

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Monica Farrimond
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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 home provides accommodation for young people of both genders. Placements are usually planned for a medium- to long-term period. However, emergency placements can be considered. There is a facility to educate young people onsite if they are unable to maintain their current school placement. The building is a detached property and provides a good standard of accommodation. It is domestic in appearance and contains all the facilities associated with a domestic dwelling. It is located near to a small town and has easy access to transport, education, leisure and other community facilities.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

At this unannounced full inspection all key standards were inspected. Young people's welfare is enhanced by positive relationships that exist between experienced staff and young people, and between young people and their peers. Young people are encouraged to eat healthily, they are kept safe and they are provided with support from professional services outside the home. Staff are well supported by the manager, who is effective, enthusiastic, and has a strong commitment and focus on improvement. The promotion of equality and diversity is good throughout the standards inspected. No actions and no recommendations are made following this inspection, which reflects the high standard of care offered by this home.

Improvements since the last inspection

Recommendations made at the last inspection related to all aspects of physical restraint, including evaluation, recording incidents, and training for all staff on the use of restraint. These issues have been fully addressed, and all staff have received appropriate training in this area. Other areas highlighted for attention included development of placement plans, provision of a telephone for young people to make and receive calls in private and the suitability of age related DVDs found in the staff's office. These issues have also been addressed: placement plans reflect all recommendations in the regulations and standards, a telephone is available for young people to use in private and a new recording system for DVDs has been put into practice.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The young people enjoy healthy, nutritious meals whilst staying at the home. A weekly menu is devised, determined by the likes and dislikes of the young people, balanced alongside the provision of a healthy diet, which provides varied meals. Young people's choices of food are promoted and diversity is encouraged through sampling different cultural foods at local restaurants. The staff eat with the young people, enabling meals to be well-managed, sociable occasions. Fresh produce is used in the preparation of meals and fresh fruit and drinks are always available. All staff are trained in food hygiene; this ensures that staff's awareness of the importance of hygiene is raised.

The young people's health needs are identified in the local authority referral form and followed up at the first planning meeting. The manager and staff use this information to develop internal health plans. The home has a robust approach to meeting the health needs of young people. There is a commitment to ensuring that good health, across the board, is an important aspect of life, and staff work carefully and conscientiously with young people to promote sensible lifestyles. Healthy activities are encouraged; staff and young people are involved in the development and review of their health plans, ensuring consistency in the approach to such issues as alcohol, illegal drugs and sexual health. Young people's health and welfare is closely monitored by staff, together with young people, ensuring their good health is promoted.

Staff are trained in the administration of medication, and drug awareness, ensuring young people's health needs are safeguarded and promoted. All medication is stored securely, preventing young people from unnecessary access. Clear records ensure all medication is accountable, administered appropriately and disposed of safely. All staff are trained in first aid and can respond to minor injuries, prior to seeking professional medical advice. Accident records are kept within individual young people's files, and give a clear account of any accidents or injuries to the young people whilst accommodated at the home.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

There are highly effective procedures and good care practices that keep young people safe in the home. Staff demonstrate a strong commitment to preserving the dignity and privacy of young people. Staff have a very good understanding of safeguarding issues, which ensures that young people are protected from abuse. Training for staff is kept up to date and detailed policies and procedures are readily available for consultation by staff. Staff are sensitive to gender issues. This helps to ensure that equality and diversity is considered when caring for the young people accommodated.

The service has a well-developed complaints procedure, which is explained to young people on admission, and reminders of the procedure given during young people's meetings. This ensures that young people know the complaints procedure well and they are confident that any complaint will be taken seriously. The manager has developed a quality assurance document for the young people to voice any concerns they may have about any aspects of their life at the home; this also ensures that young people feel that their concerns and opinions are valued.

Issues relating to bullying are handled well, ensuring young people feel safe. Good staffing levels ensure that young people are well supervised. Individual risk assessments and comprehensive placement plans, allow staff to be aware of and manage any concerns that might arise between young people. Staff are quick to intervene, should a bullying situation arise and the young people voice confidence in the system to manage issues of bullying. There is a clear protocol for staff to follow, in the event of an unauthorised absence. This ensures that young people are properly protected.

Staff promote and reward positive behaviour and support young people well, so that they are protected from incidents developing into episodes of challenging behaviour. Relationships between young people and staff are good. Staff have a positive view of the young people they work with. All staff are properly trained to diffuse difficult situations. Individual risk management and behaviour support plans clearly show how staff will work to promote behaviour that is positive and to lessen the risk of behaviour becoming challenging. Challenging behaviour is managed appropriately, and restraints are only ever used as a last resort and in very clearly defined situations. The infrequency of such incidents indicates that the strategies that staff use work well and that young people benefit from the way in which they are cared for. Sanctions given for negative behaviour are seen by the young people as fair and appropriate; young people have the opportunity to comment on the sanctions given, and all sanctions are monitored by the manager, who carries out a monthly evaluation to ensure the sanctions are effective and appropriate.

Health and safety matters are managed well, so that young people benefit from being cared for in an environment that is safe. Risk assessments on the environment and activities, as well as on individual young people, are regularly reviewed so that information is kept up to date and accurate.

The home's procedures for the recruitment and selection of staff are robust. All staff are thoroughly vetted before they are appointed, to ensure that they are safe to work with vulnerable children and young people.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people receive regular support, in line with their individual needs and changing circumstances. Those identified as having particular needs receive more

intensive support. All of the young people have designated workers who provide them with good levels of individual support through regular key working sessions and individual time spent in or outside the home. Full information about all young people is obtained prior to placement and is developed into care and support plans. These are kept up to date. Staff work very closely with parents and with other professionals, so that care is consistent.

Staff work well as a team sharing collective responsibility for meeting young people's day-to-day care needs. Young people spoken to felt valued and supported by staff.

Young people are appropriately encouraged and supported with their education. The home is also registered as a school and staff have a positive attitude towards the value of education and make sure that young people's educational needs are promoted when they use this service. There is a good exchange of information and support from staff at the home and staff attend education reviews and contribute valuable information to the future plans and progress of the young people.

Young people benefit from being involved in a number of activities. Activities currently enjoyed include playing pool, visits to the gym, cinema and bowling; all these activities will help to increase the confidence of the young people whilst accommodated at the home. The needs and wishes of each young person are taken into account when activities are planned, thus promoting equality and diversity.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Placement plans for the young people are thorough, comprehensive documents, setting out the identified needs of the young people, and how and by whom they will be met. These provide clear guidance for both the staff and the young people in relation to what the home can provide, and what is expected of the young people. Clear mutually agreed goals provide a stable background to meeting the young people's needs and the areas covered include health, education, cultural and religious needs, and how the home and staff will meet these needs on a day-to-day basis. Assessments and risk assessments are undertaken on young people before they stay at the home. From this information, staff in consultation with parents and placing social workers, develop detailed care and support plans. All plans are regularly reviewed by the home and also through the formal local authority reviewing process.

Young people are encouraged to maintain contact, where appropriate, with parents, carers and friends. Staff have regular communication with parents and families and welcome them into the home, so that parents feel they are fully involved. Contact with family or significant people in the young people's lives is promoted. Staff know the children and young people very well and they are able to communicate effectively with them. This enables them to make sure that young people can make their views known in key work sessions and in the interactions of daily life. This also supports young people to make choices about all aspects of their care. The young

people have regular meetings to discuss any issues, positive or negative relating to living in the home, and together with quality assurance documentation, ensures that they play an important role in the running of the home.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Staff encourage and support young people to take responsibility for their actions and to develop adult responsibilities. Basic skills in relation to independence are facilitated. Independent living plans are available at the home, and this enables young people to gain confidence and move successfully towards independent living. Young people experience an environment that is well designed and pleasant. It is decorated and furnished to a reasonable standard. The home is also registered as a school, therefore suitable study facilities are available.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The work of the home is underpinned by a comprehensive Statement of Purpose which details the aims and objectives of the home. The statement is underpinned by a full range of policies and procedures which guide and support the manager and staff in the day-to-day operation of the home. There is a welcome pack for young people which provides them with information about the home and the local community.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The manager and staff take a sensitive approach to ensuring that the life chances of young people are promoted and that each young person is enabled to reach their full potential. Staff support and assist young people to develop their own individuality and identity. Care planning documents contain sections specifically highlighting cultural, religious, racial or language needs, and referral documentation requires placing authorities to highlight any such needs.

Staffing levels are good, which ensures that young people are properly supervised and they are able to take part in activities. Rotas allow staff sufficient time to undertake individual work with young people, to attend regular team meetings and to complete necessary paperwork. Staff demonstrate a clear determination to promote inclusion for young people and to encourage them to develop their skills. Staffing levels support this.

The manager and staff also demonstrate a strong commitment to reviewing and improving the service that is offered to young people and their families. Team meetings are used to look at practice issues and the needs of the young people. There is discussion with professionals from other agencies about the care that young people are given. There are robust systems in place, which enables managers within the home and the wider organisation to monitor the quality of care that is given to

young people.

There are robust monitoring systems in place. Both the manager and the registered provider take a proactive approach to monitoring the work and where issues arise these are quickly addressed to ensure that there is no adverse impact on young people.

Files for each young person are securely stored and are well structured and well maintained. Information that is held on young people is thorough, so that their needs can be met. These provide a good account of their history, their time in the home, and their progress.