

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Sue Winson
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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 is a large detached property situated in a residential area. The home has five bedrooms and sufficient communal space for the number of young people. The home is situated close to public transport, local schools and amenities.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

This unannounced key inspection considered all key standards in every outcome area. Four young people were present during the inspection. It is an outstanding home where individualised care and high levels of support ensures positive outcomes for young people in all areas. Staff work in partnership with parents and other professionals to the benefit of the young people and ensure that services are provided to meet identified needs. Education and healthy living are well promoted. Young people have a voice and their views and opinions are listened to and respected. Diversity and equality are well promoted in all aspects of the service. There are sufficient staff who are well managed and there is a robust quality assurance system. The manager and deputy demonstrate positive leadership and involve staff in the improvement agenda. No actions or recommendations have been made on this inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

No actions or recommendations were made at the last inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Young people enjoy a healthy and balanced diet. They are involved in compiling weekly menus which include alternatives, and their individual diets are monitored. They help with shopping and preparation of meals and staff take opportunities as they arise to discuss healthy eating and food hygiene. There is sufficient dining space and meals are routinely taken at the table as social occasions.

Young people's health needs are met and services are provided to meet them. Comprehensive health plans outline both physical and emotional needs and specify how they will be met. All the young people are registered with doctors, dentists and opticians and the home ensures that they access specialist services. Where young people are unwilling to engage directly, staff meet with health professionals to

discuss any issues. Individual work addresses health issues. The home has positive relationships with the local looked after children nurse and Child and Adolescent Mental Health workers which benefits the young people. Accident records demonstrate that appropriate actions have been taken in the interests of the young people.

The welfare of the young people is safeguarded by the home's policies and practices for administering first aid and providing treatment. Full records are maintained and regular stock checks are carried out. Medicines are securely stored and dispensed.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Young people's privacy is respected and information is confidentially handled. Young people are encouraged to read records which relate to them and arrangements are in place which ensures they do not view information about others. They are able to see visitors, talk to staff and make telephone calls in private. Room searches are carried out only when necessary for safety reasons and young people are informed. Staff sign confidentiality statements and information is safely stored.

Policies, procedures and practices in respect of safeguarding, bullying, complaints, absence without authority and notifications of significant events serve to protect the young people. They are informed of their right to complain and know of a range of people they can speak to. Complaints are dealt with appropriately and complainants informed of the outcome. Young people's welfare is promoted and individual work addresses safety issues. Where necessary the home works with other agencies to protect young people and the managers and staff balance individual's need for independence with safety issues. All significant events are notified to appropriate people in a timely manner. Young people are protected from bullying. They are informed of their rights, and what constitutes bullying, in the young people's guide and through individual and group work. They expressed confidence that staff would address any issues.

Young people who are absent without authority are protected as far as is possible. Staff work closely with the local police, and multi-agency meetings take place when there are concerns about safety or vulnerability. Risk assessments are compiled with the young people and staff talk to them about safety issues. The home has successfully reduced the incidence of absence without authority.

The staff practice positive behaviour management to the benefit of the young people, who are encouraged and supported to take responsibility for their own behaviour. The home uses a reward system which the young people like and respond to positively. A small number of achievable goals are identified with each young person and they are encouraged, reminded and sometimes assisted to achieve them. Positive relationships between the staff and the young people contribute to the effectiveness of behaviour management strategies used. No physical interventions have been necessary for over three years and sanctions are few, fair and reasonable.

A consistent approach across the staff team benefits the young people. Staff receive training including updates.

Individual risk assessments serve as working documents and provide staff with specific guidance on managing risks. They contain clear and specific strategies to reduce or minimise risks and are updated regularly with the involvement of the young people. The home provides safety and security and appropriate checks are carried out within the required timescales. Young people have the opportunity to practise evacuating the building during fire drills. There is a system in place to record all visits made to the home for the safety of the young people.

Selection and recruitment processes protect young people. Gaps in employment are explored at interview and all the required checks and references are taken up prior to staff starting work. Reference requests ask for verification of why employment ended.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Young people receive high levels of individual support in line with their needs and requests. They say that staff are helpful and support them. Individual sessions are well recorded and demonstrate that work is done to meet the aims outlined in placement plans. Young people benefit because all staff know what has been addressed and can build on this. Staff are skilled in using innovative ways to engage young people. The staff team work in conjunction with a range of professionals and services to meet the needs of the young people and advocate on their behalf where specialist services are not in place. All the young people benefit from having someone outside of the home who they can contact directly.

Education is actively promoted and young people are supported and encouraged to attend and achieve at school. There is good communication between schools and the staff, which ensures young people are well supported and changes of schools are well managed. Staff attend school meetings and education information is held on young people's files. Young people have help with homework and two computers are available to them, which have appropriate guards for their safety. Young people are encouraged to engage in community activities in line with their wishes and interests. Trips out are arranged by staff, and young people are given choices. Friends are welcomed in the home.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Young people's needs are assessed and comprehensive written placement plans outline how they will be met. The home is persistent in requesting information from placing authorities to inform these plans. The placement plans are working documents which are adapted as young people's needs change. Outcomes for young

people are constantly monitored, as is the effectiveness of plans and strategies. Young people are encouraged to contribute to their plans, and do so. Weekly reports for social workers demonstrate that young people are making progress. Statutory reviews and planning meetings, attended by the young people, monitor their care.

Contact with parents and other significant people is promoted. The staff establish and maintain positive working relationships with parents where possible. Examples were given where working in partnership has benefited the young people and where young people have been supported in re-establishing contact with family members. Staff keep parents informed of events and progress and ensure that contact takes place in line with care planning.

Young people move into and leave the home in a planned and sensitive manner wherever possible. Planning meetings take place as soon as possible after admission and staff help young people familiarise themselves with the local area. When young people are moving on to independent living staff are sensitive to their concerns and offer both practical and emotional support once they have left. Several of them continue to visit the home.

The home promotes inclusion of young people in decision making about their future and the running of the home. The majority of records have space for their views and signatures and they often add their comments. They are consulted in both group meetings and individual sessions. They are empowered to give their views and opinions as part of everyday life and do so readily.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

Young people receive care which helps prepare them for adulthood. They are encouraged to carry out household chores and tasks, shopping, budgeting and cooking, at levels which reflect their age and abilities. Staff support them to develop life skills and balance their need for independence with safeguarding issues. Young people receive pocket money and exercise choice in the clothes and personal requisites that they buy.

The house is suitable for purpose and provides sufficient space and adequate facilities to meet the needs of the young people resident. It is well decorated in a homely style and young people have their own bedrooms which they are encouraged to personalise. There is sufficient dining space and rooms are available for young people to see visitors in private. A rolling programme of refurbishment ensures that high standards are maintained.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Young people receive individualised care and are consulted and involved in decision-making at all levels. Photographs, diaries and mementos are kept for young people to take with them when they leave as a record of their life in the home. Tolerance and respect is promoted.

The home has a Statement of Purpose which outlines services provided and how it operates. The welcome pack for young people is in a child-friendly format and gives them appropriate information about the home.

The staff group are committed to achieving positive outcomes for young people and are involved in the improvement agenda. The majority of them have worked in the home for some time and they work as a team to provide consistency of care, to the benefit of the young people. Effective communication systems ensure that information is shared in a timely manner. There are sufficient staff who are experienced and qualified. Staff meetings take place monthly and provide a forum for discussion about young people and practice issues. There is sufficient time for handovers, completion of paperwork, shift planning and reflecting on practice. Staff say they are well supported by the managers who are available and approachable. Formal supervisions take place at the required frequency and the staff value training as opportunities to improve their practice and skills.

The home is well managed, efficiently run and effectively monitored. Visits under Regulation 33 are taking place each month and the manager and deputy monitor and evaluate practice continually. The home has a development plan to guide their improvement agenda. Young people's files are well ordered, up to date and reflect their progress.