

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 one of a group of homes operated by the same organisation as part of a tendering contract with a local council. Accommodation is provided for up to three young people between the ages of 12 and 16. Placements are long term. Currently, three young people are living at the home.

The home is a three-bedded unit in a large converted semi-detached residential property. The ground floor comprises of a lounge, dining room, kitchen, conservatory, staff office and toilet. There is a medium sized rear garden. The first floor has three bedrooms for young people, a bathroom and a staff sleeping-in room.

The home is situated within walking distance of local shops. There are local bus routes to allow easy access to nearest city and surrounding areas.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

This was a full unannounced inspection. All key standards were assessed to help form a judgement on the provision of care. One young person was present during the inspection and spoke very positively about living here.

Outcomes for young people are excellent, not only has the home sustained its strengths since the last inspection, but has also improved in other areas. The home is extremely well run, led and managed and puts young people at the heart of all that it does. The senior management of the organisation also ensures the home is always well resourced and management highly supported. There is a dedicated, enthusiastic and competent staff team. As a result of all these things young people are receiving high quality care that is helping them to stay healthy, feel safe and aspire in areas of learning and personal development.

Improvements since the last inspection

No actions or recommendations were made during the last inspection that took place in September 2010.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Young people experience a genuine caring and secure relationship from care staff that are committed and supportive. They are being helped to develop appropriate awareness of personal health, including nutrition and hygiene. This helps them to build a greater sense of independence and make informed choices to enhance their well-being. Young people have individual health plans that capture details about their specific medical need, including any action required by staff.

Young people benefit from having excellent access to professionally trained staff and other professionals to meet their emotional, mental and physical needs, for example, the child and adolescent mental health service. The staff consult with different professionals to ensure young people are receiving the most effective healthcare, assessment, treatment and support.

There is a robust approach taken to the safe administration of medicines. This extends to having concise auditing of what is administered to young people and staff being appropriately trained. The staff are good at working alongside young people to help them increase their knowledge of basic nutrition and to receive a balanced diet. This includes young people being able to participate in shopping, planning and cooking meals.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Staff have good skills to help young people feel secure, develop their self-respect, and feel confident enough to deal with challenges in life. There is a culture of openness within the home that enables young people to be confident to raise concerns which they know staff will take seriously. All concerns are investigated and young people are always informed about the action taken, including ensuring they are happy their concerns have been resolved.

The privacy and confidentiality of young people is properly respected. Young people have individual bedrooms, where they can be private and where they can keep their possessions safe. They are encouraged to respect each other's personal space. Records are held securely and staff have a good understanding of issues of confidentiality.

There is good co-operation and collaboration between the home, local authority designated safeguarding officer and police in areas of child protection and when young people go missing from care. The staff team appreciate the serious implications of bullying and its potential harm to young people's welfare. There is a commitment by staff to tackle all types of bullying through discussion, initiatives and strategies that improve behaviour and increase awareness. Risk assessments around bullying are in place to ensure any potential impact is either reduced or eliminated.

The support given by care staff enables young people to learn strategies to cope with their emotions and to help them manage their behaviour. This avoids behaviour escalating to a level where young people become distressed and place themselves and others at risk of harm. Because of this effective approach, the use of restraint has not occurred for a long time. The staff team fully understand their responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of young people. There is recognition of the importance to maintain vigilance. After an incident young people are able to express their views and feelings. This willingness to listen to young people enables them to have confidence that staff respect their opinions and take their views seriously.

Safeguarding within the home is steered by the senior management. This includes young people being protected from hazards associated with fire, water and electrical safety. Young people report feeling safe protected and valued by staff. This strong relationship provides them with the knowledge that they will be protected.

Staff recruitment is robust; staffing is seen as a key safeguarding issue. This extends to ensuring that all appropriate checks are completed prior to staff being appointed. The induction, training and supervision of staff is equally well developed to further enhance safeguarding within the home.

All visitors to the home are required to show identification, this ensures young people are kept safe from potential risks.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The outcomes for young people are so good because the provision is carefully tailored to their individual needs. The rapport and effective communication between staff and young people is built on trust, respect and honesty.

Education is seen as an important aspect of a child's development. The staff encourage learning in consultation with schools attended by young people. Key educational documents are obtained and utilised by staff to help young people reach their full potential. Staff are proactive in requesting young people's personal education plans reflect their current education plans.

The staff recognise the importance of young people accessing leisure and recreational activities, not only in relation to health but also to encourage them to socialise outside of the care system. For example, swimming or meeting up with friends they have made in the community. These opportunities offer young people the chance to develop personal and social skills, talents and abilities and spend free time in chosen activities. Young people talk very positively about these activities which reflect their level of enjoyment.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are treated with dignity and respect at all times. They are empowered to make a positive contribution towards their lives. This is secured by the sustained engagement between young people and staff.

Admissions are planned to ensure young people's specific needs are identified. Once a child is admitted a comprehensive placement plan is formatted which develops with the progress of the placement. This identifies their needs, including all aspects of health, behaviour and explicitly addresses any issues that arise out of their ethnicity, race, faith and heritage. The home has a well-established and thorough system for reviewing the placement plan. This system includes active participation in young people's statutory reviews, monthly reviews and young people having access to key carers, who they can approach for support and guidance. Young people are actively encouraged to participate in their reviews.

Young people are positively supported to sustain contact with people who are important to them. These arrangements are clearly covered in their placement plan to ensure any required safeguards are known and followed in the interests of young people's welfare.

Regular young people's meetings provide a forum for group discussion and resolution of any conflict within the group. These meetings allow young people to have a shared and democratic say in the running of the home in which they live. This approach results in young people being able to influence key decisions that directly affect them.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

The home is really well maintained and there are a range of facilities and resources. The home is located in a residential area with access to a range of community facilities and resources for health, education, recreation and leisure. The space, facilities and grounds meet the requirements for accommodation and provide a safe secure environment for young people.

The home is very homely and decorated to a very high level with an ongoing maintenance programme in place. Young people are positively supported to personalise their bedrooms to reflect their age, gender and preferences. Young people say they can make some decisions about the décor of their bedrooms. This enables them to have a strong sense of ownership and belonging. At the time of the inspection there were no young people living at the home who required having a pathway plan. But the staff have in place clear strategies to use when they are promoting young people's independence skills.

The location of the home is well positioned to aid young people's education allowing some of them to travel to school independently. It is very convenient to leisure facilities, transport and other community facilities that are important for the full development of young people.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The staff team are all appropriately qualified. As a minimum all staff are required to hold a National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People, There is strong support from management to sustain high standards of care. This extends to all staff receiving regular supervision, ongoing training opportunities and weekly meetings. Excellent contribution from both the management and the organisation ensures rigorous monitoring of the service is maintained. This includes the signing of appropriate records at the required intervals and evaluating practice. These arrangements create a sound quality assurance mechanism to assess the quality of care in the interests of young people.

The Registered Manager plays an integral role in ensuring high standards of care continue to be developed. Relationships between young people and the manager are strong and are helping young people to feel secure and safe.

The staff rota shows that staffing levels comply with the stated purpose of the home. It is also aimed at providing a balance of male and female staff to reflect the gender mix of young people accommodated here. Staff sickness and holidays are covered by the staff team. This ensures young people continue to have consistency in their care and their needs fully met.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. There is an engagement between young people and staff that is built on trust and equal respect. Placement plans are explicit about individual needs and utilised effectively by staff to ensure the delivery of care is always child centred. There is a strong commitment towards the appreciation and celebration of differences and a genuine commitment towards anti-oppressive practice.

Young people's individual case files are confidentially stored. Their needs are clearly recorded and updated daily to ensure their welfare is always closely monitored. The Statement of Purpose accurately describes what young people can expect from living at the home.