

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

The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for two children of either sex aged between 10 and 17 years who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. All young people are placed in the home by the local authority in which the home is situated.

The home aims to provide a safe and caring environment to enable young people to develop and allow them to progress in their daily lives, in education and encouraging them to live and share family values.

The home is a three bedroom property with a large garden to the rear and a small garden at the front. It is situated in a quiet cul-de-sac, close to local amenities, bus routes and also the countryside.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This was an unannounced inspection covering all the outcome areas below and to check compliance with the statutory actions and recommendations made at the last inspection.

The overall quality rating has gone back up to good reflecting improvements and strong practice with regards to protecting young people from harm. Overall the health, safety and welfare of young people is promoted well. There is a commitment to ensuring good educational outcomes and the home is managed effectively. Good outcomes for young people are facilitated by the small number of young people living at the home which is a domestic family type property run with family values. This helps ensure a nurturing, supportive environment for the two young people who live there.

As a result of this inspection four recommendations are made to improve practice further regarding: the consistent provision of wholesome nutritious diets; the registered providers checks of the use of control and discipline; a review of the lone working risk assessment; and the gathering of assessment information prior to a young person being admitted.

Improvements since the last inspection

There is better practice with regards to the correct reporting of safeguarding issues and all staff have had further safeguarding training to help ensure young people are kept free from harm.

The use of discipline now includes a record of how effective it is to assist in monitoring and ensure appropriate actions are taken to help young people improve their behaviour.

Risk assessments have been reviewed to ensure they are relevant and the necessary safety measures are in place.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

There is good practice in promoting and protecting the health of young people who live at the home. Young people's health is valued strongly and staff work hard to encourage and promote healthy lifestyles.

Information about young people's health needs is gathered as part of the admission process and regularly reviewed. Assessments of individual health needs help staff ensure young people receive the healthcare they need. Records are well organised and detail young people's health needs and how they are supported. As a result young people's health care is effectively monitored and they receive care from a range of agencies to meet their needs. As part of the preparation and support for leaving the home, young people are encouraged to be actively involved in planning their own healthcare.

Young people help make decisions about what meals are cooked and join in the food shopping. There are also regular opportunities for young people to budget, shop and cook for themselves independently. This is part of their preparation for more independent living. Young people can use the kitchen when they want to and have plenty of choice over what they eat. Although healthy eating is regularly encouraged, young people's individual diets are not consistently wholesome and nutritious which reflects young people's choices. The menus help promote diversity with food that reflects different cultures and meets young people's needs based on their individual backgrounds and preferences.

Staff are trained in first aid in the event of any accidents and are trained in safe administration of medication. There are good procedures for making sure young people receive prescribed medication at the correct times. Medication is securely stored and administration records are well kept. This helps ensure young people's welfare is safeguarded by effective procedures for administering their medication.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Safeguarding is a priority in the home and young people are protected by good, safe care practices. Staff are trained in safeguarding issues, understand their responsibilities and how to keep young people safe. As a result there are good

outcomes for young people ensuring they are free from harm.

Since the last inspection safeguarding procedures have been reviewed and staff have had further training to ensure safeguarding issues are reported immediately to the right authorities. Staff know how to manage any allegations or suspicions of abuse and harm to keep young people safe. Safeguarding issues that have arisen have been managed effectively and reflect the required improvements from the last inspection.

Levels of bullying between young people are very low and staff work hard using various strategies to keep young people free from bullying. At the time of inspection there was a pleasant, settled and homely atmosphere and young people reported they were free from the harm of bullying. Staff encourage an atmosphere of acceptance, respect, trust and honesty between young people. Being a small home with no more than two young people living there helps staff to achieve this.

There is effective practice that ensures young people are protected when they go missing from the home. The frequency of this varies but when young people are missing regularly a range of agencies are involved in developing appropriate strategies to keep young people safe. On return young people are welcomed back and have the opportunity to talk to someone independent of the home in case the reasons they left were connected to the home. The overall approach to safeguarding young people who are missing is a notable strength of the home.

Young people are generally well behaved and agree that rules at the home are fair. There are incentives for young people to behave well and staff also use a range of appropriate sanctions if young people's behaviour has been poor. Occasionally staff have to physically intervene if poor behaviour is a risk to anyone's safety. This is as a last resort and staff are trained to do this safely. Records of the use of any form of discipline are well kept and have improved highlighting whether the use of discipline has had the desired impact on improving behaviour. These records are monitored by the manager to ensure there is good safe care practice. The records have not been checked as part of monthly monitoring visits undertaken on behalf of the registered provider. As the use of discipline measures is limited the shortfall in this monitoring has not been judged on this occasion to impact on outcomes for young people's safety.

Young people's privacy is respected and written records about them are kept secure and confidential. Young people have regular opportunities to see their own records and can add their own comments. Young people know how to complain and feel their concerns are listened to and acted on.

The home is a safe place to live in and well maintained. There is a good approach to risk management helping ensure young people are not at risk from themselves or from the physical environment of the home. Risk assessments have been reviewed since the last inspection as required making sure they are still valid and the necessary safety measures are still effective. The review of the risk assessment for lone working does not include reference to the fact that different young people with

different needs are now living in the home. Although this risk assessment has not been thoroughly updated the impact of this on the safety of young people has been judged to be minimal on this occasion.

No new staff have been recruited to work in the home since the last inspection. Records available at the home reflect a thorough recruitment process ensuring only suitable people work in the home.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

There are good arrangements for supporting young people with their care, helping them to achieve an education and enjoy a range of leisure and social activities.

Each young person has a placement plan detailing their care needs and support they will get from staff or other helping agencies. Young people have positive views of their care and the staff who support them. Young people feel that staff are caring and have an impact on helping them improve the quality of their lives. Staff provide very good care, are flexible, committed and able to support a wide range of young people's individual needs. There are well developed links with other agencies allowing for effective multi-agency interventions to provide positive outcomes for young people.

There is a good commitment to promoting young people's educational achievements. Young people are supported to attend school regularly and apply to college or look for work. Staff are effective and good at giving young people practical and emotional support to do well with their education. Staff also support young people to be involved in a range of leisure and social activities both in and outside the home helping them to develop their skills, confidence and fitness.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Overall there are good outcomes and opportunities for young people to contribute positively to their development, make decisions about their lives and the running of the home.

There are good arrangements for supporting young people to move into the home in a sensitive way through well-planned admissions. Sometimes there are emergency placements that do not allow for much planning. Risks of the impact of admissions of new young people both on the young person moving in and on existing young people are thoroughly considered to help ensure all young people's needs will be met.

All young people have written individual placement plans. These plans detail the care needs a young person has and how they will be looked after. These plans are based

on assessments of young people's needs including potential risks to their welfare and safety. This is not helped by the placing authority who have not provided the home with detailed and comprehensive assessment information for all young people placed at the home. On this occasion this is not judged to have significantly impacted on outcomes for young people.

The plans include support with specific individual needs based on young people's backgrounds and differences. Young people are encouraged to be fully involved in plans for their care and they have plenty of opportunities to talk to staff about their progress and any anxieties. Placement plans are reviewed regularly with young people and amended in light of their development. Young people also get good support to make decisions about their lives at more formal reviews of their care involving other health and social care professionals and family members where appropriate.

There is good support from the home for young people to regularly see their families, relatives and friends as long as this is agreed with the placing authority and is not putting young people at risk. Staff are knowledgeable about young people's individual arrangements for family contact and work hard to help promote contact.

Young people are involved well in how the home is run. There are plenty of opportunities for them to do this through meetings, complaints and grumbles, one-to-one time and daily interaction with staff. This ensures young people have a say in their care, what they do, the menus, decoration and home improvements. There are good relationships with staff who treat young people well, promote their rights and independence.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people get good support to learn independent living skills helping prepare them to leave care. With the agreement of their placing authority, young people are able to stay at the home until they are 18 and feel ready to move on.

There is a homely atmosphere and the home is decorated and furnished to a good standard with a range of facilities that young people benefit from. Young people have their own bedrooms and there are ample bathing facilities. There is a lounge, kitchen diner and large garden. The home is a domestic family type property and young people benefit from the warm homely environment it provides.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

There are good management arrangements to make sure the home is run in the best interests of the young people living there.

There is accurate detailed information for placing authorities and relatives about the home and what it provides. All young people receive a guide to the home when they move in. This is being developed into a DVD with input from young people which is good practice. Staff will also help to explain any information to help young people settle in.

There is a competent and experienced staff group with good deputising arrangements in the manager's absence. Staffing levels are suitable and ensure support to young people with their care, activities, visits and appointments.

Staff training is well planned, all staff have the recommended qualification or higher. In addition, staff undertake a variety of training courses to keep their skills and knowledge up to date ensuring they are competent to meet the needs of young people.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Young people receive a good levels of individual support and commitment from staff. They benefit from living in an environment where acceptance and respect is promoted. Diverse needs are promoted well and young people learn about a range of diverse issues. Record keeping reflects the individuality, needs, progress and development of young people

The manager is competent and experienced with good monitoring and quality assurance systems in place. Care practice is person-centred practice so that young people have good positive life experiences and their needs are well met. Young people and staff are involved in the running of the home and their ideas are used for improving the service.

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 all children are consistently provided with food that is wholesome and nutritious (NMS 10.3)
- ensure that visits undertaken in accordance with Regulation 33 include a check of the disciplinary measures and use of restraint indicating that these measures have been used safely and appropriately (NMS 32.2)
- review the lone working risk assessment whenever a new young person is admitted to the home (NMS 26)
- ensure there is a copy in the home of an effective assessment of each individual young person's needs prior to admission to the home, including an up to date core assessment, detailed chronology and any assessments completed by other professionals relevant to the young person's needs. (NMS 2)