects practice and facilities in the home well. The young people's guide to the home is available and staff have ensured that young people speaking different languages fully understand what is available to them by the use of an interpreter. However, formats are not yet available in young people's own language.

The promotion of equality of diversity is outstanding. Staff provide quality and individualised care to young people with a diverse range of needs. Staff are experienced, non-judgemental and led by young people. This enables them to provide quality and focused care where the needs of all young people are equally well met.

Team building has encouraged shared values from staff and this is conveyed well in their practice. Staff are committed, focused and feel well supported to fulfil their roles. Training is focused on meeting the needs of young people and is improving. More staff are being accessed to NVQ level 3 and there is a clear plan in place identifying further training required. Staff are appropriate in numbers to meet the needs of young people who benefit from positive relationships and lots of one to one support.

A development plan is in place and this is clearly linked to the rigorous monitoring of the quality of care in the home. The manager is fully aware of areas for development in this home and clear plans are in place to further raise standards from within.

Staff produce clear records of children's lives and there is accountability in their practice.

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):

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- ensure there is a comprehensive plan in place for young people preparing to leave care which is consistent with and also contributes to the young person's pathway plan (NMS 6.1)
 - review the use of physical restrictions to the kitchen and 'chill out' room (NMS 23.5)
 - ensure the children's guide is in forms appropriate to the understanding of the children in the home (NMS 1.3)
 - qualify 80% of staff to NVQ level 3 in the Caring for Children and Young People(NMS 29.5).