

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Chris Fuller
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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 home provides medium to long-term care for up to six young people of either gender aged 10 years to under 18 years. The large detached house has a front car park and a fenced rear garden. The premises include two staff offices, a large kitchen, dining room, lounge, a quiet room and an education room. All bedrooms are single and are situated on the first floor. There are sufficient toilets, showers and baths for the young people. There is a flat to enable young people to acquire independence skills and this is used to support young people in placement within the home. The home has several areas to hold meetings and for young people to meet family members in private. It is situated 10 minutes from a city centre with nearby bus stops enabling young people to commute into the city and surrounding areas. The home has its own transport in the form of a people carrier.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

The unannounced random inspection visit of the home was made to monitor the key national minimum standards in the outcome area of staying safe. The progress with addressing two recommendations made at the previous inspection in respect of risk assessments for the self-administration of medication and the number of staff were also inspected.

The inspection found that the management team ethos is open, supportive and inclusive. They provide effective, practical leadership to an experienced, knowledgeable and skilled staff team whose primary aim is to safeguard the welfare of young people. Young people are well informed and involved in decision-making about their daily routines so that they know how to keep themselves safe. There are two recommendations being set as a result of this visit. These relate to records of room searches and staffing.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were two recommendations made at the previous inspection in respect of risk assessments for self-administration of medication and staffing numbers. Progress has been made with the former, however, a new recommendation has been raised regarding staffing numbers and this is addressed in the organisation outcome. Staff complete risk assessments for young people to determine the safe self-administration of medication by young people. This means young people are supported to develop personal skills so that they may safely maintain their health and well-being.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff practice with regard to any young person's religion, belief, sexual orientation, race, gender, disability or culture supports their privacy and confidentiality. Any decision to support the above includes evidence that a young person's views are given importance. In addition, facilities within the home enable young people to experience semi-independent living and the privacy this provides while supported by the staff. Young people know what levels of privacy and confidentiality they can expect and say that staff usually keep to these. There are occasions when staff need to complete room searches to ensure the safety and well-being of young people. Young people are generally involved or informed of the room search, however, records of these searches do not reflect that young people have been involved or informed on all occasions. All young people are asked to respect each other's private space and belongings. This in turn promotes positive relationships, mutual respect and safe care of young people.

The complaint procedure is produced in a wide range of formats which suit the needs of the young people and others well. Young people know how to complain. They confirm that staff are approachable and they are confident their concerns and complaints are and would be addressed well. Young people receive feedback about the outcome of their complaint and are encouraged to add their comments to the outcome of the complaint. In addition to the formal process for making complaints, young people are encouraged to raise issues directly with staff in one-to-one meetings, residents meetings, through focus groups, with social workers and reviews. Young people may also choose to use advocacy services and clear contact details of independent services are provided in the welcome pack young people.

The home has comprehensive accessible policies and procedures for all safeguarding practices in respect of child protection, countering bullying, absence of a child without authority and notification of significant events. Staff demonstrate a clear knowledge and understanding of these processes and their effective application is regularly discussed in supervision and staff meetings. This means staff practice is consistent and reinforces safe care within the home. Young people confirm that they feel safe and cared for by staff and they are confident they will receive the help they need with any problems they may have. Staff network effectively with other professionals to secure the health and safety of young people. Management act responsibly to address any concerns or allegations so that, safeguarding processes are followed appropriately and young people are well protected.

The prevention of bullying is constantly on the agenda. Bullying is a live issue for

both staff and young people, consequently there is regularly open discussion with individuals and as a group to address specific incidents and general aggressive or oppressive behaviour. Staff introduce and prompt preventative strategies which in turn raise young people's awareness of the impact of their language and behaviour on others and also how to protect themselves.

Staff complete comprehensive detailed individual and group risk assessments and plans for what to do should a young person go missing. The plans describe what action is taken; including who is to be notified and the timescales by which each person or agency should be notified. Detailed records about the event are kept. Young people have a clear understanding of what is expected of them and generally keep staff informed of their whereabouts. Staff liaise effectively with local police, other professionals, family and friends to secure the safety and welfare of young people.

Management review behaviour management practice and training to ensure this remains suitable to meet the needs of young people. Management and staff remain open to exploring new methodology and strategies for managing challenging behaviour. Staff place high value on developing positive relationships with young people which in turn facilitates good communication with and involvement of young people. The home has good behaviour management strategies in place with few restraints or sanctions being applied. Staff use incentives, positive reinforcements and rewards to prompt and recognise young people's progress and achievements. Good progress has been made in one-to-one sessions and residents' meetings to raise young people's awareness and reinforce positive and socially acceptable behaviour. This in turn frequently reduces levels of risk and enhances the personal and social skills of young people.

Young people's health, welfare and safety is protected by a range of well written health and safety policies, procedures and guidance. There is good evidence that all the necessary health and safety checks maintain a safe environment. Young people and staff know the home's fire procedures well. Fire drills are undertaken regularly and at different times of the day and night. There are detailed records about fire safety and fire safety equipment is checked in accordance with fire safety regulations and guidance. Detailed, up-to-date risk assessments for all aspects of health and safety, for individuals and for groups of residents are available. This means staff and young people are well informed of the importance of keeping themselves safe through daily routines, discussion and implementation of health and safety practices.

The home has an established and effective system for the vetting and supervision of visitors. The management have a robust system for the recruitment of suitable staff to work with 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 good.

There have been changes in the management of the home with the manager appointed to post at the beginning of October 2010 following a number of periods of acting manager. It was also noted that an application to register as manager has not been submitted. The number of staff on duty is sufficient to meet the needs of the young people and to support them in their activities, visits and appointments. There is a strong core group of staff who have worked at the home for many years, have considerable experience skills and knowledge. The management and staff work very well together as a team, share information appropriately and support each other in their duties in the best interests of the young people. However, there continues to be some staff vacancies for the post of cook and assistant manager. Staff are extremely flexible and committed to providing cover so that they maintain consistency of care and stability for young people.

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 all searches of a young persons' room or possessions are made only in accordance with the guidance, and only on clear grounds, which are explained to the young person concerned and all such searches are documented (NMS 9.8)
- ensure the home is staffed at all times of the day and night, at or above the

minimum level specified under standard 30.2; this includes posts for management and cook. (NMS 30.1)