

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Katarina Djordjevic
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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 part of the provision operated by the local authority. The home provides care for up to two young people aged between 12 and 17-years-old who have significant, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is a semi-detached property, which is indistinguishable from its neighbours. The young people are able to access local leisure activities in the immediate neighbourhood and staff provide transport to take the young people to those facilities that are at a distance. On the ground floor there is a kitchen/diner, toilet and lounge. On the first floor there are three bedrooms and a bathroom. Young people have their own separate bedrooms and the third bedroom is used as an office as well as a staff sleeping-in room. There is an enclosed garden at the rear for activities and to the front of the home is a parking area for the staff members and visitors.

Two young people were living at the home at the time of this inspection and contributed to the inspection.

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. The purpose of the visit was to assess the quality of care provided for young people, in line with statutory requirements. All key standards were inspected and standards 15, 21, 28, 32 and 34 were also inspected. The outcome groups relating to being healthy, staying safe, and economic well-being are judged as good. Enjoying and achieving, positive contribution and organisation are judged as outstanding.

This is a good service with many outstanding features. Young people feel safe and enjoy living at the home. They receive a very good level of care based on their individual assessed needs. This can be attributed to a highly skilled and committed staff team who constantly strive to improve the quality of care provided to young people. The Registered Manager who has been in post since August 2010 has already demonstrated clear leadership and direction which is valued by the staff team. Excellent relationships exist between young people and staff which helps young people learn, grow and develop in a nurturing environment. There are good systems to protect young people from the risk of harm and abuse. Care records are of a very good standard and young people are actively involved in producing their placement plans and risk assessments.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were no actions set at the last inspection. Two recommendations were made to include the telephone number of Ofsted in the young person's guide and to give young people the opportunity to discuss incidents and record young people's views. These have been completed.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The promotion of a healthy lifestyle for young people is seen as important by staff. Staff receive a variety of training which enables them to meet the health and cultural needs of young people. The training includes basic first aid, food hygiene, diet and nutrition values, working with young people with mental health issues and the administration of medication. Staff work closely with other agencies to ensure young people's needs are met and that their good health is promoted.

Procedures are in place to ensure that medicines are appropriately handled and stored to safeguard young people's welfare. Records of medication administered and disposed of, are kept. An inspection of young people's medication administration records (MAR) identified in one instance that the details on the MAR sheet did not correspond with the directions on the dispensing label. However, in this particular instance this did not pose a risk of harm to the young person. Where home remedies are used, MAR sheets do not always give the frequency that the medication should be given. Practices and records are checked regularly by staff and the Registered Manager which helps to safeguard young people.

Young people receive a varied and well-balanced diet which they enjoy. Young people are consulted about the menus which reflect their likes and specific dietary needs. For example, there is always a vegetarian option. Menus include a wide range of meals from different countries and to broaden young people's knowledge and experiences theme days/nights are held. These enable young people and staff to learn about other countries' traditions and prepare food from that particular country. Young people take an active part in shopping and the cooking of meals. Meal times are relaxed social occasions where young people and staff interact positively. Staff use these opportunities to discuss various issues including how to stay safe where it is deemed appropriate.

Young people's physical, emotional and health needs are clearly identified and services are provided to meet them. Care records are of a very good standard and are regularly reviewed. Staff work closely with other agencies to ensure young people's health needs are met. Staff work hard to support young people to access different health advisory and support services to ensure their physical and emotional needs are met. This includes providing young people with information and guidance on health issues, including diet, sexual health, personal hygiene and drugs awareness.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Keeping young people safe and protected from the risk of harm and abuse is at the forefront of staff practice. Staff are totally committed to enabling young people grow and develop the necessary skills to keep themselves safe and to take responsibility for their actions. Young people are supported to take controlled risks in a nurturing environment, which helps them develop their self-confidence and keep themselves safe in preparation for adulthood. As a result, young people live in a safe and secure environment.

There are a range of safeguarding policies and procedures in place which staff fully understand and are competent at implementing. This helps to promote the well-being of young people and protect them from the risk of harm or abuse.

Furthermore, staff receive a range of training which increases their abilities to meet the needs of young people including keeping them safe. Training includes: child protection; complaints; health and safety and behaviour management. The home has detailed safeguarding procedures and has on line access to the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures. Staff fully understand their responsibilities in reporting any concerns, which helps to protect young people from the risk of harm or abuse.

Staff work closely with other agencies to minimise the risk of harm or abuse to young people. Young people are informed from the start in the young people's welcome booklet, and as part of the admission procedure that bullying is not tolerated.

Bullying is included in individual risk assessments where there is an identified risk. Staffing levels enable close monitoring of young people's behaviours which helps to reduce the risk of bullying. Young people said that bullying is not at issue. Clear procedures and practices to deal with unauthorised absence help to protect young people from the risk of harm and abuse. Risk assessments are carried out for each young person. Relevant people are kept informed and detailed records kept when a young person goes missing. Staff discuss the dangers of going missing with young people when young people return to the home. Young people have mobile phones and they are encouraged to keep in contact with staff when they go out on their own.

Young people are further protected by, a clear and easily accessible complaints procedure which they fully understand, and open and positive relationships with staff. Young people know how to complain and will raise any concerns they may have. Where concerns are raised, these are taken seriously and acted upon promptly. Records are kept of complaints, concerns and grumbles received and give clear details of actions taken. However, records do not always state if the complainant is satisfied with the outcome. Staff engage positively with the local neighbourhood to resolve any concerns they raise. Where young people's behaviour impacts on the local community, staff work hard with the young people to enable them to change the negative behaviours. This helps young people become accepted members of the community. Young people also have access to an independent advocate.

Young people's privacy and dignity are respected which helps them feel valued. Young people's information is kept securely and confidentiality is maintained. Young people are not allowed in the staff office which helps to maintain confidentiality.

Excellent relationships exist between young people and staff which helps staff work positively with young people. Staff are totally committed to enabling young people to change unacceptable behaviours and develop socially acceptable behaviours in preparation for adulthood and being part of the wider community. The emphasis is on recognising and rewarding good behaviour including progress made in changing unacceptable behaviours. Individual behaviour management plans are in place which helps to ensure that staff work in a consistent and safe manner with young people. A number of reward initiatives are in place to encourage positive behaviour and development. There are effective monitoring and support systems in place which enables the Registered Manager to ensure that the management of young people's behaviour is appropriate, consistent and safe. The use of sanctions is minimal and young people said that they think sanctions are fair. Restraint is rarely used which is testament to the skills of the staff team. Detailed records are kept of restraints. The Registered Manager meets with the young person after any incident which helps them to reflect on their behaviour and the impact it has on themselves and others, and realise the consequences. The Registered Manager also meets with the staff involved to reflect on actions taken and to ascertain if the situation could have been managed differently.

The management of health and safety is good which helps to protect young people from the risk of harm or injury. Staff receive appropriate training in health and safety including fire safety awareness. Equipment and installations are serviced at the required intervals. Fire alarm tests are carried out weekly and regular fire drills take place. The fire evacuation procedure is explained to young people on admission which helps to protect them from the risk of harm and injury.

Staff recruitment details were not available for inspection during this visit. However, discussions with the Registered Manager supports that robust recruitment practices are implemented. Recorded evidence confirmed that all staff had received an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

All young people are given a high level of individual support and guidance from a committed staff team. Staff truly believe that young people should be given every opportunity and support to achieve their full potential in life. Care is based on individual assessed needs which takes into account their abilities, gender, religious, racial, cultural and linguistic needs. Practice at the home is based on a culture of mutual respect which results in excellent relationships between young people and staff. The staff team have an in-depth knowledge of young people's needs. Support and encouragement is given to each young person which enables them to pursue their particular interests, achieve and develop confidence in their skills. Individual risk

assessments are in place and young people are supported to take controlled risks, appropriate to their age and abilities. Risk assessments are reviewed regularly. Staff work closely with a range of other agencies to ensure young people's needs are being met.

Education and helping young people prepare for employment is regarded as important by staff at the home. Young people are encouraged and supported to achieve their full potential academically, socially and as part of their development into adulthood. Staff work closely with local education services and young people's education is based on their individual learning needs. Practical and emotional support is given to young people to access further education courses and seek employment. Support is given by staff to enable young people to develop skills in terms of applying for jobs. Young people's care files contain personal education plans, a statement of special educational needs and copies of school reports.

Young people are provided with, and enjoy a good range of activities based on likes, interests and needs including health and learning needs. Risk assessments are in place for trips and outside activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Staff work very hard to empower young people. Systems and practice in the home enable young people to make positive contributions to the running of the home and their future lives. This helps young people to feel valued, develop confidence and take control of their lives. Young people say they feel listened to and this was evident throughout this inspection. Young people are actively involved in the day-to-day running of the home, in the writing of their placement plans and risk assessments and encouraged to attend their review meetings.

All young people have individual files which contain looked after children (LAC) documents, placement plans, risk assessments and case records. Placement plans are based on the five outcomes of Every Child Matters (ECM) and also include a section on equality and diversity needs. Care records are of a very good standard giving clear details of individual needs and how to meet the needs. Young people are actively involved in drawing up and reviewing their placement plans. Their care files are personalised reflecting their individual identities, likes, interests and hobbies. Care files also contain photographs of young people engaged in different activities and certificates and stickers which acknowledge their achievements. All records are reviewed regularly and monthly summaries are produced based on the five ECM outcomes. This helps to monitor young people's well-being and progress and identify any additional needs.

Contact arrangements are clearly recorded to ensure that staff understand each young person's situation with regards to meeting with their family. Staff work hard to support young people to maintain valued relationships and provide both practical and emotional support.

There is a clear admission procedure and every effort is made to ensure that the admission of a young person is appropriate and a welcoming experience. Detailed referral information is carefully considered to ensure that the home can meet the needs of the young person and that they are compatible with the young people already living at the home. Young people are given the young person's welcome booklet prior to or on admission to the home. This gives good information about what to expect in the home, what is expected of them and what life is like in the home.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The ethos of the home is on enabling young people to adequately prepare for adulthood in all areas of life. This is based on individual needs, taking into account a young person's age, abilities and previous experiences. Associated risks are clearly identified and young people are educated and supported with managing these risks. Young people receive a good level of practical and emotional support from a highly committed staff team. Staff work closely with other outside agencies to enable young people to make as much progress as possible during their stay at the home. Staff recognise the importance of providing emotional support to young people during the time of transition. Pathway plans are in place and all young people work through the home's independence training programme.

Young people enjoy homely accommodation which is decorated and furnished to a good standard. The home is clean and well-maintained. Young people are encouraged and supported to personalise their bedrooms to reflect their individuality. There is a well-maintained garden at the rear which young people and staff made good use of.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The home's Statement of Purpose contains all the information required in Schedule 1 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001. This informs young people, their families and placing authorities about the services provided by the home. The Statement of Purpose accurately reflects the practice and registration conditions of this home. In consultation with young people, the young person's guide has recently been updated and each young person has received a copy. The guide is an excellent example of ensuring young people receive appropriate information in a format that is 'child friendly' and engages young people. The guide includes word searches, space for young people to include photographs and a section for young people to feedback to staff.

Young people receive a very good level of care based on their assessed needs from a committed and experienced staff team. The home was without a Registered Manager

from the end of March 2010 until August 2010 and staff received support from managers from the authority's other small group homes. It is testament to the commitment and skills of the staff team that they have continued to provide a good level of care to young people during this time. The recently appointed Registered Manager provides clear leadership and direction and has already established good support systems. Staff are well trained, feel well supported and receive regular supervision. All staff have the National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities which they carry out with enthusiasm and commitment. Staff work well as a team and they constantly strive to improve the quality of care provided to young people. Staffing levels are flexible dependent on the needs of the young people.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Staff receive a range of training on equality and diversity including cultural diversity, anti-discriminatory practice and disability discrimination. As a result, staff are able to help young people learn and understand about difference. Care provided is based on their individual needs which takes into account their age, abilities and disabilities, gender, race, religion and culture. Placement plans include equality and diversity needs. Young people are provided with various opportunities to experience and learn about other people's differences in terms of race, religion, culture, sex, age and disabilities.

The quality assurance systems are robust and effective which help to ensure young people's needs are being met. Excellent team work promotes shared ownership of responsibilities and therefore all staff are part of the day-to-day monitoring of standards and practices. The range of monitoring systems enables the Registered Manager to accurately assess the standard of care being provided and to ensure young people's needs are being met. Monthly Regulation 33 visits are carried out by a representative from the company and reports produced. Reports are sent to Ofsted as required. These visits complement the internal monitoring systems to ensure young people receive a good standard of care based on individual's assessed needs.

Young people's files contain all the necessary information as detailed in Schedule 3 of the Children's Homes Regulations, 2001, to inform staff about the needs of young people and how to meet their needs.

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
13	make suitable arrangements for the safe administration and	30/11/2010

	recording of any medicines received in the home. (Regulation 21 (1))	
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Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- include in the record of complaints if the complainant is satisfied with the outcome of the investigation. (NMS 16)