

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Chris Fuller
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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.

The unannounced interim inspection visit of the home was made to monitor the key national minimum standards in the outcome area of staying safe. The four recommendations made at the previous inspection were also monitored.

The overall quality rating continues to be good with outstanding practice in respect of keeping young people safe and protecting them from harm. Management and staff demonstrate exceptional commitment, placing the highest priority on maintaining and promoting the health, safety and welfare of young people. Young people enjoy living in a homely, caring and supportive environment where they receive the best possible care. There are no actions or recommendations being set as a result of this visit.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were four recommendations made at the previous inspection in respect of: dietary provision; monitoring of restraint and sanction records; a review of the lone working risk assessment; and pre-placement assessment information. Progress has been made with all four recommendations being fully met. All young people are consistently provided with food that is wholesome and nutritious; staff provide healthy menu options and maintain records of meals actually eaten. Regulation 33 visits and reports are regularly completed; these include monitoring and constructive criticism of management of behaviour to ensure they are used safely and appropriately. Management ensure the lone working policy is reviewed each time there is a new admission to ensure suitable staffing levels and safe working practice

is implemented. Staff ensure that all of the required information is obtained to enable an effective assessment of each young person's needs prior to admission. This means that suitable matches can be made reducing potential breakdown in placement and increasing the best possible outcomes for young people.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Staff have an excellent understanding of privacy and confidentiality. Young people are relaxed and confident that staff fully respect their privacy and dignity. Young people's files and records are very well organised, held confidentially and secure. Young people are encouraged to contribute to their records and aware of the information held. Staff practice demonstrates very well that any child or young person's religion, belief, sexual orientation, race, gender, disability or culture supports their privacy and confidentiality. Any decision to support the above includes evidence that a child or young person's views are given paramount importance. Staff consistently promote young people's understanding of private and public information, property and space. This means young people are asked to take responsibility for their own belongings, personal room and their actions. Young people have keys to their rooms and personalise their own space with belongings, photos and certificates. Young people are asked to respect each other's private space and belongings.

Young people are able to raise any issues or concerns through very effective formal and informal communication systems, including contact with external independent people or agencies. Young people are given a range of opportunities to express their views through Children in care groups, young people's meetings and one-to-one sessions. In addition, an excellent newsletter has been produced specifically for small group homes providing an opportunity for young people to raise issues and express their views. Staff place high importance on listening to young people and take their concerns seriously. Where it is possible these are addressed as they arise. Young people know how to complain. They are clear that their concerns and complaints are, and would always be, addressed very well by all staff. Young people always receive feedback about the outcome of their complaint. Management also invite comments and compliments so that strengths of the service are recognised, celebrated and developed.

The home has a comprehensive range of policies and procedures for all safeguarding practices in respect of child protection, countering bullying, absence of a child without authority and notification of significant events. All staff complete child protection training and regularly update their knowledge and understanding of safeguarding topics. In addition, learning opportunities are maximised through online

training opportunities and multi agency safeguarding courses. This promotes integrated practice and effective networking relationships with other professionals. The staff team has excellent links with the local safeguarding board. They liaise effectively with local police and other community services so that young people are well supported in the community. Young people confirm they feel safe living in the home and feel confident they can approach staff with any concerns and that they will be supported and any issues dealt with.

Staff demonstrated clear understanding of the nature of bullying and the potential vulnerability of young people. Priority is given to promoting the self-esteem of young people and enabling them to recognise bullying behaviour and strategies to keep themselves safe. There is clear evidence in young people's behaviour management plans and risk assessments of strategies for prevention and monitoring of bullying behaviour. Staff are very proactive monitoring group dynamics and relationships and also wider social networks and contacts. Staff consistently challenge any harmful or hurtful language and behaviour so that young people are protected from bullying.

Each young person has comprehensive individual risk assessments and plans for action to be taken should they go missing or absent without authority. These are always reviewed after each event and detailed records are kept. Management monitor these events for patterns and trends so that appropriate strategies are implemented. Staff ensure that a decision about whether a local authority should review a young person's placement is made. Staff have established very strong links and partnerships with the police who will also call at the home and informal visits and get to know young people in placement. There is a comprehensive protocol for liaising with the police when children or young people go missing. Excellent progress has been made with a significant reduction of the number of events of absence without authority. Staff consistently raise young people's awareness of dangers and potential hazards in the community. They actively plan positive activities to engage young people through structured activities and meaningful activities.

The home has highly effective positive behaviour management strategies in place and reviews these with the young people to ensure they remain purposeful and meaningful. Young people benefit from a small well-motivated and enthusiastic staff group who consistently promote their health and welfare through positive relationships. All staff receive training and ongoing support in behaviour management which promotes proactive reinforcement of appropriate behaviour and de-escalation of challenging behaviour. Young people are encouraged to contribute their comments to records of restraints or sanctions. Staff place great emphasis on building positive relationships and engaging young people in the life of the home and community. Young people are encouraged and enabled to reflect upon their own actions and the impact it has upon others. Staff ensure young people have a clear understanding of the potential consequences of their behaviour as well as incentives for engaging positively. Young people make excellent progress in developing their personal and social skills and engaging appropriately with others both in the home and the community.

Young people are very well informed of the importance of keeping themselves safe

through daily prompting and discussion of health and safety strategies as they apply to their daily routines. Staff receive training in all safe working topics and demonstrate a clear understanding through effective implementation of policies and procedures. Staff continually engage young people in the practical arrangements for maintaining a safe environment. This includes accessing relevant services and facilities in the community to enhance their independent living skills. Young people's awareness is raised of potential hazards pertinent to their health and safety both in the home and community such as, use of mobile phones and the Internet. The home has a broad range of risk assessments including fire safety within the home. These are regularly reviewed and monitored by management who ensure any shortfalls are identified and addressed. This means young people live in a safe and secure environment.

The home has an established and effective system for the vetting and supervision of visitors. The management have established a very robust system for the recruitment of suitable staff to work with young people.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is not judged.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is not judged.