

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

The home provides care and accommodation for seven young people from the age of 11 to under 18 years. The home looks after young people who have emotional, behavioural or mild learning difficulties.

The building is situated in a residential area close to the seashore. The accommodation comprises of a dining room, lounge, kitchen, laundry and games room. Young people have their own bedrooms with en-suite facilities. In addition, there are two semi-independent flats which each have their own entrance, dining/living area, kitchen and bathroom. There is a grassed garden to the front and rear of the building and an area for off-road parking.

Seven young people are currently placed in the home. Six were in the home at various times and able to participate in the inspection.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This full inspection looked at all the key standards. It also looked at the progress the home has made in meeting the action and recommendations made at the last inspection.

The home provides a good standard of care with an excellent outcome in staying safe. Staff advocate on behalf of young people and provide them with new experiences and opportunities, such as holidays abroad, which helps develop their resilience. The focus is on giving young people normal childhood experiences, consistency and firm boundaries to help them feel safe and secure. The building is maintained to a high standard and provides a comfortable and homely environment where young people feel safe.

There is a safe and happy environment where young people have the chance to thrive. The staff focus on the needs of the young people and help them manage and reflect on their behaviour very well. There are positive and warm relationships between staff and young people.

Young people commented on what they feel the home is good at doing: 'Meeting my needs' and 'Help us get over our worries' and 'Everything, sometimes. Looking after me.' They did not make any suggestions as to how the home could improve.

No actions or recommendations are made as a result of this inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

The home was asked to improve fire safety. This has been achieved through regular review of the fire risk assessment to ensure it remains current.

The Registered Manager was asked to improve the procedures for staff to follow should there be any allegations or suspicions of abuse or neglect. The policy has been updated to include all elements of the standard to make clear the action staff should take. In addition, the home has ensured the policy and procedure are in line with the local safeguarding board, to ensure consistency in how the home approaches child protection.

The home has reviewed the written information given to young people. This now includes a summary of the complaints procedure so this is available to young people in this document.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people are supported to be healthy and make informed choices about their lifestyles. A young person commented on how they keep healthy: 'We have fruit. We have snack boxes.' Staff understand individual health needs and make sure young people can access the general and specialist services they need. Health information and advice is provided for any young people seeking support to change any aspect of their lifestyle, for example, giving up smoking.

There is an effective system for recording the administration of medicine which ensures two staff check that the appropriate dose has been given. Secure storage for any drugs ensures that these are stored safely in the home.

Mealtimes are very sociable, pleasant occasions where young people chat with staff. Young people help staff with food preparation to help them enjoy their meal as well as learning vital skills for their future lives. The introduction of individual snack boxes has been popular with young people and ensures staff can include healthy options and young people's likes and dislikes.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Safeguarding is a real strength in this home. All staff receive training in child protection and know what to do should there be any allegations or incidents of a child protection nature. They work with other professionals, such as the police, should young people not return to the home when they are expected. Staff also work with other professionals to ensure their best practice in keeping young people safe, for example, consulting mental health services on safeguarding issues regarding self-harming behaviour. Staff are supported by sound policies and procedures to keep

young people safe.

There is great respect for young people's right to privacy and their personal information is stored securely. They have access to their files, where appropriate, and to all parts of the home, including staff offices. This helps foster a trusting, open and transparent culture in the home and ensures young people can always approach adults in a homely environment.

The service has a very efficient system for dealing with concerns and complaints. Young people are encouraged to raise any concerns with staff by using the accessible 'I want you to know' complaints system. They can be confident that staff will respond to their complaint and help resolve any issues. There are regular opportunities for them to meet with a children's rights officer should they wish to complain to someone external to the home. Contact details for other organisations they may complain to are also supplied.

Young people are confident that staff will not tolerate bullying in the home. They feel protected by the positive and sensitive ways in which staff manage any incidents of bullying. Staff use techniques such as de-escalation and sanctions to manage poor behaviour, using physical restraint only occasionally, within clear guidelines, to keep young people and others safe. Agreeing a restorative element to any sanctions, such as making an apology or repairing damage, is extremely effective in helping young people understand the consequences of their actions and behaviour.

There is a very robust, staff recruitment policy which includes all the required checks, to ensure people are suitable for the work. The vetting process also includes informal interviews to further establish applicants' motives for wanting to work in the home. Young people may also participate in making decisions about who is employed in the home.

Safety of the premises is given a high priority. Young people are fully involved in fire safety by taking part in regular drills, so they know what to do in an emergency. Careful checks are made to ensure that gas, electrical appliances, fire equipment and alarms are safely maintained. This ensures young people live in a building which provides physical safety and security.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people are seen very much as individuals and their differences are understood and respected. They receive good individual care from a staff team that nurtures and supports them. The open and homely atmosphere enables young people to approach staff when they need to. They have opportunities to talk to their key workers for guidance and support when needed.

The home fully supports young people's individual interests and hobbies, for example, fishing, horse riding and learning to play a musical instrument. The home

also promotes their social inclusion by providing opportunities for young people to mix with others in the local community. Young people are fully involved in planning and raising funds for trips away from the home throughout the year, including overseas destinations. This gives them valuable opportunities to experience holidays in different cultures and communities as well as developing their confidence and social skills.

The majority of young people attend educational placements. Staff work closely with education professionals to support young people's education and source alternative provision when young people are not in education. There are facilities in the home to support study and homework.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff make sure young people can positively contribute to the running of the home. There are many opportunities for young people to give their views on everyday matters in the home, for example, the choice of food and activities, through regular young people's meetings, key work sessions and informal meetings with staff. Young people feel that the rules are fair and one commented 'children are involved in making the rules.' Young people are fully involved in more long term decision making, such as planning for holidays and how to fund raise for them.

Contact with families is fully supported by the home. Arrangements are clearly recorded on young people's files so staff can manage any practical aspects, for example, arranging transport to take young people to meet their family. Staff are sensitive to the impact that contact may have on young people, ensuring careful monitoring of this and support for young people in dealing with their feelings and behaviour.

Clear, simple care plans ensure that staff can easily assess young people's care needs. Plans are regularly reviewed to include any changes, for example, to health or education needs. Regular reviews, of young people's placements, determine what staff need to do to meet any short or long term needs, including preparing young people for future independent living.

Young people are helped to develop the skills for independent living, for example, by learning to prepare meals and cleaning their rooms. The home benefits from having a flat within the building as an option for those young people preparing to leave care. If young people take up this option, they can benefit from opportunities to cook and generally care for themselves while still having the support of staff. This helps smooth the transition to independent living.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Recent refurbishment to young people's bedrooms has resulted in a high standard of comfortable accommodation which suits their needs and which they may personalise. All bedrooms have en-suite bathrooms, furnished to a high standard, which give young people additional privacy. Desks are provided for study purposes and there is plenty of space and storage for young people's hobbies, interests and possessions.

Communal areas of the home are very spacious and comfortably furnished. All parts of the home are kept clean and tidy, with repairs carried out within reasonable timescales. This ensures young people live in a homely environment with suitable facilities.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home has strong leadership and a committed staff team who are dedicated to providing the best service to young people. Commenting on the strengths of the home, a professional wrote 'Strong' and committed staff group that helps to promote stability to the young people in their care.'

Staff are reflective of their practice and continually strive to develop the service they offer young people. Staff are supported in their role through regular supervision, meetings and training. New staff receive an appropriate induction to the home and methods of working.

Regular opportunities for training, for example, in constructive sanctions and fire safety help staff develop their skills and knowledge in caring for young people. There are also opportunities for staff to gain professional qualifications, for example, the Masters in Social Work and National Vocational Qualification at level 3 to provide a professionally qualified staff team.

There are effective systems for managing any absences or vacancies in the staff or management team.

Monthly visits are made on behalf of the local authority to monitor what goes on in the home. These are very thorough and include the views of staff and young people. Reports of these visits fulfil a useful quality assurance function by helping the home continuously improve.

The Statement of Purpose has been rewritten to make this reader friendly and includes all the required information. Young people are given a clear summary of this information when they move into the home to help them know what to expect from their time there. Further information is added to this, such as details of pocket money and key workers, to give specific information to individual young people.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Staff identify young people's individual needs and interests and these are well met in the home. Staff strongly advocate for young people to have the same opportunities as those who are not in care. There are opportunities for young people to access local facilities and staff give them wider experiences and opportunities by taking them on holidays in this country and abroad. Through such activities they have the chance to experience and accept other cultures.