

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

This home is registered to care for five children of either sex from the ages of 11 to 18 years. The home's ethos is that young people have the right to equal opportunities and to progress and make a positive contribution to society. As such, it sets out to treat young people with respect and dignity.

The home prepares young people for the future by assisting them to achieve their full potential. It aims to provide a high standard of care irrespective of race, culture, gender and sexuality. The home aims to provide a person-centred approach, using a solution focused therapeutic method of intervention to help young people.

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 national minimum standards were inspected. The main focus of the inspection was to find out how well the home meets the needs of young people living there.

This is good children's home in all respects and meets the national minimum standards well. Young people live in a stable and secure home environment where they are protected from harm. Young people benefit from consistent daily routines and expectations and they are making good progress in their health, their education, developing their social and communication skills and becoming more independent.

Staff actively promote young people's rights to have a say in what happens to them. Any worries young people may have are taken seriously and sorted out. Staff take into account young people's views and as a result young people's quality of life has improved. Staff have a detailed knowledge of young people's individual needs and ensure that young people get the support they need. Staff are well supported, enabling them to keep young people safe.

The home has a few minor shortfalls. The monitoring and development of the quality of care is not fully effective because as it does not sufficiently evaluate the quality of the service that it is providing. In addition, health care plans do not clearly evidence whether the health needs that have been identified have been met.

Improvements since the last inspection

A number of improvements have been made in response to the actions and recommendations of the last inspection. Bullying policies have been updated, so that

everyone is aware of the different forms of bullying that can occur and these can be clearly identified and acted upon. Complaints are written out fully, so it is clear whether they have been satisfactorily met within relevant timescales. The recruitment procedures are now robust to prevent young people being exposed to potential abusers. Young people are reported missing in accordance with relevant guidance and procedures; appropriate records are kept in relation to the use of restraints. Young people and staff now receive regular individualised support in order to promote and safeguards young people's welfare.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people's health and well-being are actively promoted and supported. Young people enjoy healthy, homemade and nutritious meals that meet their individual dietary needs. Young people's food choices and preferences are taken into account. Young people enjoy food shopping. This encourages young people to develop their life skills and become more confident in public places, such as supermarkets. Staff fully understand the importance of good nutrition and what makes up a balanced diet and they actively encourage young people to develop healthy eating habits.

Young people have easy access to community health services and are registered with a local doctor, dentist and optician. Health plans clearly set out how young people's general and specific health needs are to be met. However, they do not clearly evidence whether the health needs that have been identified have been met. Staff have a good understanding of the full range of young people's health needs. They monitor young people to make sure they are healthy by encouraging them to attend routine health checks, such as going to the dentist.

Staff manage young people's medication effectively to ensure young people's welfare is promoted and protected. Staff are trained in handling medication and first aid. This means that medication is securely stored and staff are knowledgeable about each young person's medicines. Staff understand the reasons for taking the medication, the correct dose, how the medicine needs to be taken, and what to do if young people refuse to take it. This makes sure that young people only have medication specifically prescribed for them and take it in line with the prescription instructions. Staff keep accurate medication records.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people live in a secure and stable home where they are protected from harm. Staff respect young people's privacy consistent with good parenting and the need to protect young people. The accommodation provides space where young people can relax easily and spend time to be alone when they wish. Information about young

people is managed confidentially and held securely in the office.

Staff encourage young people to let them know when they have concerns and handle young people's complaints effectively. They take young people's worries seriously and work really hard to sort out any problems. Young people know how to complain and the complaints procedure is in a suitable format. This takes into account young people's age and level of understanding.

Staff give protecting young people from harm a high priority. They understand their responsibilities to promote and safeguard young people's welfare and appropriately respond to concerns about young people's safety. They work effectively with safeguarding agencies to protect young people by sharing information and putting safeguarding plans into practice. They work hard to ensure that all young people are effectively protected from harm.

Young people who are missing are protected in line with written guidance. Updated policies are in place to ensure that efforts are concentrated on looking for young people who are genuinely missing, rather than those who simply stay out longer than agreed. Documentation relating to this is filled out consistently in order to ensure that agencies who are searching for young people have all the necessary background information to make an accurate assessment of risk.

Policies relating to bullying provide staff with information about the various types of bullying. Consequently staff take appropriate if young people act in a discriminatory manner towards others. Staff are very vigilant to ensure that young people's behaviour does not have a negative impact on others.

Staff are knowledgeable about young people's individual behaviour and support plans. Staff work very well together as a team to encourage young people to develop socially acceptable behaviour. This provides young people with clear and consistent messages in ways which help young people understand what is expected of them.

Staff are suitably trained in understanding the management of unacceptable behaviour, including the use of physical restraint. The home has clear and appropriate guidance for staff about the use of restraint; this is always followed in practice to ensure young people's welfare is promoted and safeguarded. Staff keep detailed records of any restraints used with young people. This provides useful information for monitoring the effectiveness of individual behaviour management strategies and to ensure they are used appropriately.

Young people live in a safe environment. They are protected by a comprehensive range of detailed health and safety procedures and risk assessments. Staff carry out regular health and safety checks which ensure the premises are safe and secure.

The procedures for the recruitment and selection of people working at the home are thorough to make sure young people are protected. For example, before starting work all staff have appropriate checks with the Criminal Records Bureau and all staff are carefully vetted to prevent young people being exposed to potential abusers.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people are very well supported with their individual needs. They are able to talk to staff about problems and receive good individual support when they need it. Staff spend a lot of time individually with young people and clearly enjoy working with them. Plans to meet young people's individual needs are identified in their records and put into practice effectively. Staff provide advice and support with a wide range of young people's possible needs. These include healthy lifestyles, emotional well-being, personal care, social and communication skills, and life skills.

Education is actively promoted and plays an important part in the lives of young people. Staff have created a stimulating environment that encourages young people to learn and develop their confidence and skills. Young people's educational needs are identified and the arrangements for meeting their needs are put into practice, some young people have achieved excellent results and have exceeded expectations. A school is on-site in which young people can attend if they have no mainstream school placement.

Young people take part in a wide range of leisure activities that they enjoy at home and in the community. Staff support young people's interests and hobbies very well and make sure that there are always plenty of things to do. Young people enjoy relaxing, watching DVDs, listening to music, going shopping, and physical exercise, such as swimming, running around the park and playing football. Staff ensure that young people are given every opportunity to feel part of the local community and as a result, young people build their confidence in their social skills and meeting new people.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The home's records provide clear insight into the individual needs of young people and the plans in place to meet them. Staff keep good records about young people's progress and experiences that show clearly how all their needs are being met on a day-to-day basis. Young people's placements are reviewed regularly to make sure that they continue to meet their needs. Staff work closely with young people, their parents, and the other agencies involved in their lives to monitor their progress. The outcomes of formal review meetings show that young people live in a service that is able to meet their needs and adapt to changing needs and developments in young people's lives, ensuring that they always get the support they require.

Young people are encouraged to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way the home is run. Residents meetings are held regularly and they are

involved in decisions about what food they eat, the accommodation and what they do in their spare time.

Staff ensure young people have suitable regular contact with their families and that the arrangements promote and safeguard young people's welfare. Young people have clear arrangements for contact with their families to help them maintain and build positive relationships.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Staff encourage young people to develop the skills they need for adult life suitable to their age and understanding. They routinely learn skills through taking part in the running of the home, and carrying out tasks such as cooking, going to the shops, tidying their bedrooms, bringing their washing down and handling money. In addition, staff encourage them to develop their personal, organisational and social skills. These include personal hygiene, using public transport and getting themselves ready for school. This results in young people developing a wide range of life skills to support them in the future and increase their potential independence.

Young people live in a very comfortable and homely environment that meets their needs. The house is clean, decorated and furnished to a good standard. Young people can personalise the home to reflect their interests and individual tastes. Photographs within communal areas reflect the current group of young people living at the home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Evidence demonstrates a strong commitment to delivering equality and diversity in practice, ensuring that all young people are treated with respect and dignity. Staff recognise young people as individuals with different needs, backgrounds, interests and views. They ensure that young people receive an individual service designed to meet their personal needs.

Monitoring visits are conducted within relevant timescales and set out to evaluate how the home is performing against its Statement of Purpose. The current format is comprehensive and ensures that all aspects of the Statement of Purpose are considered. However, this method primarily focuses on whether systems are in place rather than enabling the monitoring visitor to provide a judgement about quality of the content that is seen. For example, although a complaints book may be available, the book might not state whether the complaints were conducted within appropriate timescales.

The manager has the experience required to undertake this role; he is in the process of applying to become the Registered Manager for the home as set out in the Children's Homes Regulations 2001.

Young people know what support they can expect from the home and how they will be looked after. The children's guide provides important information about the home in a way that is easily understood by young people. In addition, the home has a clear written Statement of Purpose for parents and social workers of how the home operates and plans to meet young people's needs.

Staff feel very well supported and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They confirm that when they need support and guidance, the manager is always available and helpful and they receive one-to-one supervision regularly. In addition, team meetings take place every month which allow the whole staff team to discuss the running of the home and to look at ways to improve the service they offer. This also provides a valuable opportunity to reflect on young people's progress, how best to support them, and the management of the young people as a group.

Young people are looked after by a competent staff team who have a wide range of skills and experience. The skills within the team match the needs of young people living in the home well. The numbers of staff on duty meets the needs of young people in the best possible way. This includes the support they need for activities, visits and attending appointments.

The home's written records provide a comprehensive picture of individual young people's needs, development and progress. Young people's records contain information about them, including the relevant documents from placing authorities, showing how young people should be supported on a daily basis.

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 outcome of health appointments are clearly documented (NMS 12)
- ensure that records of regulation 33 visits provide staff with detailed guidance on how well the home is performing against its Statement of Purpose. (NMS 32)