

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 children's home is located in a residential area with close access to local amenities, shops and public transport facilities. The home can accommodate four young people from the age of 12 to 17 who may have complex behavioural or emotional needs. It is owned by the local council and has recently undergone major refurbishment.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

This was an unannounced key inspection. The purpose of this inspection was to assess if the home is continuing to meet the national minimum standards and regulations for children's homes and protecting and promoting the welfare of the young people accommodated. Three young people contributed to the inspection.

The home offers an excellent standard of care for young people. Staff are extremely effective in supporting young people to manage their behaviour. Young people's needs are comprehensively assessed and well met and they were observed to accept support and guidance from the staff team. The staff team continue to ensure all young people are suitably protected and their welfare is promoted to a high degree. Staff are proactive in responding swiftly to young people's individual needs and provide a consistent approach to managing behaviour. The home continues to work towards development and improvement and has effective systems to monitor the quality of care in the home; however medication records contain minor errors in recording times of administration. Young people are supported by a committed, qualified and positive team that are very proactive in providing an excellent level of support and guidance to young people. Educational attendance is good. The management is highly effective and ensures young people's welfare is paramount. Three recommendations have been made as a result of this inspection. Recommendations made relate to administrative errors and monitoring. These errors do not negatively impact on the excellent outcomes for young people.

Improvements since the last inspection

The last inspection at this home was extremely positive with two recommendations made. To develop a formal risk assessment process to determine whether or not a young person is sufficiently responsible to keep and administer their own medication (NMS 13.9). Staff now undertake a formal risk assessment to ascertain young people's competency to administer their own medication. Staff also monitor young people to ensure they continue to take medication appropriately and make changes if young people fail to take medication at the prescribed times.

The homes was also asked to ensure the record of the use of restraint includes all the elements outlined in NMS 22.9. (NMS 22.9).The records now contain all the elements to meet this standard.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Young people's health and emotional needs are very well met. All young people have access to a vast range of health professionals to meet their individual needs. Staff demonstrate a committed and comprehensive awareness of young people's health and emotional well-being.

Staff consistently promote healthy eating by young people and ensure this is closely monitored by key workers. Young people are able to make choices about meals and are positively encouraged to try new foods. Work is undertaken on an individual basis to respond to any concerns relating to eating and diet. Young people are actively encouraged to plan and prepare meals with an emphasis on healthy eating and work towards independence. Meal times provide a social occasion in which staff and young people can have open discussion around the table. Young people reported their enjoyment in helping prepare meals and learning new cooking skills. Health and safety within the kitchen is given high priority to safeguard young people.

Staff are highly committed and proactive to ensure young people's health needs are fully met. Prescribed medication administration records for each young person are generally well maintained and monitored. However on occasion the time that prescribed medication was administered was not always recorded consistently within records. It was clear from records viewed and discussion with young people that medication was always given when young people required this. Monitoring of medication is undertaken at the beginning of every day and through the monthly monitoring checks, this minor administrative error had already been highlighted as requiring attention. All staff are suitably trained and hold a first aid qualification. Extensive and comprehensive health information is maintained for all young people with key workers being proactive in ensuring regular health appointments are made and attended by young people.

Medication is safely stored to ensure young people's health is protected including extra provision for the storage of controlled drugs. Detailed records are held of any medical intervention needed with a clear audit of medication held within the home.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are extensively protected from the risk of harm or abuse and live in a safe home environment. Staff have a very good understanding of key child protection matters and are supported by regular training. Staff demonstrate an excellent

understanding of the individual needs of the young people and how to appropriately safeguard them.

Young people's privacy is well respected by the staff and young people have their own private bedrooms. Alarms are fitted to young people's rooms. This is a new system that the home is piloting. It records when young people leave their bedrooms at night and also when staff are woken from their sleep in duty. Monitoring of the system can ensure trends are picked up and young people are further safeguarded within the home.

The complaints system is clear and understood by staff and young people. Clear records are kept of any concerns raised. An open and honest culture within the home which fosters positive relationships with young people enabling them to feel comfortable with raising concerns. Ofsted's details are not present in the young people's guide should they wish to complain.

Staff are very proactive in dealing with any bullying issues within the home and continue to educate young people about relationships and the impact of group living, as well as current issues such as internet safety. All staff are to attend the child exploitation and online protection training to further enhance their knowledge of e-safety.

The staff work extremely well in positive behaviour management and undertake appropriate training to manage challenging behaviour. Staff support young people through a restorative justice approach to promote positive behaviour. It was evident on inspection that young people are supported to manage their behaviour and generally respond well to staff intervention. Additional support is gained from services to meet individual needs to promote positive outcomes for young people. The acting manager closely monitors the levels of restraint used within the home and these have proven to decrease over time. Records of physical intervention are well maintained and meet the regulation. Full incident records of all violent incidents are well maintained as well as a behaviour management log focusing on interventions used and their effectiveness. Staff expressed that physical intervention is only used as a last result. Observation on inspection was of a positive dynamic team working well in de-escalation techniques and humour to positively manage young people's behaviour. Young people are able to earn rewards through their personal incentives and reward targets. Staff focus strongly on praise and rewards in order to boost young people's self esteem and manage behaviour in a positive fashion.

There are clear systems for reporting and recording any event where a young person has been absent without authority. There are not significantly high numbers of incidents where young people are absent without authority. Incidents of high risk behaviour are closely monitored and staff are extremely vigilant to ensure young people remain safe within and outside of the home environment. Risk assessments and records clearly detail actions to safeguard young people. Staff implement the organisation's policies and procedures promptly should a young person leave the home without authorisation. It was evident that there has been a reduction in the number of incidents due to incentive work undertaken with young people.

Young people are encouraged to access the local community through a balanced risk assessment process. Young people are actively encouraged to develop positive independent lives dependant on their age and ability, through a range of staff support.

The health and safety policies and procedures are robust. Designated staff maintain records of all checks undertaken and of staff training, for example in fire safety. Young people and staff practise fire evacuation procedures and fire safety records are clear and up-to-date.

Staff recruitment procedures provide safeguards for young people's welfare. An annual audit was undertaken at the local authority central recruitment office on 25th June 2010. On inspection of files audited the majority did not have evidence of checks against qualifications. The local authority has since audited all files and evidence of qualifications are now maintained to meet the regulations. Evidence showed no member of staff commences employment until satisfactory Criminal Records Bureau checks and references have been received. Young people are involved in the recruitment process and their views sought.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The individual needs of each young person are highlighted through extremely detailed care planning and review. Individual support is fundamental to the success of young people developing and achieving whilst living at the home. Staff demonstrate a real commitment to the young people to ensure they are supported to achieve in all areas of their lives. Young people feel they have their individual needs met and it was evident that they felt able to talk to staff on matters affecting their lives. Observations made were of excellent relationships between staff and young people, and consistency within the staff team has helped this to flourish.

Young people are encouraged and supported to attain their educational goals. Suitable and up-to-date plans ensure that the particular educational needs of each young person are assessed and incorporated into realistic education programmes. Young people are assisted to maintain their educational placements though good attendance records. Staff are extremely proactive in securing education for young people who refuse to attend school placements.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are supported by a very committed staff team and effective systems to make a positive contribution to their lives and placement whilst living at the home. Excellent care plans comprehensively detail the care needed and how this is to be provided to young people. Staff are very successful in engaging with young people,

enabling young people to develop and achieve positive progress whilst living at the home.

Regular reviews of care planning ensure that young people have their progress assessed routinely. When necessary care plans are amended to meet changing needs or circumstances. Staff are able to review the care provided to young people through regular team meetings and supervision.

Young people are supported to maintain contact with family members where appropriate. Young people have access to a private phone. Staff foster positive relationships with parents and ensure good communication is maintained. Young people are provided with a mobile phone. Relevant numbers are programmed so young people can make calls if they require help or contact staff. Staff are able to further safeguard young people by keeping in regular contact while young people access the community.

Initial referral information to the home is suitably gained, ensuring the young person's needs are known and understood prior to placement. This ensures the suitability of the placement and highlights how staff can provide the best possible individually planned service. The home's Statement of Purpose clearly defines the admissions procedure and criteria. Young people are able to have visits to the home prior to placement; this enables a positive move into the home and helps them settle in quickly.

The atmosphere in the home is open and friendly and young people are clearly able to express their opinions easily. Regular young people's meetings allow a formal approach to be considered in respect of their views. Motivated and committed staff ensure that young people are supported to express their views through other means should they not wish to attend the young people's meetings. Any issues or queries are responded to in good time and young people are able to suggest agenda items for discussion. Staff promote young people's independence and provide opportunities for them to advocate for themselves.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are encouraged through their placement to be as independent as possible and staff work closely to support them with a range of independent living skills in order to prepare them for leaving care. Transition plans and careful planning and thought are put in place to ensure young people move onto future placements in a positive manner. Excellent independent living plans clearly outline the skills young people learn and the action taken to achieve this. Young people have made positive transitions into independent living following their placement at the home. It was evident on inspection that young people value the support from the staff team as many young people have returned and thanked the staff for their support and care.

The home has been extensively refurbished in order to provide homely accommodation for young people. The home now provides excellent accommodation in a domestic setting. Young people enjoy living in the home with excellent facilities and leisure areas provided. Young people have access to an education room and a chill out room as well as comfortable lounge area. A well maintained garden allows opportunity for activities such as barbeques in the summer. Young people regularly bring friends back to their home and have been involved in preparing food and welcoming guests when social events are organised. This allows them to feel comfortable and relaxed in their environment, and provides a 'family feel' to their home.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The management of the home is very efficient and effective. The Registered Manager is currently on sick leave; however the deputy is acting as manager and demonstrates a considerable understanding of the home and the needs of both staff and young people. There are systems in place to support both staff and young people and it was clear that this has helped young people to develop and achieve since being at the home.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Staff work extremely well to support young people's individual cultural and diverse needs.

Staff duty rotas indicated that there are very good levels of staff on duty at all times. Staff undertake a range of training to equip them with the relevant skills to meet the needs of individual young people. All of the staff are either qualified to National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in care or a higher qualifications. The staff team are very proficient in delivering an excellent standard of care to young people. Staff reported that the training provided by the local authority was excellent. Training provided equips them with a huge range of skills and knowledge in order to meet the needs of young people accommodated and promotes excellent outcomes.

The welfare of young people is protected and promoted by a professional, positive and committed staff team that are able to fulfil the home's Statement of Purpose. A thorough induction programme is available for new staff and all staff have access to a wide range of training opportunities, which are both encouraged and supported.

Young people enjoy the benefit of a home that is suitably staffed by day and night. Staff are extremely vigilant to ensure young people are suitably safeguarded. The staff team consists of both male and female members, offering a good mix of skills to the young people in their care.

Young people are safeguarded and their welfare promoted by the effective monitoring carried out by the acting manager. Although daily monitoring of medication records as well as monthly monitoring takes place, minor errors are occurring with staff not consistently recording the time medication is administered.

The manager had highlighted this in her monthly monitoring checks and this was to be brought to staff's attention. Monitoring visits by the regulation 33 visitor occur on a monthly basis and reports are submitted to Ofsted in a timely fashion. These reports highlight areas for development to improve standards of care and provision for young people.

Young people benefit from excellent informative case files that they can access if requested. They are stored securely and confidentially. They contain clearly written records and provide comprehensive accounts of the young person's history and progress. Staff work tirelessly to ensure paperwork is maintained to a high standard and information held on young people is accurate and up-to-date.

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 that a written record is kept by the home of all medication, treatment and first aid given to children, giving name, date, time medication/treatment. Specifically in relation to consistent recording of time medication is administered (NMS 13.2)
- ensure young people's complaints procedure is updated to include Ofsted's details (NMS 16.5)
- ensure stringent monitoring is undertaken of medication records to ensure errors in recording times of administration are improved. (NMS 33.1)