

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Brian Mcquoid
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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 registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four young people from within the local authority who have suffered disruption in their lives and display difficult behaviour as a result. It is a detached property set in its own grounds, in a residential part of a town. There is car parking for two vehicles at the front of the property and an enclosed garden with a lawn and patio to the rear. The home has four single bedrooms and a sleep-in room for staff. A dining room, study, lounge and conservatory all provide communal relaxation space. In addition, there is a well-fitted kitchen and a utility room as well as a bathroom and a shower room.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

The inspection was carried out on an unannounced basis and the home was inspected against all of the key national minimum standards for children's homes. The home is being well managed and provides a good standard of care for young people. Staff are a caring and committed group who are suitably experienced and qualified to address the needs of young people being cared for. There are good links with external agencies and especially good support for staff in identifying ways of working with individual young people. Accommodation and facilities at the home are well suited to the needs of young people and are being well maintained. Significant work was being carried out throughout the home by the local authority during the inspection. One young person was resident in the home at the time of the inspection and their views were obtained about living there. One action relating to first aid training for staff has been made as a result of the inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

Two actions and one recommendation arising from the home's previous inspection report have been satisfactorily addressed. Complaints are now being effectively monitored, all staff are now aware of the fire evacuation procedures, and there is improved recording of sanctions.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

There is good provision at the home for identifying and addressing young people's health needs. Staff have a good working relationship with the local surgery where young people are registered and have very good access to a range of specialist

health services. This includes someone from the children and adolescent mental health service regularly attending staff meetings and providing invaluable support for work undertaken with individual young people. Staff actively encourage and support young people to have annual health assessments and to attend routine check-ups with a dentist and optician. Detailed individual health plans address their routine and specific health needs, and these are subject to regular review. There is good ongoing support provided by staff who display a clear knowledge of young people's health related needs, and actively promote the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Excellent individual support, information and guidance on health related issues, such as sexual health, substance misuse, smoking, and alcohol, is provided for young people.

Staff provide a healthy diet for young people with fresh produce used as much as possible and little reliance on processed foods. Young people are able to be fully involved in the preparation of meals, the home has a well-equipped kitchen and staff are suitably trained in food handling and hygiene.

The home's policies and procedures for the management and administration of medication provide suitable safeguards for the welfare of young people. Medication is securely stored and records of administration are appropriately maintained. Some staff at the home are suitably trained in first aid, but there are times when no member of staff on duty has a suitable first aid qualification. This has not impacted directly on young people, but clearly needs to be addressed. First aid boxes are easily accessible and incidents of accidents, illness and injuries are clearly recorded.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

There is good provision at the home for ensuring young people stay safe, and are suitably protected from harm. Staff have all completed child protection training and are well aware of what to do should any concerns arise. There have been no child protection concerns at the home since the previous inspection. The management of risk is well catered for within the home. Young people report feeling safe at the home and say bullying is not a problem for them. Single rooms are provided for young people, their privacy is being appropriately respected, and confidential information within the home is stored securely.

Young people are provided with appropriate information in relation to complaints and are well aware of how to make a complaint should they wish to. The home's complaints log shows no complaints having been received since May 2009.

Staff at the home work hard to engage young people and to encourage and motivate them to develop socially acceptable behaviour. A positive approach is used with a reward system providing additional financial incentives. A significant period of challenging behaviour from young people has been well managed by the staff group. Incidents of physical intervention are at a very low level and staff are appropriately trained to intervene in a safe manner. Sanctions are being fairly applied and staff adopt a restorative justice approach whenever possible to deal with unacceptable

behaviour. The home have a very good relationship with the local police and follow a jointly agreed protocol should young people go missing.

Young people benefit from living in a safe environment with good provision for addressing health and safety matters. Written risk assessments provide for the effective management of risk relating to behaviour, the premises, and all activities undertaken by young people. Regular health and safety checks are carried out, an up to date fire risk assessment is in place, and all checks and tests of fire safety equipment are being carried out and recorded as required. Practice fire evacuations are also carried out regularly. Also, staff recruitment procedures provide appropriate safeguards for the welfare of young people, and are rigorously implemented.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

There is good provision at the home for providing individual support to young people. A key work system provides opportunities for young people to spend individual time with staff and records showed that staff work hard to engage young people in this process. Detailed individual plans identify young people's needs in all areas of their lives and how these are to be addressed. There is good access to external individual and professional support for young people when necessary, and an independent advocacy service visit the home on a regular basis. In addition a specialist worker from the children and adolescent mental health service provides extremely good support for staff in relation to individual work with young people.

Encouragement and support is provided for young people to attend school regularly and staff provide transport whenever necessary. There are good working relationships with the schools attended by young people, and staff work to achieve positive outcomes for them in relation to their education. An education liaison officer from the local authority also provides much valued support in relation to young people's education. Staff attend educational meetings and routinely assist young people in exploring further education provision. Facilities within the home provide well for young people to be able to do homework and study in private should they need to.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Individual placement plans are comprehensive and clearly identify young people's needs and how they are to be addressed. Plans detail the focus of work under each Every Child Matters heading, and the strategy to be used to achieve the desired outcome for the young person concerned. Plans are reviewed on a weekly basis with staff adopting a flexible approach to working with individual young people as necessary. Statutory reviews are being held at the required intervals with young

people being able to attend and contribute to the process.

Young people are able to maintain contact with their families and friends while at the home and are well supported by staff in doing so. A telephone is available to young people within the home and is able to be used in private should they wish to.

The home has clear admission procedures which provide suitably for information gathering and the assessment of young people's needs. The process also makes provision for young people to visit the home prior to admission.

There is good provision at the home for consulting with young people. Young people at the home are able to communicate openly with staff in order to express their views and opinions, statutory reviews include a process of consultation, and they are able to spend individual time with key workers. Menu planning is carried out in consultation with young people and they have been consulted about the colours used in the redecoration of the premises. They are also able to decide the colour of their own rooms.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

There is good provision at the home for supporting young people to develop the knowledge and skills required for future independent living. Opportunities are provided on a daily basis and staff encourage young people to be as independent as possible. Preparing meals was one example observed during the inspection. Staff work closely with the local authority and the Connexions service in preparing young people for independent or semi-independent living arrangements.

The home's accommodation and facilities are well suited to meet the needs of young people being cared for. Young people benefit from living in a domestic style environment, which is homely and which provides them with accommodation that is decorated, furnished and maintained to a good standard. They have spacious individual bedrooms, which are able to be personalised and to which they have their own keys. Staff sleep-in accommodation is suitably separate but close by to young people's rooms. Communal areas include a well-equipped kitchen and dining room, and there is plenty of space for recreational purposes and for young people to meet visitors in private. There is a large garden area and the home is well located in relation to transport links and community facilities. The home provides a safe physical environment for young people.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home is being well managed and has a stable and supportive staff group. A comprehensive Statement of Purpose and children's guide provide young people, parents and placing authorities with detailed information which accurately reflects

the home and how it operates.

Provision for staffing at the home is good. The staff group operate effectively as a team and are suitably qualified and experienced to meet the needs of young people being cared for. There is a clear management structure at the home with clear and effective systems in place for supporting staff. The manager is suitably qualified and a deputy manager takes chief responsibility for the homes day-to-day operation. Newly appointed staff complete a structured induction programme and there is good provision for ongoing training. Support for staff is very good, they receive regular supervision and are subject to annual appraisal. There are always sufficient staff on duty with sessional staff and agency workers supplementing the staff team when necessary. An established out of hours duty rota provides for obtaining senior support should it be necessary.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Documentation shows a clear commitment to providing young people with equal opportunities, and an environment within which their individual needs will be addressed. Young people are not being subject to any form of discrimination and are being cared for by a culturally diverse staff group.

There is good communication between staff. Daily handovers take place and regular staff meetings provide good opportunities for reflective practice. The manager has an effective system for monitoring the homes operation and the welfare of individual young people. Regulation 33 visits take place as required with detailed reports providing valuable feedback and identifying matters requiring attention. Individual case records are well organised and young people are made aware of their right to view and contribute to their own files.

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 that at all times, at least one person on duty has a suitable first aid qualification. (Regulation 20 (2) (e))	01/02/2011