

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	David Martin
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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 six young people between the ages of 12 and 17 on a medium to long-term basis. The home is purpose built, with the ground floor of the home comprising two offices, games and study room, lounge and kitchen. On the first floor there are young people's en-suite bedrooms. An enclosed garden surrounds the home and there is a secure car park to the front of the home.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This unannounced inspection was carried out to assess the home's performance against all key national minimum standards in each outcome area.

The home continues to be run in a way that ensures that outcomes for young people are good and their relationships with each other and the staff are positive. It is successful in making sure that young people are healthy and encourages them to lead active, healthy lifestyles. The young people are protected from harm and the home is effective in dealing with incidents of bullying. The staff have an excellent understanding of safeguarding issues. The young people lead full lives and are engaged in a range of activities that promote social inclusion and provide opportunities to use leisure time constructively. Leadership is strong and the staff feel well supported.

Improvements since the last inspection

No actions or recommendations were made as a result of the last inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are provided with well-balanced, nutritious food. The young people are encouraged to eat healthily and a well-established gardening project has provided good opportunities to discuss the benefits of eating well. Young people can contribute their ideas for the weekly menu and there are opportunities to participate in shopping and meal preparation. All individual dietary requirements based on health, religious or cultural needs are provided for.

All young people are registered with primary health care providers and can access

treatment or consultation as and when the need arises. All young people have a health care plan and each young person has an annual medical. The young people have excellent access to health care advice which is provided through the sexual health team, the looked after children's nurse and the local drug and alcohol project. The child and adolescent mental health service provides specialist advice and its representatives regularly attend the staff meeting. The home actively promotes the health and well-being of young people.

There are robust systems in place to ensure that medicines are administered safely and stored securely. The records clearly identify any medication that is prescribed and safely account for the use of any household remedies. Parental consent for treatment has been obtained. None of the young people currently require prescribed medication. Staff have completed training in the safe administration of medicine, first aid and food hygiene. These arrangements contribute to the overall safety and well-being of the young people.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

There are strong arrangements in place to ensure that the privacy of young people is respected. The building is designed to enhance the privacy of young people. Bedrooms provide en-suite bathrooms and young people have their own keys. All records are held securely and staff have a good understanding of issues of confidentiality. This ensures that information about young people is kept safely.

There have been a small number of complaints which have all been investigated and resolved appropriately. The young people are provided with a wide range of information as to whom they can contact to share their concerns. This ensures that they can share their worries and concerns.

The home has strong arrangements in place to ensure that any safeguarding issues are reported promptly. Staff have an excellent understanding of child protection and are aware that information may have to be shared with other appropriate agencies. They have all completed safeguarding training. One recent incident concerning the well-being of a young person was investigated and managed sensitively and appropriate action was taken to ensure future risks were minimised. The safeguarding measures in place protect young people from harm.

The home has taken steps to ensure that its anti-bullying message is actively promoted with the young people. The anti-bullying procedures have been used very effectively to deal with serious concerns about one young person's behaviour and to ensure the protection from harm of the other young people in the home at the time.

The use of sanctions is limited and there have been no incidents requiring the use of physical intervention in the past 12 months. Staff have completed training that provides them with a range of skills to manage anti-social behaviour in non-confrontational ways. Positive behaviour is promoted through high levels of

engagement with the young people and the provision of a wide range of activities and learning opportunities. Socially acceptable behaviour is strongly promoted through this approach.

The premises are safely maintained. There is a range of comprehensive risk assessments for both the safety of the premises and activities undertaken with the young people. The staff have been thoroughly vetted prior to employment in the home and ongoing checks are carried out at the required intervals. These steps contribute to the overall safety of the young people.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The home successfully promotes good school attendance. A number of the young people are on course for high academic achievement. The staff also encourage young people to develop their talents and abilities. The home has direct links with the education support service for looked after children. The service helps identify the most appropriate education programmes and works with schools when young people are in danger of being excluded. Young people can pursue education activities in the home and have been provided with individual computers. The arrangements in place ensure that education is regarded as a valuable and enjoyable experience.

The home has an excellent range of activities and projects in place. This includes a gardening project which has involved the young people in growing their own food. Some of the young people have completed the Duke of Edinburgh award which encourages individual achievements and social responsibility. The young people are also involved in outdoor pursuits and have completed camping trips. The home's approach ensures that young people have opportunities to use their leisure time in active and constructive ways.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Case records are well maintained. The approach ensures that care and support are provided in a well-planned and consistent way. The main file is electronic but there are hard copies of important documents. The needs of individual young people are comprehensively assessed and there is careful planning with regards to the way in which staff will provide care and support. The home has access to social work records held centrally which allows them to acquire information about young people prior to admission. This assists in the process of ensuring that young people are appropriately placed.

The provision of care and support is formally reviewed at the required statutory intervals. Young people attend their review meetings and said that they feel that they can have their say and that their views are taken seriously. This ensures that young people are directly involved in the decision-making process concerning their

future. Contact arrangements are well documented.

The care planning and review systems in place contribute to the process of ensuring that young people move on from the home in a positive and constructive way. Young people can also have a direct influence on the way in which the home is run through weekly house meetings. On an individual basis they can share their views through key worker sessions and individual time with staff. Young people's views are taken seriously.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The young people are encouraged to acquire independent living skills. They are supported to undertake laundry and be involved in the preparation of food, for example. Young people of school-leaving age are assigned a worker from the leaving care team to help them make the transition to adulthood. Pathway plans are in place to assist in the process. These measures ensure that young people's experience of moving on from the home is positive.

The premises are well maintained. Communal parts of the home are attractive, comfortably furnished and generally in good decorative order. The home is very spacious but has a homely feel. There is a range of communal rooms allowing young people the space to pursue their interests and activities on their own or with staff and other young people. The young people recently participated in a street art project and some of the works are displayed in the home. Young people benefit from living in a pleasant environment.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The staff recognise the individuality of each young person. There is a strong commitment to the promotion of the rights of young people.

There is a well-written Statement of Purpose which clearly sets out the way in which the home will care for and support young people. It is a comprehensive document and covers all key areas. Similarly there is a comprehensive and useful children's guide to the home, setting out the essential rules and responsibilities. Both documents ensure that young people and professionals working with them know what to expect from the service.

The staff team have ongoing access to training and there is a programme in place to ensure that they have or are working towards childcare qualifications. There are sufficient numbers of staff on duty and any shortfalls in the rota are covered through the use of bank staff. The staff feel well supported by the management team. They have regular supervision and six-monthly appraisals. This ensures that the staff are

able to reflect on their practice and set themselves goals and targets to assist in their professional development.

The case records are well maintained and the electronic version makes a range of individual records very accessible. The home is subject to regular monitoring visits which are used to review activity within the home and to identify areas for improvement as necessary. Quality assurance measures are robust and contribute to the overall safety and well-being of young people.