

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 provides therapeutic residential care on a medium to long-term basis. It can accommodate two children and young people of either gender from the age of eight up to 18 years who display varying degrees of emotional or behavioural difficulties. The home is a normal domestic property within easy walking distance of local amenities. There are good public transport links and the home also has its own vehicle.

The organisation has its own school for children and young people whose needs cannot be met within mainstream education at this time. Children and young people enjoy high levels of support in school and they are able to access the National Curriculum. Therapists provide the third main part of the service. Children and young people are encouraged to engage in activities that address previously unmet developmental needs, promote their self-esteem and enable them to experience success and achievement.

There is currently one young person in residence who contributed to the inspection process.

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 the key standards were inspected. The main focus of the inspection was to identify how well the home meets the needs of young people living there.

Overall, this is a good service with enjoying and achieving judged as outstanding. Young people live in a safe and supportive environment, which helps them to feel secure. The manager and staff are good at ensuring young people's welfare and safety are protected. However, there are some issues around the sanctions log and restraint log not being held in accordance with the standards; the fire evacuation policy regarding evacuating the building at night; the medication record regarding the amount of medication administered and stock taking procedures. Also staff do not always receive the minimum amount of supervision and some repairs have not yet been addressed.

Young people are cared for in a homely environment. They are actively encouraged to contribute to the refurbishment of the home, choosing colour schemes and personalising their bedrooms. One young person was present during the inspection and a positive interaction was observed between this young person and staff. Staff work well together as a team using their skills and experiences effectively to support

vulnerable young people, helping them to deal with their problems. Outcomes for education are exceptional and as a result young people are making very good progress in preparing for adult life.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the home was asked to address a number of issues in relation to the supervision of therapists working with young people, the management of the home, placement plans not containing all the required information, repairs to the internal structure of the home and young people not signing the pocket money record. These have now been addressed.

The home now ensures there is proper provision for the care, education and supervision of therapists. Ofsted is kept fully informed of any changes to the management of the setting. This ensures the safety and well being of the young people.

Placement plans contain all the required information and identify how young people's needs are to be met on a daily basis. Staff and young people contribute to the placement plan, which promotes inclusion and ensures young people's voices are heard. Young people sign the pocket money records resulting in a clear audit trail. The home is undergoing a period of refurbishment, which includes the provision of new furniture in the lounge, carpets in hallways and painting throughout. However, some maintenance work is still outstanding such as the radiator in one young person's bedroom and the bathroom. Appropriate procedures are in place should physical restrictions need to be implemented within the home such as locking the lounge. No such restrictions are in place at this time.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people enjoy a range of generally healthy meals that meet their dietary needs. Weekly shopping trips with staff mean young people are able to plan and purchase food for the week. Young people often help to prepare meals and enjoy the opportunities to bake with staff. This promotion of independence is a strong feature of how the home works with young people to develop skills for life and self-confidence. Staff are proactive in encouraging young people to choose healthy options and talk to them about the benefits of a healthier lifestyle.

Clear information is held in the young person's file regarding their health needs and any medication that is to be administered. However, the administration of medication recording systems are not sufficiently robust. On some occasions it is unclear as to the actual amount of medication that has been administered and no reason is given as to why a half dose was administered. Medication monitoring systems are not sufficiently robust as the number of tablets in stock does not match the recorded amount. This does not meet the required standard.

Staff effectively support the good health of young people as they have an in-depth knowledge about their individual and specific health needs. They use the home's future skills package well to support young people's understanding of how to administer basic first aid such as dealing with minor cuts and how to contact the emergency services if they need additional assistance.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff are respectful of young people's privacy as they ensure that their information is kept confidential. For example, moving to a secure area to discuss issues on the telephone and knocking before entering a young person's bedroom. Young people feel valued as they know their concerns are listened to by staff and that any complaints are acted upon. Young people state they know who to talk to if they are worried about anything.

Staff have a good understanding of the needs of young people and how to safeguard them. Comprehensive risk assessments mean staff are able to effectively minimise risks within the home and outdoors. For example, they encourage young people to take safe risks, such as having time alone to shop while staff remain in the area. This successfully ensures young people's safety while enhancing their independence and self-esteem. As a result young people's safety and welfare is positivity promoted.

Staff receive training on safeguarding and child protection as well as behaviour management and physical intervention training, which supports their day-to-day practice. However, recording of sanctions and physical interventions is not robust. Staff do not always record how long young people are restrained for and which member of staff carried out the restraint. The sanctions record does not always make it clear as to what the actual sanction was. The introduction of recording positive sanctions where children have received a reward of their choice, such as going for a 'take-away' for improved behaviour has worked well. Staff build positive relationships with young people by explaining and showing them what is socially acceptable behaviour. Staff are knowledgeable about young people's individual behaviours which enable them to put strategies into place to support them. Young people are aware of the house rules and think they are 'fair'.

Bullying is not an issue for young people at this time. However, there are clear procedures in place should this arise. Young people state that if they were being bullied they would speak to a member of staff for support. Their safety is further promoted should young people be missing from staff's direct care. Staff follow agreed reporting procedures to ensure young people's safety. This includes contacting young people on a daily basis by telephone and providing contact numbers, so that they can make contact with the home. This results in practices, which are consistent with wider police protocols for reporting young people who go missing without consent.

Health and safety matters are effectively managed within the home. Individual and

general risk assessments enable staff to put into place appropriate plans to reduce or eliminate risks. For example, replacing the gas cooker with an electric cooker to reduce a potential fire hazard. All risk assessments are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure they meet the ever changing needs of the young people. Fire evacuation drills are carried out on a regular basis and regular discussions with young people means they have an understanding of what to do in an emergency. However, the fire evacuation procedure does not include the procedure for evacuating the home at night. For example, staff have not considered what action to take should a young person refuse to leave the premises.

The home is currently being refurbished. Young people have had a great deal of input into the changes, such as choosing new pictures, ornaments and being involved in selecting the colour scheme. Young people feel that the paint colours are just right and that the house looks better than it did before the refurbishment. However, some identified repairs, such as the mould in the bathroom and the re-installation of a radiator in a young person's bedroom have not yet been addressed.

The vetting of visitors and people wishing to work at the home is thorough to ensure young people are protected

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Young people's educational needs are exceptionally well supported. Staff ensure young people receive excellent help, support and guidance to meet their individual goals. For example, assisting them in seeking employment by helping them to seek and complete application forms. Staff set appropriate targets for young people, such as letter writing tasks to help them develop skills which will support their ongoing career prospects.

Young people's needs are clearly identified in their placement plans, with effective systems put into place to support them. Young people's choice of educational options are carefully considered. Following a young person's decision not to return to college, staff initiated discussions with them to identify what they would like to do. This provided the young person with a number of options and enabled them to make decisions about their future. Staff give high priority to ensuring children have a good education and develop skills for life, such as budgeting and shopping. This is echoed by young people who state they are given sufficient help with school or college work.

Each young person has an identified key worker and individual key working sessions take place regularly. These sessions provide opportunities for young people to talk about issues that are relevant to them and receive support and guidance that is specific to them. The home meets a wide range of potential needs including healthy lifestyles, culture, sexuality, gender and personal care and is effectively supported by a range of therapists. Access to the advocacy services means young people have independent access to external support and advisors to ensure their needs are met.

Staff actively encourage young people to enjoy their spare time and take part in leisure activities, for example cycling. Staff are very aware of young people's interests and have arranged activities in line with these such as dog walking. Staff use young people's interests as a learning opportunity, for example, encouraging them to book theatre tickets with bank cards over the telephone. By doing so they increased young people's understanding of automated services, security when using bank cards and ultimately enhancing their self-esteem and independence. Young people are encouraged to consider their future and the skills they will need, for example, applying for a provisional driving licence.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people are effectively supported by care plans which reflect their individual needs and take into consideration their own wishes and views. Care plans include comprehensive risk assessments, which ensure that young people maintain their levels of independence in a safe manner. Placement plans identify and address the support necessary for education, relationships and the management of behaviours.

Key working sessions provide good opportunities for young people to talk about particular issues relevant to them and receive support and guidance consistent with their needs. For example, looking at ways to enhance their confidence when outdoors. Young people state the house rules are fair and that they have a say in the way in which the home is run.

Staff understand the importance to young people of maintaining contact with their family and friends. Young people comment that their friends are able to visit them. Staff work closely with placing authorities to ensure young people are able to keep in regular contact with their family in line with agreed contact plans. Young people are introduced to the home in a way that meets their individual needs. Information about the home is available to young people, and they are encouraged to bring familiar possessions with them and personalise their rooms.

Young people enjoy positive relationships with staff based on honesty and respect. Staff view young people in a positive light. They are helpful and enjoy spending time with them. Clear professional and personal boundaries mean young people receive consistent care in line with good parenting.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The daily life of the home ensures that young people are able to develop the knowledge and skills, which will help them prepare for adulthood. For example, managing their own pocket monies and clothing allowances, which supports their understanding of budgeting and planning for future events. Recently young people have been actively involved in selecting the furniture, paintings and other household

items for the home during the refurbishment. This has enabled them to consider the budget available and make choices in line with this.

The life skills package provides opportunities for young people to consider their future for example, how to create a curriculum vitae, writing letters and interview skills.

Staff encourage young people to take more responsibility for themselves and develop skills suitable for their age and understanding such as looking for part-time work.

Young people are appreciative of time staff spend with them, this is evident from the many thank you notes from them to staff.

Young people are encouraged to express their individuality in the way that they dress. Their clothes are of a good standard and meet young people's needs in relation to their age, gender, culture and weather. Young people are encouraged to purchase their own toiletries and other personal requisites. They live in a homely environment that meets their needs.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Young people benefit from an organised and well managed home, which has a positive impact upon the outcomes they achieve. The home has guidance and procedures for staff and monitoring systems to assist in the improvement of the quality of care. There is an up-to date Statement of Purpose and a young person's guide that describe what can be expected in terms of facilities.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Policy training and care practice helps young people to know that their individual needs on the basis of race, sexuality, ethnicity, gender, age and religion are valued. This is achieved through individualised planning which means young people's diverse needs are met in everyday life while they reside at the home.

Young people are looked after by a competent staff team who have a wide range of skills and experience. Staff receive a programme of training to ensure they continue to maintain the health, safety and well being of young people. Staff state they are well supported by and know who to contact for support. Team meetings take place on a regular basis. These meetings provide opportunities to discuss the young people, the running of the home and future plans for improvement and training. Supervisions are generally well organised however, insufficient planning over holiday periods resulted in staff not receiving the minimum amount of supervision.

Monitoring systems are working appropriately, resulting in any shortfalls or areas for concern being identified and generally addressed within an appropriate timescale. Regulation 33 visits are conducted regularly and the information from these are used by managers to address any identified issues. Young people comment that staff are good at making everyone feel safe. They say the home is 'nice' and that they are really pleased with the new décor. Young people's files are well maintained and

contain all the necessary information. Records are cross referenced and young people are able to access their records on request.

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	ensure suitable arrangements for the recording, handling, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home are effective. (Regulation 21)	16/12/2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure there is satisfactory maintenance and repair programme in place with regards to the mould in the bathroom and re-installation of the radiator in the front bedroom (NMS 24.3)
- ensure all staff receive at least one and a half hours of one-to-one supervision from a senior member of staff each month with particular regard for holiday periods (NMS 28.2)
- ensure the records of restraints and sanctions include all of the required information with particular regard for the name of the person carrying out the restraint and duration of restraint and the actual consequence imposed (NMS 22.9, 22.10)
- ensure the emergency evacuation procedures for the home include how to evacuate during the night, with particular regard as to the action to take should a young person refuse to leave the building (26.7)