

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Julian Mason
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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

Generally, the home provides care for up to four young people between the ages of nine to 17 years on a medium to long-term basis. However, in certain circumstances the home can accommodate young people over the age of 17. The property is a large, detached Victorian family house set in its own grounds in a quiet residential area within walking distance of a local shopping centre. The aim of the home is to offer individualised support designed to achieve stability and to prepare for independence where identified. Education can be provided by a range of local schools or by the company's own school. Therapeutic provision is also available to young people as identified within their placement plans.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This was a full unannounced inspection that focused on key national minimum standards. Three young people were living at the home and were present during part of the visit. Two young people participated in some of the inspection process.

The overall judgement for this service is good with some outstanding features. The Registered Manager and staff team are focused and committed to managing the home in a way that best suits the group of young people accommodated. Each young person is receiving very individualised care and support that successfully promotes their personal and social development. Also, contact with family and friends is supported very well because staff are flexible and responsive to young people's needs and arrangements. Young people are able to make meaningful contributions to the running of the home because staff listen to what they have to say and shape day-to-day routines in response to this feedback.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last inspection, one requirement and one recommendation were made which related to fire prevention training and making available a copy of the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures to staff within the home. Both of these areas have been addressed.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Each young person is receiving the support they need in relation to their health and well-being. Staff ensure that they listen to young people and that they respond in a timely and practical way to any health-related needs or concerns. This approach is supported by comprehensive monitoring to ensure that young people's good health is maintained. Risks are discussed in a sensitive and practical way to ensure young people can make informed choices about their own health. When health or well-being concerns are raised, young people also benefit from a non-judgemental approach being taken by staff that focuses on helping to achieve healthier outcomes.

Young people are provided with practical help and support regarding their food choices and what they eat. Staff monitor young people's overall fitness and they provide sensitive and practical guidance about diet and exercise. Staff are actively involved in helping young people to keep fit, making good use of local facilities and resources. Young people are involved in food shopping, menu planning and cooking which provide opportunities for discussion and debate with staff about healthy eating.

Young people's medication is safely administered and stored properly. Records demonstrate that medication is being administered according to individual prescription instructions. Staff receive training in a number of health-related areas and parental consents are signed to allow carers to act in the best interests of young people if needed. Young people benefit from staff being well trained and having good administration practices that meet their individual health needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people's safety and protection are supported by a range of organisational policies and procedures that help guide the staff team in providing a safe residential service. This includes working in partnership with other professionals and notifying necessary agencies about significant events that impact on young people's safety. The manager ensures that staff are equipped and trained with the necessary knowledge and understanding to fulfil their safeguarding role and responsibilities. In addition, young people are provided with staff who have been properly checked and vetted before they start work in the home. These arrangements ensure that young people's welfare is positively and consistently promoted.

Staff know how to keep young people safe as the home's records consistently detail discussions and actions that relate to each young person's circumstances and needs. Staff understand the need to respond appropriately to complaints from young people, to work within the child protection and Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures and to promote a bullying-free environment. Young people and staff know that bullying is not tolerated and staff respond in an effective and timely way

to counter this kind behaviour. Young people's privacy and confidentiality are respected. For instance, staff understand the importance of keeping personal information securely and providing unrestricted access to a phone so young people can talk to people in private.

Young people's safety continues to be a high priority when their whereabouts are unknown because staff work diligently to gain their safe return to the home. Staff have good links with other services to ensure a coordinated approach is taken to promote young people's protection and safety. Young people are actively discouraged from having time away from the home without permission.

Interactions between staff and young people are supportive and based on providing clear, realistic and fair behavioural boundaries. Staff are trained in specific behaviour management strategies and techniques. Records demonstrate that very few physical interventions have been used since the last inspection. Young people are rewarded for positive behaviour and where necessary staff use a range of sanctions as a consequence for poor behaviour. The manager monitors the use of the behaviour management systems to ensure staff practice is in line with the home's policies and individually agreed plans of care. Where staff practices are not consistent with agreed strategies and approved interventions, proportionate action is taken by managers which match safeguarding policies and procedures.

The management of health and safety processes is good which helps to protect young people from the risk of harm or injury. The home's equipment and utilities are regularly serviced. Fire safety tests are carried out that include fire drills and everyone is involved in practice evacuations of the building. Young people's safety is further protected by the use of recorded assessments to inform staff about risks and how to promote safe daily living. The home is currently accommodating a young adult and staff are working in a way that accounts for these circumstances. However, care and support routines are not underpinned by any written assessments so it is hard to know if staff are doing everything necessary to keep risks to a minimum.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are provided with a wide range of support that is tailored to help each individual in their daily lives and future plans. This is because staff get to know young people very well and this helps them to develop supportive, caring relationships that are based on individual needs. Young people are encouraged to freely express their wishes and requirements and this forms part of the home's daily routines. This results in staff providing very flexible support that is shaped to suit each young person's circumstances.

Young people also benefit from having regular one-to-one time with their key workers so they can talk about the things that are important to them. Key worker relationships are very positive and make a significant contribution to the progress and development of each young person. Young people appreciate and value their

key worker relationships and identify this as a very positive aspect of living at the home.

Staff are knowledgeable and very aware of young people's backgrounds and family histories and this helps to shape how each individual is supported to develop their own identity and independence. Staff operate in a non-discriminatory way and understand the importance of promoting social inclusion and the need to challenge any form of discrimination. The manager is continually assessing risks to determine levels of staff supervision and free time away from the home. These assessments help staff to individualise how each young person is supported to progress and develop.

Young people are treated as individuals with different needs so the home's support for their education is very different. Young people are either attending school, college or engaged in vocational training. The value of learning and training is promoted well which means young people receive positive messages of support and encouragement. The manager and staff team take an active interest in all arrangements to ensure placements remain suitable and appropriate.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Young people have placement plans which are used alongside other information to ensure staff are fully informed about individual needs. The information is comprehensive and details the support required to help staff meet individual needs and manage risks safely. A strength of the home's arrangements is the way in which young people are fully involved in care planning and day-to-day arrangements. Consultation processes are broad and frequent; young people have regular time with staff to talk about their progress and any problems. In addition, young people have their say in more formal reviews of their care which involve other professionals and family members where appropriate. The home's records comprehensively evidence young people's views and how staff respond to this feedback in shaping the care and support they provide.

Young people are fully supported to stay in touch with significant people in their lives. The home's records demonstrate that contact arrangements are clearly defined including any agreed restrictions. Young people benefit from living in a home that places a high priority on helping them to stay in touch with those people who are included in their plans. In addition, young people are provided with the right support when they move in or leave the home. Staff are sensitive and aware of the need to listen to young people and this attitude fits with the home's wider approach of consultation and involving young people in their living arrangements.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people are provided with homely, well-furnished accommodation. The house is domestic in size and style with adequate space and facilities for shared or private time. Staff ensure that the home is kept clean and tidy. Young people are encouraged to personalise their own rooms with pictures, posters and photographs. They feel comfortable in their surroundings and are regularly involved in household chores and domestic routines which help to develop their life skills or planned preparation for leaving care and independence.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Young people are being looked after by a diverse team of staff with a range of different experiences, qualifications and skills. The team work in a positive and effective way to ensure young people's needs are being met and that beneficial outcomes are achieved. The Registered Manager provides supportive and knowledgeable leadership to the staff team regarding the aims and objectives of the service. Staff receive practical day-to-day support and guidance that is matched to young people's plans and arrangements. The Statement of Purpose includes all the necessary information required to describe what the home provides. A young person's guide is also available in an appropriate format to help explain what can be expected from the home.

The home's staffing arrangements are organised around young people's needs and changing circumstances. This demonstrates that the staff team are flexible and work in partnership with each other for the benefit of young people. Staff effectively share information so the changing shift teams provide continuity of care and have an awareness of young people's current priorities. Staff have access to a good range of training and some team members have achieved a National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Young people benefit from living in a home where the Registered Manager and staff team are committed to meeting the different needs of each young person. Staff are well informed about young people's needs in relation to their identity and backgrounds and they are fully aware of how to help and support them in a fair and non-judgemental way.

The Registered Manager has clear organisational processes in place to monitor and audit the quality of care being provided. Very good monthly monitoring reports are produced by someone independent of the home's staff team that summarise key areas of the home's operation. In particular, the reports provide a reflective account of the visitor's interactions with young people and how they are being cared for. Managers take an active role in the evaluation of the service and the impact the home is having on outcomes for each young person. Young people's case files are

kept securely and contain the necessary range of information about their development and progress.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Std.	Action	Due date
26	ensure unnecessary risks from adults living in the home to the health or safety of children are identified and so far as possible eliminated. (Regulation 23(c))	31/10/2010