

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Susan Mullin
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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

This children's home provides care and accommodation for up to five children, of either sex, aged from eight years to 17 years, who have a learning disability. One-to-one care and supervision is provided for the young people because of their high levels of need.

The home is a large detached house in an area of mixed residential and commercial property. Each young person has their own bedroom. The home provides two waking staff during the night. There is a small parking area at the front of the property and a separate garden area, which is equipped for the young people's recreation. The home is set on the outskirts of the town centre and there are adequate schooling, leisure and shopping facilities in this area.

There were five young people resident in the home on the day of inspection and for most of the visit, all were at their educational placement. When two returned they were unable to contribute to this inspection due to their profound learning disabilities.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

At this full, unannounced inspection, all the key national minimum standards were inspected. The recommendations made at the previous inspection were followed up and details of these are outlined in the improvements section of this report.

This is an outstanding service. Young people's welfare is enhanced by the positive relationships that exist between staff and young people and between parents of young people and staff. There is a strong focus on meeting the needs of each individual young person, including supporting and encouraging them to attend full-time education. The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding throughout the standards inspected. Meaningful behaviour management plans are consistently adhered to by all staff members and risk assessments are robust and very specific to individual young people's vulnerabilities. Record keeping throughout is easy to cross reference, up to date and very comprehensive

The home is very effectively managed and young people benefit from a caring and competent staff team. The majority of the current group of young people have lived in the home for a number of years, with few staff changes. This enables the young people to be looked after in a very stable and consistent environment by staff who know them exceptionally well.

No actions or recommendations have been made at this inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

Four recommendations made at the last inspection have been fully met. These included ensuring a certificate of insurance is displayed with the service details on, updating the Statement of Purpose with the experience of care staff, reviewing the staff training system and ensuring that there is a comprehensive transition plan in place for young people. All of these have been addressed. However, the transition plans do not detail fully the needs of young people suffering from profound learning disabilities but additional information is recorded in the supplementary information retained in the records.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The food provided for the young people shows that the staff have a very good understanding of what makes up a good balanced diet and they put this in to practice. Menu planning is adventurous, integrates culturally appropriate food and encourages young people to try new dishes. Individual's dietary needs and preferences are explored and very well provided for.

Healthy living and good health care continue to be strongly promoted at this home by a well-informed staff team. Staff recognise their responsibility to meet primary health care needs for young people, which results in their physical, emotional and social development needs being effectively met. All staff have first aid training and are able to treat minor injuries and illnesses. All accidents and illnesses are logged and the record is regularly monitored by senior staff.

The administration of medication is organised, efficiently and safely and there is a newly established, dedicated medication room. A clear protocol on administering prescribed and non prescribed medication is available for staff and makes it clear who has responsibility for the safe storage and management of medication. Medication administration record charts have been completed in line with regulations. Controlled drugs are stored safely and these are checked by the Registered Manager on a weekly and monthly basis.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The privacy of young people is respected by staff and there is space where they can relax and easily find privacy away from others if they wish. Staff ensure the privacy and dignity of the young people, for example, they keep bathroom and toilet doors shut when young people are receiving personal care. All records are kept confidentially and young people's issues are not discussed openly.

The safety and rights of both staff and young people are protected and all staff receive training on safeguarding young people as part of their induction and then at regular intervals. All staff are aware of the bullying policy, although they feel that bullying does not occur in the home due to the nature of the young people and the high staffing levels. There are no incidents of young people going missing from the home. The high staffing levels, staff competence and the security in and outside the building ensure young people are safe.

The behaviour management plans are comprehensive and reviewed regularly and known by all staff. Staff effectively manage challenging behaviour in a calm and professional manner. High staffing levels, staff competence and comprehensive risk assessments ensure the safety of the young people who stay at this home. Sanctions are not applied due to the level of young people's understanding. The staff always offer verbal praise at every opportunity, which encourages positive behaviour. All staff undergo training, which includes de-escalation techniques as well as physical intervention. There is a minimal amount of physical intervention carried out and records seen were very well maintained.

The home has comprehensive risk assessments for all aspects of safety of the premises and grounds, including fire and young people's behaviour and activities. These assessments have taken into account the daily activities in and outside the home. All staff are given fire safety training and fire drills are carried out regularly and recorded. Fire safety equipment is checked as appropriate and a detailed record kept. Young people are protected by robust health and safety procedures.

Young people are protected by safe staff vetting procedures and the monitoring of visitors. Safety checks are completed and staff only commence employment, when they have a satisfactory Criminal Records Bureau disclosure and three satisfactory references, which are all followed up by a telephone call. All visitors sign into the setting only after showing satisfactory identification and then they are monitored while in the home.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Staff are positive in their approach to education and its value for young people. Staff work in partnership with schools to ensure consistency of practice and to enhance the quality of care provided. This is reinforced by exchanging written updates of achievements, attending review meetings and liaising with teachers.

Individual support is comprehensively detailed in each young person's placement plan. Observations and discussions with staff demonstrate that staff ensure each young person's individual needs are fully addressed. The strength of the home lies in the staff team, who know the young people well and are very knowledgeable about their individual needs and the implications these have for their care.

Staff provide a variety of activities for young people, including trips out to local places of interest and within the home there is a variety of art and craft materials, games, books and DVDs. The garden provides a safe and secure space for young people to enjoy with swings and a trampoline. All activities are well planned, risk assessed and carried out to ensure the young people are able to enjoy the activity safely. Young people are able to pursue their particular interests, develop confidence in their skills and are supported by competent staff to engage in leisure and educational activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Young people have a placement plan which is used alongside other information to ensure the home's staff are fully informed about individual needs. The available information is of a good quality and details the support required resulting from assessments of individual needs and risks. Case files contain a range of information including weekly and monthly reports that provide an overview of events, routines and how the home is supporting young people.

Young people's reviews are effectively managed. They are encouraged, where possible, to participate in their review meetings. Staff use imaginative materials, such as symbols and photos, to illustrate day-to-day activities. For example following a recent trip to an adventure park, photographs show clearly how the young people enjoyed themselves.

Young people are able to maintain valued relationships with family and friends as staff support and help facilitate contact visits in and away from the home. Information in case files details who young people can speak to and see. The home always actively meets these arrangements, as staff know how significant family contact is to young people.

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 and observe young people. Young people are given good support when they arrive and leave the home and these routines are based around individual needs and circumstances. Staff understand that moving home can be very difficult for some young people and they provide appropriate support and reassurance during these times.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people, where able, are encouraged by staff to develop their independence, thus providing them with confidence and skills that will support their future wellbeing. Transitional arrangements for young people to be cared for by adult care services are a significant issue for young people, their parents and the agencies involved. Key workers continue to ensure that transitional review meetings are

planned well in advance and reports are available to appropriately represent the young person's care needs. Young people and their parents are fully involved at all stages of the arrangements to leave the service.

This service enables young people to meet friends and new people and lets them experience different activities. Staff provide support for young people to be involved in a wide range of community based activities, which are easily accessible due to the location of the service.

The home is domestic in style and appearance and is friendly and welcoming. The standard and quality of the furnishings are good and meet the needs of the young people placed. Staff and young people take great pride in the upkeep of the house which is very clean, homely and welcoming.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The Statement of Purpose is current and staff understand the key principles of providing a quality service that takes account of the needs of the young person and the whole family or carer. Young people are provided with a user-friendly guide in a pictorial format, which staff spend time going through with them.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding and the staff ensure that each young person is seen as an individual and is treated as such. Evidence supports a strong commitment to improving equality and diversity in practice.

Staff development is supported by the organisation and all training requirements are fully met. Over 80% of staff have completed a National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in the Care of Children and Young People.

Young people are cared for by a qualified and competent staff team. Young people also continue to benefit because there is a highly skilled, caring and committed staff team working at the home. They are very enthusiastic and motivated by their enjoyment of working with young people and watching them progress. The team work well together and possess the skills that they need to look after this client group well. They know the needs of individuals well and how they should be met, ensuring that exceptionally good quality care is delivered.

The staff team work on a rota basis and this ensures the needs of all the young people placed are met. There are enough staff on duty at all times to provide safe care and staff have opportunities to spend quality time with the young people. The rota is amended according to holidays, term time and weekend need. It is also adjusted depending upon the needs of the young people placed together.

The Registered Manager ensures effective monitoring of the home, which is evidenced by the regular signing of records as well as a monthly report. A senior member of the organisation also visits the home on a monthly basis and reports on the conduct of the home. These reports include discussions with staff and

observations of practice. Young people's records are kept in good order and reflect all the information necessary for staff to care and support them throughout their placement.