

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Linda Brown
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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 is a large, modern house situated in a residential area. It is close to local recreational, health and educational facilities. The communal areas of the home include the lounge, dining room, kitchen, activity room, computer room, bathrooms, laundry and garage with gym equipment. All young people have their own bedrooms.

There are two staff sleeping-in rooms and a staff office. The home offers placements for up to four young people from 14 to 17 years of age. The length of stay is based on an assessment of need.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

The purpose of this unannounced visit was to monitor the home's performance against some of the key standards in the national minimum standards for children's homes, and monitor the progress made in meeting the recommendation made at the last inspection. All key standards in staying safe have been inspected. Discussion took place with the Registered Manager, staff and some young people.

The young people are involved with a range of groups and clubs, to include the children in care council. One young person has nominated the home to engage in the active participation award, providing young people with a variety of new opportunities to be consulted about their placements. For example, the recruitment process, listening to young people's views and looking at policies and procedures. Young people continue to take an active role in the local community, for example, helping at the Christmas church fete and carol service. Young people stated that they are currently planning their next fund raising car wash event to raise money for the 'Make a Wish' children's charity. The welfare of the young people is promoted very well because the Registered Manager welcomes the suggestions from the young people and encourages and supports them to develop their ideas.

This inspection found outcomes for children remain outstanding and the service meets and exceeds many of the national minimum standards. The management and staff continue to provide a very positive environment where young people feel safe. Staff receive the appropriate training in child protection and provide services to support and actively encourage young people to keep themselves safe. Behaviour is well managed and there are good relationships between the staff and young people. Robust systems are in place for dealing with complaints, young people feel confident that their complaints are taken seriously and resolved. All outcome areas were judged to be outstanding at the previous inspection. The outcome area for staying safe was examined at this inspection and judged to be outstanding.

Improvements since the last inspection

The Registered Manager is committed to improving and developing the service provided to young people. She immediately addressed the recommendation made at the previous inspection regarding the recording of key worker sessions. New recording systems have been introduced, staff record key worker sessions separately and this confirms that young people are provided with the opportunity to regularly express their views and wishes.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

It is evident that staff form positive relationships with young people. Young people confirm that the staff treat them well and ensure that personal and confidential issues are dealt with dignity and respect. Visitors are made welcome at the home and where appropriate rooms are made available for young people to have visits in private.

There is an effective and robust system in place to record, address and resolve any concerns made known by young people. External and internal complaints are managed through the provider's complaints department. The Registered Manager continues to work closely with this service to resolve any concerns. Detailed records are maintained at the home of the complaint, action taken and the outcome. Young people confirm that they are provided with information and are confident that staff will listen to their concerns and take the appropriate action to address and resolve them. Young people are kept informed of the action being taken about any complaint they make. In addition a representative from an independent advocacy service is a regular visitor to the home. There continues to be evidence to show that the advocacy service is effectively used.

Staff demonstrate an excellent awareness of the safeguarding procedures and a knowledge and understanding of the implementation of these procedures in their day-to-day work. Regular training takes place to ensure that staff have up to date knowledge. Good links and strong relationships continue to be maintained with professionals who are involved in the protection and safeguarding of young people. In addition to the information provided by the staff, advice and guidance is provided from a range of professional such as the police, fire service and youth offending team to support and encourage young people to keep themselves safe.

The welfare of young people is safeguarded because robust systems are in place to

ensure that young people are protected from bullying. Staff demonstrate a good awareness of the need to create an anti-oppressive environment and to tackle any issues of bullying immediately. The Registered Manager carries out detailed pre-admission assessments to identify any areas of concern which may impact on the other young people living at the home. Staff are fully aware of the plans and strategies in place. Young people state that they feel safe at the home and are confident that any issues would be immediately dealt with by staff.

Staff are fully aware of the procedure to follow in the event of a young person going absent without consent. Risk assessments clearly identify the risks, timescales and circumstances for reporting a young person missing to the police. Excellent links continue to be in place with the local police service. Young people state that they are happy at the home, however, on occasions, some young people are absent from the home without permission. The Registered Manager is committed to addressing this concern. She is providing a range of specialist support services to young people. The Registered Manager ensures that all professionals involved with the young people take an active role to put strategies in place and to regularly review care plans in order to safeguard and support the young people.

The young people benefit from a stable and committed management and staff team. Staff provide young people with an excellent child focused, caring and consistent environment. The atmosphere at the home is relaxed and calm. Behaviour is managed well, staff understand and know the young people they care for. They are able to demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of the detailed behaviour management plans and strategies in place for managing individual behaviours, which can be challenging and difficult at times. They have the appropriate skills to defuse situations, resulting in restraint techniques being rarely used. Appropriate records are maintained in the event of a restraint taking place. Young people are encouraged to discuss the incident and share their views and feeling. Sanction records are regularly monitored by the Registered Manager who continually assesses the effectiveness of the sanctions imposed. If required she will discuss with the staff and young person involved and review or amend the sanction given.

Young people's protection is further supported by good health and safety routines. Health and safety records continue to be well maintained. Excellent systems are in place to ensure that detailed risk assessments are completed for all the activities that young people participate in. All other risk assessments are regularly updated and reviewed to include the building, fire and individual assessments. Regular fire tests and drills take place and equipment is checked and serviced within the required timescales.

The Registered Manager is able to demonstrate a good understanding of the recruitment process. She takes an active role in the appointment of staff and is appropriately trained in safe recruitment. A sample of recruitment files for staff employed in the provider's five children's homes were examined at the Human Resources department during July 2010. Records are well maintained of staff Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks and a system to ensure that they are renewed every three years is in place. All files contain application forms, a full work history,

CRB checks and reference requests. Action has been taken to address any shortfalls. All visitors to the home are signed in and where appropriate identification is requested. The provider ensures that the recruitment policy is effectively implemented and this protects and safeguards 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 not judged.