

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Sue Winson
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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

The children's home is owned and managed by a private company. The property is a three-storey house, situated close to transport networks, schools and other community facilities. The home provides care on a medium- to long- term basis. Clothing, support for education, activities and a holiday are also provided. All young people have single room accommodation.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

This unannounced interim inspection considered all key standards under the three outcome areas of being healthy, staying safe and organisation. Seven young people were resident, four were present at the inspection and three participated. This is an outstanding home where individualised care and high levels of support allow young people to achieve positive outcomes. Young people are safeguarded and their complex and varied needs are well met through working in partnership with other professionals. Young people experience positive behaviour management, based on consistency of care and positive relationships between them and the staff. They are integral to decision making and are encouraged and empowered to express their views or concerns. They are confident that staff will support and help them. The home is well run and benefits from a stable, dedicated staff team who are well managed, supported and trained.

Improvements since the last inspection

No actions or recommendations were made at the last inspection. The home has a development plan and continuing improvement remains at the centre of practice.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Young people enjoy healthy meals that are tailored to their dietary needs and preferences. Individual diets are monitored and young people have choices. They are involved in planning, shopping and cooking meals and staff take opportunities as they arise to discuss healthier options and food hygiene. Meals are routinely taken at table as social occasions. Their religious and cultural needs are well met and they go out for a variety of meals to widen their horizons. The service has a history of promoting healthy living with high degrees of success and funding is available for young people to join sports clubs and gyms.

Young people's health needs are identified and services are provided to meet them. Excellent placement plans outline both physical and emotional health needs and specify how they will be met. These are in line with local authority care plans and are updated monthly in consultation with young people who are encouraged to sign and comment. Good communication with placing social workers is maintained to the benefit of the young people. Planned and unplanned individual work with the young people addresses the issues identified in their plans and there is a focus on promoting self-confidence and self worth. They are given information about local services which they can access directly. All the young people are registered with doctors, dentists and opticians and the home advocates on their behalf for the provision of specialised services.

The welfare of young people is safeguarded by the home's policies, procedures and practices for administering first aid and non-prescription medication. Appropriate written permissions are held on file and full records and stock checks are carried out. Staff receive training and medicines are safely stored and dispensed.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Young people's privacy is well respected and information is confidentially handled. Young people are encouraged to read records which relate to them and arrangements are in place which ensures they do not view information about others. They are able to see visitors, talk to staff and make telephone calls in private. Room searches are carried out only when necessary for safety reasons, young people are informed and invited to sign and comment on the records.

The home's policies and practices in respect of complaints, safeguarding, bullying and absence without authority promote young people's welfare and protect them. Central records are maintained by the manager for monitoring purpose and he also ensures that staff are trained and receive updates as necessary. Young people know how to complain and are regularly reminded of their rights to do so. Information leaflets about children's rights organisations and stamped addressed envelopes to the manager, senior managers in the organisation and Ofsted are readily available to them. Their welfare is promoted effectively and appropriate responses to safeguarding issues have been made, in consultation with local authorities. All significant events are notified to the relevant people in a timely manner. Young people are protected from bullying. They are regularly reminded what constitutes bullying in group and individual sessions. As far as is possible, young people are protected when absent without authority and the home has been successful in reducing incidents. Staff follow procedures, try to keep in touch by mobile phone and ensure that young people are seen by someone outside of the home on their return. Individual sessions take place with all the young people concerning keeping safe in the community. Safe caring practices in the home benefit the young people. Their comments include that they "feel safe", "staff talk about keeping safe all the time because they care" and that they could speak to staff if they were not happy about

anything.

Positive behaviour management assists young people in taking responsibility for their actions. Reward systems are effective and the young people like the opportunities to achieve their individual goals. Staff routinely use praise and encouragement which results in few sanctions, which are fair and reasonable. There has been no use of physical intervention. Young people benefit from consistent approach across the staff team and say that they know what is expected of them and that they are well supported by the staff.

The home provides physical safety and security and the managers and staff are vigilant in ensuring this is maintained through regular house checks. Fire drills take place at regular intervals and always shortly after a new young person arrives in the home. A wide range of risk assessment further protects the young people, as these contain action planning to minimise and reduce risks. They are regularly reviewed and their effectiveness is continuously assessed. There have been no new staff since the last inspection. The company has a history of highly robust recruitment procedures which protect young people.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is not judged.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The Statement of Purpose outlines the services provided. The young person's guide meets regulations and is in appropriate language for the young people resident. There is facility for it to be provided in other languages when necessary.

Young people receive excellent levels of care from a stable staff group who have a range of skills, qualifications and experience in the work. They are focused on achieving positive outcomes for young people and are committed to continuing

improvement. Staff retention remains high and the team work co-operatively for the benefit of the young people, under the effective leadership of the manager and deputy. After a settled period, the home has had a number of admissions and discharges in recent months. The staff team have risen to this challenge and maintained consistency and a focus on high levels of individual support to the young people. Staff receive regular supervision and appraisal and their training and development needs are well met. They are positive about the management and leadership in the home and feel valued.

The home is well managed, efficiently organised and monitoring and auditing systems are highly robust. The ethos of open management allows for reflexive practice and involvement of the whole staff team in the improvement agenda. Visits under Regulation 33 take place each month and comprehensive reports, which include action planning, are useful in guiding improvements. The manager and deputy consistently act on any concerns or deficits raised in the reports in a timely manner. Young people's files are well ordered, up to date and reflect their progress well.