

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

Care and accommodation is provided at the home for up to six young people aged 11 years old to 17 years old. The home is detached with an enclosed rear garden. The house has two floors. On the ground floor there is a lounge, kitchen, laundry room, games room, quiet room and staff office. On the first floor there are six bedrooms used by young people, two family-sized bathrooms, two toilets, a staff sleep-in room, an education room and the manager's office.

The home is situated in a residential area and is near to local shops. The home is close to local bus routes, which provides easy access to the town centre, with its larger shops and leisure facilities.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This was an unannounced key inspection of the home. All of the outcome areas for young people were inspected and were found to be good with the exception of economic wellbeing which was judged to be satisfactory. Overall, this is a good service.

Members of staff care about the young people who live there and treat them with dignity and respect. In addition, members of staff are fully committed in supporting young people to achieve their maximum potential and to develop socially acceptable behaviour. Young people were observed to have a friendly, open and honest dialogue with members of staff and appeared relaxed and comfortable in approaching them with their concerns.

Members of the staff team are knowledgeable, skilled and committed to delivering a high quality service to young people. Monitoring processes are good and ensure standards are maintained, with any shortfalls addressed quickly to improve provision to young people. There are clear systems and procedures for keeping young people safe and for their health and welfare to be promoted and their needs met. Young people and members of staff actively share ideas about what the home does and how high standards and quality can be maintained.

Six young people currently live at the home, and six inspection questionnaires were received from them. Two young people were present at the time of the inspection, although they did not directly contribute to the inspection process.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection the home's manager has improved the system for ensuring members of staff receive supervision. All members of staff now receive regular, formal supervision.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Members of staff ensure young people have easy access to fresh fruit and vegetables. One young person who returned an inspection questionnaire said, 'they encourage me to eat healthy meals of fruit and vegetables and a bowl of fruit is left out for us'. Nutritious meals are provided and young people participate in the planning of menus. Young people are also encouraged to participate in shopping for food items and meal preparation. The home ensures that young people living there are able to follow the diet of their choice. The home also ensures that young people are able to sample food from different countries and cultures. Young people living at the home enjoy a healthy, well-balanced diet and healthy eating is promoted.

Young people living at the home have had their individual health care needs fully identified and reviewed. Each young person has a healthcare plan which outlines what their physical and emotional needs are and what support they may need. Young people are supported and encouraged to attend all meetings and appointments with healthcare professionals. One member of staff said, 'we seek professional advice on the misuse of alcohol, and drugs. We also encourage the young people to stop smoking'. Members of staff have all attended first aid training. The health care needs of young people are promoted.

Policies and procedures relating to the safe handling and administration of medication are in place. All members of staff have undertaken training in the safe handling and administration of medication. An audit of the home's administration records, in relation to the administration of controlled drugs, was undertaken. Records show that controlled drugs are not only received into the home following receipt from a pharmacist but also direct from a young person's parent. Receiving controlled drugs direct from a parent does not guarantee the integrity of the medication. Young people living at the home are not fully protected by the home's medication administration systems.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Members of staff are pleasant and friendly towards all the young people living at the home, all of whom have their own bedroom. Young people are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms in a style of their own choice and to keep the rooms clean and tidy. The home has policies and procedures in place, which explain what action members of staff should take when it is necessary to search a young person's

bedroom. A small number of room searches have been carried out since the last inspection; the reason for these searches appear reasonable. Written records relating to any room searches that have taken place are retained and include an area for the young person themselves to make comments. Personal information relating to each young person is stored securely to prevent unauthorised access. Young people living at the home are treated with dignity and respect.

There are policies and procedures in place for dealing with complaints in an effective and timely manner. The young people's guide provides clear information to young people about the complaints process. Young people were observed at the time of the inspection to speak freely and honestly with all members of staff and to make their needs known. All the young people who returned inspection questionnaires said they felt comfortable speaking with members of staff if they were worried about something. All members of staff have received training in the complaints process and young people know how to complain if they are unhappy with any aspect of living at the home.

Young people living at the home are fully protected from exploitation and abuse. A copy of the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures is available in the home. There has been no child protection referrals made since the last inspection. All members of staff working at the home have undertaken training in child protection and the welfare of young people is promoted effectively.

The home has policies and procedures in place with regard to countering bullying and all members of staff have received training in countering bullying. The young people's guide to the home includes clear information for young people about what action they should take if they feel they are being targeted by bullies. Information about independent agencies that can help young people, if they feel they are being bullied, is available within the home. The manager of the home has written a countering bullying risk assessment. The risk assessment outlines the times, places and circumstances where bullying might occur and is regularly reviewed. Young people who returned inspection questionnaires all said that bullying does not happen within the home. Young people are protected from bullying.

There have been a number of occasions since the last inspection when young people have been absent without authority, and the home has effective policies and procedures in place with regard to what action members of staff should take if a young person is missing. Procedures comply with national minimum standards and provide clear guidance for staff action, particularly when a young person returns to the home after being missing. Each young person has a risk assessment in place, which outlines whether or not they are likely to run away, and any specific action members of staff should take in order to keep them safe. Young people are responded to positively on their return.

The home has policies and procedures in place relating to the safe holding or restraint of young people, and members of staff have received appropriate training. Restraint records are retained within a separate bound and numbered book used specifically for that purpose. The written records meet national minimum standards

and regulation. There have been a small number of restraints used within the home since the last inspection. The home also has policies and procedures in place, which relate to the sanctions members of staff are permitted to use to help young people modify their behaviour. Sanction records have been completed appropriately. Members of staff, spoken to during the inspection confirmed that they had all undertaken training in the safe holding of young people and that this training is regularly reviewed and kept up to date.

Young people are protected from fire and other hazards within the home. There are good systems in place to ensure that young people, members of staff and visitors to the home are kept safe and free from hazards. Fire drills are carried out at regular intervals and these include some undertaken at night. Risk assessments are undertaken on the known and likely activities carried out by young people. These risk assessments are thorough and help to protect young people from the risk of accident or injury.

There have been no new appointments to the staff team at the home since the last inspection. Written records show that thorough and detailed checks are carried out to ensure that all members of staff are suitable to work with young people. Young people living at the home are provided with physical safety and security and are protected from being exposed to potential abusers.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people living at the home have their own key worker and they receive help and support when they need it. Written records retained within the home show that meetings between key workers and young people take place. However, it is not fully clear how often these meetings take place or what the content of the discussions has been. The progress of each young person is however, regularly reviewed and members of staff offer help, guidance and support to help them improve their behaviour.

All the young people living at the home attend school, college or training. The home employs an education coordinator to help facilitate each young person's education and to help overcome any problems which may arise. This proactive approach to helping young people progress and to achieve their maximum potential should be commended. In addition, young people living at the home are actively encouraged and supported to develop their own hobbies and interests.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people living at the home are appropriately placed. Planning and placement meetings take place prior to the admission of any young person to the home. Meetings held prior to admission help to ensure all essential information is available

and that the placement has the greatest chance of success. Each young person has their own placement plan, which outlines what their needs are and how they will be met. In order to help ensure that needs are met, the manager and members of staff undertake individual risk assessments of each young person and devise more detailed care plans following admissions.

Written records retained within the home show that the needs of young people are formally reviewed at regular intervals and within agreed timescales. The changing needs of young people are highlighted and appropriate action taken. The home's manager, members of staff and young people themselves regularly attend these meetings. The needs of young people living at the home are regularly reviewed.

Contact with friends and family is discussed at each young person's planning meeting, prior to admission. Where appropriate, young people are supported and encouraged to maintain regular contact with their friends and families. Restrictions on contact between young people and their families are discussed prior to admission and are written into the young person's placement plan. The reasons for these restrictions, if any, are both known and understood by the manager and staff at the home.

The admissions procedure for the home is good, where appropriate and possible, arrangements are made for the young person and their parents to visit the home before a placement is agreed. Members of staff work hard to try to make young people feel welcome and to understand what it will be like to live there.

Young people are encouraged to raise issues, which affect their lives. Meetings take place between members of staff and young people about how the home is run and what improvements can be made.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

Formal pathway plans, for the young people who require them, were available in the home at the time of the inspection. However, the pathway plan for one young person did not clearly show their assessed needs or what the plan was for their future. The plan had no review dates highlighted or contingency arrangements considered. In addition, it did not include any financial arrangements and on-going responsibilities had not been considered. Young people may not receive the care they need to prepare them and support them into adulthood.

Young people enjoy homely accommodation that is decorated, furnished and maintained to a very high standard. Members of staff help to maintain the building and to keep it clean and tidy. Young people living at the home are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms and are encouraged to keep their home clean and tidy.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Members of staff support and enable young people to participate in community-based activities on an equal basis and to develop their own identity. All members of staff have attended equality and diversity training. The Statement of Purpose has recently been reviewed and accurately describes what young people can expect from living at the home. Young people know what services they can expect from the home.

Young people are looked after by members of staff who are very well supported and properly managed. All members of staff receive regular, formal supervision. The manager and his deputy also make themselves available to talk with members of staff should they need to do so. Staff meetings are held at regular intervals.

Young people receive the care and services they need from well trained, competent staff. All permanent members of staff are trained to a minimum National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People. The home's rotas ensure that, there is always a mix of both male and female staff on duty. Staff sickness and holidays are covered by existing staff members being flexible in their work patterns. Consistency of care is provided to young people and there are clear arrangements in place for members of staff to deputise in the absence of the manager.

A record of all training received by members of staff is maintained within the home. Young people are looked after by members of staff who are well trained and competent to meet their needs. The care of young people living at the home is monitored regularly. A system is in place to ensure performance is monitored and any patterns or issues requiring action are highlighted.

The needs of young people are recorded to reflect their individuality and daily records are maintained. Information relating to the care that young people receive is stored securely. Young people and their parents are able to access this information within the home if they request it.

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):

- review the home's procedures for the management and administration of medication (NMS 13.7)
- ensure that regular key worker meetings take place and that the content of these

- meetings is fully recorded (NMS 7.5)
- ensure that each young person living at the home who is eligible has an up-to-date and comprehensive pathway plan. (NMS 6.1)