

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Julia Toller
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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 care for up to four young people aged 10 to 17 years, who may experience emotional and behavioural difficulties.

This is a large terraced house over three floors, situated in a residential area. The communal areas consist of a lounge, activity room and kitchen with a dining area. A utility room is situated off the kitchen. The bedrooms, all of which are single, are situated on the first and second floor; a bathroom fitted with a bath and shower is available on the first floor of the home. There is also an office, staff sleep-in facilities and to the rear of the home a garden.

There is a good public transport system with buses and a local railway station nearby. Shops, schools, cinemas and other leisure facilities are within easy reach of the home.

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. This is a good service overall. As part of the inspection, three members of staff and one young person spoke to the inspector.

Young people benefit from positive relationships with staff, they are afforded a range of facilities and opportunities to encourage and support a healthy lifestyle, to develop their life skills and to reach good outcomes from education. There are however minor shortfalls around complaints records, staff files and dining furniture.

Staff benefit from a good level of training and support, they work well with other professionals to meet the complex and holistic needs of young people in areas such as emotional and physical wellbeing.

Improvements since the last inspection

Eight actions were raised at the last inspection regarding staff supervision and training, safeguarding procedures, recruitment procedures, physical restraint and complaint records, schedule 5 notifications to Ofsted, staff rotas and staffing levels.

Recruitment procedures are now in line with national minimum standards and regulations, and staff receive appropriate regular training and supervision. Rotas are clear and show that there are adequate staff on duty at all times.

Staff are able to demonstrate that they are aware of safeguarding procedures and follow these appropriately. Records of physical restraint are completed appropriately and the 'log book' is a clear record and account of what is happening at the home. Ofsted has been notified of all incidents in line with schedule 5 of the Children's Homes Regulations.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people have a health care plan that outlines their health care needs, these are updated to reflect any changes in their health care needs. Liaison with health care professionals and relevant advice is used to develop coping strategies for staff to ensure a consistent approach for young people.

Young people are registered with a general practitioner and dentist, the outcome of appointments with these professionals are recorded and health care plans updated accordingly.

Young people are encouraged and supported to follow a healthy diet and lifestyle. Menus are discussed at weekly meetings with young people and changes made as necessary, staff encourage young people to take part in regular exercise through a variety of activities.

There are suitable safe medication storage facilities at the home, and medication records are signed appropriately. This helps to keep young people safe and ensure that their health care needs are met.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Safeguarding policies and procedures have been reviewed and updated to ensure they are in line with current safeguarding procedures. These procedures help staff to keep young people safe, promoting a consistent approach from staff in line with safeguarding procedures.

Bullying is not an issue at the home, staff work with young people to explain the effects of bullying and offer young people ways to keep themselves safe.

Staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding procedures. Risk assessments are in place in line with placement plans; these address the specific high risk behaviours of young people to ensure their safety and well-being, by minimising risks.

Records of sanctions and physical restraint are in place, these are maintained in line with national minimum standards. Sanctions made of young people are reasonable and appropriate to their age and understanding. Staff maintain a consistent approach

offering rewards for positive behaviours which results in a minimal amount of sanctions being made.

Complaints are recorded alongside action taken in response to complaints and outcomes. This shows that the home takes complaints seriously and listens to the opinions of others to improve the service they offer.

Procedures are in place for staff when young people are absent from care without authority. Staff notify Ofsted of all incidents in line with Regulations and take appropriate action to safeguard young people.

The safety of staff and young people is promoted through the testing of fire safety equipment at required intervals.

With the exception of photographic identification, recruitment procedures are sufficiently robust to assist in safeguarding young people with staff files holding information in line with Schedule 2 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people have placement plans that contain relevant information. They outline individual's care needs and how they should be cared for by staff.

Staff demonstrate an awareness of the needs of young people, they work with young people to ensure that their care needs are met, unfortunately this work is not always reflected in the recording systems at the home.

Young people have their care needs reviewed at the required intervals and it is evident that the home has appropriately contributed to the review process. This ensures that then care needs of young people are monitored and young people are provided with an opportunity to 'have a say' about their care and future.

A range of risk assessments are in place to identify risks that may be apparent to young people when taking part in activities, this enables staff to minimise risks and keep young people safe. Staff promote activities with young people and take time to explore individual interests to promote positive behaviours. This enables young people to develop a range of interests and shows them positive ways of using their leisure time.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

There are good examples of young people receiving advice and support, including issues such as healthy lifestyles, sexual awareness, building self-esteem and drug and alcohol awareness. Staff spend time individually with young people, listening to them and offering guidance. Unfortunately this positive work is not always recorded,

consequently this does not fully demonstrate how the care needs of young people are being met.

Contact arrangements are clearly detailed in young people's records. The home facilitates and promotes all aspects of contact with families and those significant to young people. Where appropriate, contact is planned and staff work with children to ensure that transport arrangements are made, and that the contact is a positive experience for the young person and their family. Staff are in regular contact with families to discuss progress of young people in their care and similarly any issues that need to be addressed.

Young people have opportunities to undertake a range of activities suitable to their age and interests.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Staff prepare young people for adult life, they are encouraged to take more responsibility for themselves, suitable to their age and understanding. They routinely learn skills through taking part in the running of the home, such as shopping, planning meals, cooking, using money and household tasks. Also, they are encouraged to develop their personal care, organisational and social skills.

On the whole, the premises are well maintained and offer homely accommodation for young people to live in. However, the dining table is damaged and does not contribute to a pleasant environment for young people to enjoy their meals.

Young people receive regular pocket monies and clothing allowances. Young people go with staff to purchase clothing or spend their allowances. Depending on their age and needs they may also go with their friends. This allows young people to develop their skills for independent life and learn about making appropriate choices.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The cultural and individual care needs of young people are identified and met. Young people are listened to and their views are taken into account regarding their care, for example, daily routines and leisure activities.

There is a Statement of Purpose and children's guide, which is updated annually to ensure it is an accurate reflection of the services offered at the home.

Young people are supported by staff that are offered a range of training. Formal planned staff supervision takes place monthly, this provides staff with an opportunity to receive the necessary guidance and support to evaluate their care practice and

promote the welfare of young people.

The manager and a representative of the home monitors standards at the home, including an audit of health and safety, to ensure satisfactory standards are maintained.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the complaint record includes all details of action taken in response to allegations made by young people (NMS 16)
- ensure that staff files hold photographic identification of all staff working at the home (NMS 27)
- ensure that there is adequate dining furniture for young people. (NMS 24)