

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 is a brick built detached three storey building. There is a kitchen, dining lounge, lounge, an office with sleeping facilities for staff, two single bedrooms for the young people and a bathroom. At the rear of the building is a small garden.

The home is on the edge of a town centre and is on the bus route servicing the town and outlying areas. In the local community there are shops, schools, health, leisure and employment facilities.

The home provides placements to young people aged eight years to 17 years who have a history that encompasses placement breakdowns, and emotional and behavioural problems.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

This was an unannounced full inspection focusing upon 25 key national minimum standards (NMS) under the Every Child Matters outcomes for children and young people.

A young person has taken part in this inspection.

Staff give high importance to guiding and ensuring a healthy life style is promoted with young people. This is being achieved through providing access to a wide range of health care professionals. The staff also receive training in a number of the relevant areas, giving them knowledge to pick up on and address areas of concern around young people's health.

Young people's welfare and safety continues to be robustly promoted by staff. Stringent protection measures assist in keeping young people safe. There are specific and detailed plans in place to ensure this happens. Managing behaviour positively is a significant strength at the home. Having a consistent staff team who have implemented clear boundaries with young people supports the success the young people achieve in this area. Immense progress is being made by young people in attending and undertaking education programmes. Staff have excellent communication skills which assists them significantly in their work with young people. There are comprehensive monitoring systems in place. Each of these areas supports young people to make continued progress in their lives.

The short fall found relates to the service not achieving the target of 80% of staff having achieved a National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were no actions or recommendations raised at the previous inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Staff give high importance to guiding and assisting young people to eat a nutritious and balanced diet. The menu includes a variety of healthy food options which young people are involved in planning each week. A young person said they are encouraged to eat healthy and there is always fresh fruit and vegetables available for snacks and meals. Therefore, young people are actively given information and encouraged to eat healthily.

The health needs of young people are identified and services rigorously pursued to ensure that their good health is promoted and maintained. The staff have initiated and accessed a wealth of professionals to gain advice and guidance for young people. This ensures they support young people appropriately. Young people said that the staff fully support them to attend health appointments. These include the looked after nurse and professionals to support the emotional and mental health needs of young people. Therefore, young people have access to the appropriate healthcare professionals to meet their individual needs.

There is a range of policies and procedures relating to health care areas that offer guidance for staff working with the young people. This ensures that young people receive good care that actively promotes their well-being and health.

The staff make sure that good practices occur to ensure that young people's medication is administered, stored and recorded safely through the home's policies and procedures. All staff have received first aid training and those staff administering medication are suitably trained. Regular monitoring of the medication system and frequent monitoring of first aid stocks takes place within the home.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Young people have their privacy and confidentiality respected. The identity of visitors is checked and files are stored securely. There is space in the home should young people want time away from other people, and young people have exclusive use of a bathroom.

The young people are fully aware of how to complain. Staff explain the complaints

procedure to young people on their admission to the home. Information on how to make a complaint is included in the young people's guide. A number of compliments have been received from family members about the good care the staff have provided to their children. Complaints have been made by a neighbour and a young person since the last inspection. Records show that immediate action has been taken to address these and the full outcome of the complaints are recorded. This indicates concerns raised are taken very seriously.

Young people's welfare continues to be robustly promoted. There are stringent protection measures in place to keep young people safe. All staff have child protection training and receive refresher training in this area annually. They can verbalise the procedures to show they are clear about individual protection strategies and protocols to follow for each young person in their care.

Bullying is not an issue at the home at this time. Young people stated that there is a zero-tolerance approach to bullying either within or outside of the home.

Staff are pro-active in persuading young people not to run away from the home, but where these episodes occur they endeavour to keep in touch with young people and facilitate their safe return. Young people are aware of the circumstances when they will be reported missing. There are appropriate, detailed and clear procedures to follow to protect each young person when they go missing without authority. The number of incidents of young people going missing have significantly reduced. The staff undertake individual work with young people to discuss their actions. This is to assist in keeping them safe in the future.

Managing behaviour positively is a significant strength at the home. Having a consistent staff team who have implemented clear boundaries with young people supports the success the young people achieve in this area.

Young people are involved in the decision making process to determine the incentives and rewards put in place. This empowers them and assists in their commitment to succeed in this area. Therefore, encouraging and supporting individual young people's positive behaviour.

The sanctions and restraint records record the required information. These have been monitored and reviewed by the manager and discussed within the staff meetings to ensure those sanctions used are appropriate and effective.

Young people's safety is highly enhanced through the practices and support from staff. The home provides physical safety and security. For example, there are detailed risk assessments in place, which cover the relevant areas and supporting safety measures. They are reviewed and updated where necessary on a frequent basis.

Fire records indicate that frequent checks on the system and appropriate fire safety training, instruction and drills have taken place. All health and safety areas are monitored by the manager on a monthly basis. Therefore, appropriate measures are

in place to keep young people safe.

Staff recruitment files have not been checked on this inspection. However, there are robust vetting and recruitment procedures in place which helps to ensure all staff employed are suitable to work with young people.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The young people receive excellent individual support from the staff and wealth of professionals. This assists them to make progress in their lives. The professionals involved with young people include; those assisting young people with emotional and behaviour difficulties. Young people also benefit from excellent links with field social workers and school tutors.

Education is vigorously promoted for all young people. There has been immense progress in engaging young people in full-time education programmes. There are facilities at the home to enable the completion of homework. The young people use the homes computer and internet café for educational and leisure purposes. The young people and staff have undertaken training in how to use the internet safely. Therefore, the education of young people is actively promoted and valued as part of their preparation for adulthood.

The home promotes the hobbies and interests for young people very well. Young people have been on a number of trips and individual activities. Examples include baking, swimming, cinema, bowling, walks, and trips to the coast. A young person said they are really looking forward to going on holiday at half term and plan to go bowling with a friend from school.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Close attention is paid to ensuring that placement plans fully reflect young people's needs. Staff present young people with plenty of opportunity to be involved in this process and they have regular opportunities to discuss their needs with staff. Specific requirements in relation to diversity and equality are also incorporated into the overall plan of care. Care plans and behaviour management strategies have been reviewed and updated at regular intervals to ensure young people's care is relevant and sets out accurately how their individual needs will be met to assist in them making progress in their lives. A young person said they have seen their care plan and can read this at anytime.

A rigorous and systematic review process is effective in highlighting young people's progress and in identifying any shortfalls or concerns. Frequent progress reports are compiled and sent to the young person's social worker and family to keep them fully informed of the young person's progress.

Staff ensure that at the monthly staff meeting each young person's care plan is discussed, reviewed and appropriate changes made to support their progress. The home also measures the outcomes for young people within the Every Child Matters areas. All of these actions support each young person significantly in making progress in their lives.

Contact with families is recognised as an important aspect of a young person's life and a means by which young people can have a positive sense of identity reinforced. A young person said the staff have given support and assisted in their family contact being increased.

Staff have frequent dialogue with young people about their care, needs and wishes. They have the opportunity to participate in their review meetings. This allows them to voice any views about their own future or any concerns they may have to the independent reviewing officer.

Positive empowerment is promoted within the home to assist young people to make decisions about their lives and the running of the home. Staff are committed and have built strong relationships with young people. This is evident in the way staff explain the work they are undertaking with young people and the way they speak to each other, with respect. Young people are involved in making decisions about the food they eat, incentives, rewards, activities and equipment in the home.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people are being well supported to develop independent living skills appropriate to their age and understanding. They are involved in a wide range of areas and undertake practical daily living tasks. These include; preparing and cooking of some meals, cleaning chores, processing their own laundry, and learning budgeting skills. A young person said that they enjoy cooking and baking.

The accommodation is decorated and furnished to a good standard, providing a positive, modern and domestic environment for the young people to live in. The home is clean and tidy and well maintained. Young people's bedrooms are suitably equipped and furnished and they have keys to their bedrooms. The kitchen and lounge have been decorated and refurbished since the last inspection. A young person is currently choosing the wallpaper, paint and new furniture for their bedroom to be re-decorated.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The home provides any referring professional with comprehensive information about the home in the form of the Statement of Purpose. Young people are equally well

informed through a good children's guide that helps to familiarise them with what they can expect from the service. Young people are clear and aware of expectations and the rules of the home.

Young people receive care from competent and experienced staff who can meet their needs. The staff team benefit from having an excellent communication system in place. This occurs through formal supervision at frequent intervals, monthly staff meetings and daily shift handovers. These communication systems support and guide staff in promoting young people's welfare and safety very well. Staff said they are a strong team who work extremely well together. They spoke about their work with young people with enthusiasm and commitment. These support systems assist the staff team in providing a consistent care approach to young people.

All staff are trained in a wide variety of safety and childcare subjects. An ongoing programme of regular refresher training is provided in a range of subjects to enhance the staff team's competency to meet the needs of the young people. The majority of staff have a NVQ or are registered on an appropriate course and they are given good support to complete it. However, the target of 80% of staff having achieved NVQ at level 3 in caring for children and young people is not currently met.

Staff training includes such areas; legislation relating to children, children leaving care, race awareness and NVQ at level 3 as a teaching assistant.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Young people's cultural and religious needs are taken into account throughout the care planning and review process. Staff have an excellent understanding of individual needs and ensure that these are met on a practical level.

Robust monitoring system is in place. These include monthly monitoring visits undertaken by the provider to check how care is provided in the home. In conjunction with this, the manager monitors in further detail the care and service provided to the young people.

In addition, parents and young people complete questionnaires to indicate their views on the quality of care provided to them. Parents have made very positive comments on the care provided to their child. The staff monitor closely the progress of each young person each month. Therefore, there is excellent monitoring of the welfare, safety and quality of care provided for the young people in the home.

Young people's individual case files are confidentially stored and are arranged in a manner which makes them readily accessible to staff. This upholds young people's privacy and confidentiality. One young person said that they are aware that they can access their files and have done so. The files examined are very well maintained and organised.

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 the minimum ratios of 80% of all care staff complete their National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People. (NMS 29)