

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Katarina Djordjevic
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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 was registered in September 2008 and is part of the provision operated by the local authority. The home provides care for up to two young people aged between eight and 17 years of age on admission, who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is a semi-detached property and it has the benefit of being indistinguishable from its neighbours. The home is located on a quiet road in a suburban area, a short walk from local amenities and bus routes to the city centre. It has front and back gardens, is not overlooked and has a large grassed area opposite.

On the ground floor there is a kitchen/diner and a lounge. On the first floor there are three bedrooms and a bathroom. Young people have their own separate bedrooms and the third bedroom is used as an office as well as a staff sleeping-in room.

Two young people were living at the home at the time of this inspection and contributed to the inspection.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This was a full unannounced inspection. The purpose of the visit was to assess the quality of care provided for young people, in line with statutory requirements. All key standards were inspected and standards 15, 21, 28, 32 and 34 were also inspected. The outcome groups relating to being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, economic well-being and organisation are judged as good. Positive contribution is judged as outstanding.

This is a good service with some outstanding features. Young people receive a good level of care based on their identified needs from a committed, competent and enthusiastic staff team. Positive relationships exist between young people and staff which helps young people to develop and make real progress whilst at the home. Systems and practices enable young people to raise any concerns they may have in a listening and supportive environment which helps to protect them from the risk of harm and abuse. Care records which young people contribute to are of a very good standard which helps staff monitor and constantly assess that young people's needs are identified and met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the Registered Manager was asked to ensure staff receive refresher training in the use of physical restraint and that regulation 33 visits are carried out monthly as required. Both these actions have been addressed.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people live in an environment where a healthy lifestyle is actively promoted by staff. Staff receive a variety of training which enables them to meet the health and cultural needs of young people. Training for staff includes basic first aid, food hygiene, the administration of medication, raising awareness of mental health and Childhood and Adolescent Mental Health Services training.

Young people enjoy a varied and well-balanced diet based on their individual needs. They are actively involved in drawing up the menus which reflect specific likes and dietary needs. Menus include a wide range of meals from different countries and theme nights are held where young people are encouraged to learn how to cook meals. Records are kept of meals provided which enables staff to monitor young people's diets. Young people are expected to take part in the shopping and cooking of meals in preparation for adulthood.

Young people's physical, emotional and health needs are clearly identified and services are provided to meet them. Staff see working closely with other health professionals and agencies as integral to ensuring young people's health needs are met. Care records are of a good standard and are regularly reviewed. Staff work hard to support young people to access different health advisory and support services to ensure their physical and emotional needs are met. This includes providing young people with information and guidance on health issues, for example, how to stop smoking. Young people are also actively encouraged to attend workshops on health issues such as drugs and alcohol awareness.

Procedures are in place to ensure that medicines are appropriately handled and stored to safeguard young people's welfare. Records of medication administered and disposed of, are kept.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Safeguarding young people is at the forefront of the home's philosophy and practice. At the same time, young people are supported to take controlled risks which helps them to develop the necessary skills for adulthood including learning how to keep themselves safe. There are a range of safeguarding policies which staff fully understand and staff receive training in these. The home has detailed safeguarding procedures and has on line access to the Local Safeguarding Children Board

procedures. Staff fully understand their responsibilities in reporting any concerns, which helps to protect young people from the risk of harm or abuse. Staff work closely with other agencies to minimise the risk of harm or abuse to young people. There is a clear and accessible complaints procedure which young people fully understand and this helps to protect young people from the risk of harm or abuse. The young people's guide gives details of how and who young people can complain to including contact details of different agencies and help lines. Positive relationships with staff enable young people to raise any issues and concerns they may have without using the formal complaints procedure. There is a clear anti-bullying procedure and the young people's guide makes it clear that bullying and play fighting will not be tolerated. Bullying including any new initiatives are discussed in the young people's meetings. For example, a system to record any incidents of bullying in individual's files has recently been introduced. There are clear procedure to follow in the event of a young person going missing. Young people's care records including risk assessments give clear details of what to do in the event of a young person going missing or not returning at the agreed time.

Young people's dignity and privacy are respected. There is a protocol for young people which is explained to them on admission titled 'How we will promote your dignity and respect during your stay'. This helps young people feel valued. Young people confirmed that they can have a bedroom key if they wish and that staff knock on their bedroom doors before entering.

Staff present as positive role models and good relationships exist between young people and staff which are based on respect. This forms the foundation for encouraging socially acceptable behaviour and enabling young people to change unacceptable behaviours in preparation for adulthood and being part of the wider community. Young people know what standards of behaviour are expected. Young people have individual behaviour management plans where appropriate. The emphasis is on recognising and rewarding good behaviour and incentive schemes are in place to encourage young people to reach their targets and behave appropriately. Records support that rewards given far outweigh the number of sanctions imposed. Restraint is rarely used and when it is, it is appropriate. Detailed records of rewards, sanctions and restraints are kept which helps the Registered Manager monitor if young people's behaviour is being managed appropriately and assess if they are making progress.

Young people live in a safe and secure environment which is as a result of the effective management of health and safety. There are various health and safety policies and staff receive a range of training including fire safety. Installations and equipment are serviced as required. Regular fire safety checks and fire drills are carried out. Detailed risk assessments are in place.

Staff recruitment details were not available for inspection during this visit. However, discussions with the Registered Manager supports that robust recruitment practices are implemented. Recorded evidence confirmed that all staff had received an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people receive a good level of care based on their individual assessed needs which takes into account their gender, religious, racial, cultural and linguistic needs. Staff are committed to enabling young people to reach their potential, enjoy life, try new experiences and improve their life chances. Staff have an in-depth knowledge of young people's needs. Good relationships between young people and staff enables positive work to be undertaken with young people who make progress during their time at the home. Staff recognise the importance of working closely with other professionals to ensure young people's needs are met. One to one sessions both planned and impromptu give young people time to discuss any issues they may have, discuss their needs and progress and have input into the planning of their future.

Staff work tenaciously and are good advocates to ensure young people are able to access education provisions based on their individual needs. This involves working closely with local authority education departments and alternative education provisions. Staff attend parents and carers evenings at the education provisions which supports young people and helps them feel valued. Routines within the home support young people attending educational provisions. Young people's files contain personal education plans, a statement of special educational needs where applicable, copies of school reports and certificates of achievements.

Young people are supported to pursue their individual interests and hobbies. They are consulted about what they want to do and activities arranged accordingly. Free time for young people to spend with their friends and families is respected. Young people are allowed to keep pets which they take responsibility for looking after. This helps to build up young people's self-confidence and sense of responsibility. Risk assessments are in place for trips and outside activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Staff are highly committed to enabling young people to have a say in their daily and future lives including in the day-to day running of the home. Systems and practices give young people every opportunity to make positive contributions, not only in their lives but in the wider community. Regular young people's meetings are held which gives them the opportunity to express their views and put forward suggestions. Young people are encouraged to contribute to the local authority newsletter which is a recent initiative.

All young people have individual files which contain looked after children documents, placement plans, risk assessments and case records. Placement plans are based on the five outcomes of Every Child Matters. Young people are actively encouraged to contribute to their plans. Care records are of a very good standard giving clear

details of individual needs and how to meet the needs. Placement plans and risk assessments are reviewed monthly. Additionally, monthly appraisals are carried out. This helps to monitor the young person's wellbeing and recognises achievements and progress made which helps build up young people's confidence. Staff prepare reports for young people's review meetings which are held as required. Young people are actively encouraged to attend their review meetings to ensure they have a say in their future. Minutes of review meetings are kept on file.

Contact arrangements are clearly recorded in young people's files. Staff work very hard, giving both practical and emotional support, to enable young people to maintain family relationships where appropriate. This involves working very closely with social workers and families to ensure contact arrangements are appropriate and that young people are given every opportunity to see their families. Protocols are in place to ensure contact arrangements run smoothly and that young people are protected from any risk of harm. For example, where a young person makes their own way to visit their family or has overnight stays, checklists are in place for staff to follow.

There is a clear admission procedure and every effort is made to ensure that the admission of a young person is appropriate and a welcoming experience. Detailed referral information is carefully considered to ensure that the home can meet the needs of the young person and that they are compatible with the young people already living at the home. Wherever possible young people visit the home first which gives them the opportunity to meet staff and other young people already living at the home. Young people are given the young person's welcome guide prior to or on admission to the home. This gives good information about what to expect in the home, what is expected of them and what life is like in the home. Time is spent with the young person on the day of admission helping them to settle in.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Preparing for adulthood in all areas of life is integral to the care provided for young people and is seen as an ongoing process. Young people's age, abilities and previous experiences are taken into account. Associated risks are clearly identified and young people are educated and supported with managing these risks. Young people receive a good level of practical and emotional support from a committed staff team. Young people are actively encouraged to participate in menu planning, shopping, cooking, doing their own laundry and keeping the house clean and the garden tidy.

Young people enjoy homely accommodation which is decorated and furnished to a good standard. The home is clean and well maintained. Young people are actively involved and take responsibility for keeping the house clean. Young people are encouraged and supported to personalise their bedrooms to reflect their individuality.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home's Statement of Purpose contains all the information required in Schedule 1 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and informs young people, their families and placing authorities about the services provided by the home. The Statement of Purpose accurately reflects the practice and registration conditions of this home. A new young people's guide has recently been produced and is an excellent example of ensuring young people receive appropriate information in a format that is 'child friendly' and engages young people. The guide includes word searches, and space for young people to include photographs.

Young people benefit from being cared for and supported by a highly committed, competent and professional staff team. As a result, young people receive care based on their individual needs and are able to make progress during their stay at the home. The staff team, ably led by the Registered Manager, work well as a team which helps protect young people from the risk of harm and abuse. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities which they carry out with enthusiasm and commitment. Staff are well trained and receive regular supervision. The majority of staff have completed the National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People. Staffing levels are based on the needs of the young people.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Staff receive a range of training on equality and diversity including cultural diversity, anti-discriminatory practice and disability discrimination. Furthermore, staff present as positive role models and as a result young people thrive in this environment. Care provided is based on their individual needs which take into account their age, abilities and disabilities, gender, race, religion and culture. Young people are provided with various opportunities to experience and learn about other people's differences in terms of race, religion, culture, sex, age and disabilities.

There are effective quality assurance systems in place. All staff are involved in monitoring the systems and practices within the home which promotes shared ownership of responsibilities. The Registered Manager carries out monthly checks and produces a report. Monthly regulation 33 visits are carried out by a representative from the local authority and reports produced. Reports are sent to Ofsted as required. These visits complement the internal monitoring systems to ensure young people receive a good standard of care based on individual's assessed needs.

Young people's files contain the required information as detailed in Schedule 3 of the Children's Homes Regulations, 2001, to inform staff about the needs of young people and how to meet their needs.