

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Robert Curr
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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 accommodation for young people of either sex, between the ages of eight to 17 years with emotional or behavioural difficulties. The promotion of attachment is viewed by the home as very important in the work undertaken with young people.

The home is situated within walking distance of the town centre and is well served by public transport.

There is good access to local amenities including schools, shopping and leisure facilities. The home is a well maintained two bedroom, two storey, mid-terrace property. The lounge, dining room, kitchen and bathroom are on the ground floor, with two bedrooms on the first floor. The smaller of the two bedrooms serves as a staff office and sleep-in facility. There is a paved area at the back of the house.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This was an inspection that took place at short notice. All of the key standards were checked and improvements made since the last inspection were noted.

This is a good service with some strong features. Young people's education is encouraged and promoted. Leisure needs are met and a multi-disciplinary approach ensures young people's views are taken into account when planning their future.

Staff demonstrate an appreciation that individual young people may have a range of possible needs arising from diversity.

Young people's welfare is enhanced by the positive relationships fostered by the staff team. The service is closely monitored, thus enabling the registered provider to oversee the operation of the home. The Registered Manager seeks the views of the parents of young people or their placing authorities with regard to the quality of care provided.

There are sufficient experienced and competent staff who are very well supported and the overall qualification recommendation is met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the registered person was asked to take action in relation to an aspect of staying safe. This included fire safety.

Although fire procedures are in place and visitors are informed of the procedures, not all staff have undertaken a fire drill practice at the recommended frequency. This recommendation has been raised for a second time.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Staff continually encourage young people to live healthy lives and to stop engaging in activities that may be harmful to their health. Although young people can decide what they want to eat, staff support them to focus on healthy eating. Opportunities for young people to help prepare meals enhance the social and emotional aspects of communal eating. All staff are trained in food hygiene, which is good practice.

Young people are registered with a doctor, dentist and optician and they are supported at appointments albeit that young people sometimes refuse to attend appointments. Young people are given information about resources that can offer a range of support and guidance around diet and other health care issues. Young people comment that staff look after them when they are ill.

There is a locked cabinet for any medication which needs to be stored in the home and there are suitable procedures in place for the disposal of medicines. A first aid box is at hand and staff are trained in first aid. This maintains the health of young people.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The safety and welfare of young people is promoted by a range of practices developed by the organisation.

Staff are trained in child protection and behaviour management. When behaviour does become unacceptable, staff are quick to respond and are good at helping to resolve any difficulties. Records indicate that there have been very few consequences put in place. However, the permanent record does not include details of the young person's behaviour leading up to the use of any consequence or the young person's views regarding any measures of control or discipline.

There are effective arrangements in place to deal with absconding and complaints. Staff are able to clearly describe the agreed missing from home protocol. Young people confirm that staff provide them with a complaints form and support them to have their concerns dealt with. Young people also confirm that there is no bullying in the home and appropriate procedures are in place should an incident occur.

Procedures and practices at the home ensure that young people's right to privacy and confidentiality is upheld. For example, all confidential information is stored appropriately and securely, and the home is large enough to provide young people

with quiet space should they so wish it. The identity of visitors is checked and accurate records are maintained of visitors to the home.

The management of health and safety processes is generally good, which helps to protect young people from the risk of harm or injury. A range of risk assessments is undertaken on young people's known and likely behaviours. Equipment and installations are serviced as required. However, the range of risk assessments for potential hazards in the environment and activities do not fully describe the action to be taken to reduce risk.

Regular fire safety tests are carried out including regular full evacuations of the home. However, not all members of staff have undertaken a fire drill practice or fire instruction at the recommended frequency. Extra locks have been fitted to the front door of the home and this is not reflected in the fire risk assessment. This does not inform staff of the action to take to ensure the safety of themselves or young people.

Young people are protected by the recruitment and selection process. The Registered Manager ensures all staff undergo appropriate checks before starting work at the home. This includes ongoing regular renewals of enhanced Criminal Records Bureau disclosures for every staff member.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people receive good levels of individual support. This is achieved by commitment and continuity of staff, and the application of a range of interventions to raise young people's confidence, self-esteem and social skills. Key working and team meeting notes show that staff praise young people and key working sessions help young people gain an understanding of their own history and develop a greater sense of identity.

Staff emotionally reinforce young people when they make a positive effort and do well, and celebrate their achievements. This helps them to develop a sense of positive self-esteem and belief in themselves. The staff team value education and educational outcomes are good for young people. One young person stated, 'The staff are right behind me when it comes to my education.' Staff are good at supporting young people in their learning in its widest sense.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people benefit from being looked after by staff who are competent in identifying and meeting their individual needs, and in compiling detailed placement plans which demonstrate how these needs will be met. Staff are successful at engaging with young people and are focused on achieving the stated aims and objectives of individual plans. These cover all the usual physical, emotional and

behavioural dimensions, any cultural and religious needs, as well as focusing on strengths and resilience and practical arrangements, such as maintaining contact with friends and family.

In line with good parenting, the development of young people is regularly monitored by observation, interactions with staff and ongoing review of the placement. Throughout these processes staff are good at consulting with the young people and involving them in making appropriate decisions about their daily lives and long-term decisions about their future.

Young people's views are made known through formal statutory review proceedings. An effective complaints procedure and contact with a range of external professionals and independent visitors enable young people to shape decision-making as well as providing additional safeguarding measures.

Systems are in place for introductions and visits to the home and information is provided to anyone considering using the service. Any discharges take place in a planned way.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people receive care which helps to prepare them for adulthood. Independence within care planning mechanisms ensure that young people receive good advice and support with financial issues, as well as with basic practical skills such as shopping for and cooking meals.

Young people live in a very comfortable home which is domestic in size, welcoming and provides a homely atmosphere. It is furnished to a very good standard and provides ample space for the young people living there to have privacy should they require it. However, young people are not provided with the use of a key to their room, subject to risk assessments, and no young people to have lockable facilities within their bedroom for private possessions.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home fulfils its Statement of Purpose in providing young people with the care and support they need. The statement is clear in setting out the services it offers and how the home operates. The young people's handbook does not accurately describe the manner in which care will be provided. This does not enable young people to clearly understand what they can expect from the home and how they will be cared for.

Young people are cared for by staff who are competent in discharging their duties. Staff training and development is well established and there are ample opportunities

for staff to enhance their knowledge and skills. All staff have achieved a qualification at National Vocational Qualification level 3 or above in Caring for Children and Young People, the overall qualification recommendation is met. Staff are also supported through regular and effective supervision, appraisal and team meetings.

Staffing arrangements are organised and adapted to meet the individual needs of young people and to ensure the smooth running of the home. Staff have sufficient time to complete the necessary paperwork and young people's records and other documents are kept in well organised files with effective cross referencing. Young people's files are kept in a manner compliant with the regulations.

Staff handovers are routinely held to exchange information about progress, care needs and other issues of concern to young people.

Staffing levels are in line with the Statement of Purpose and are sufficient and flexible enough to meet the changing needs of young people, taking current risk assessments into account. Young people enjoy continuity of care by people who are known and familiar to them.

The manager ensures that the interests, safety and well-being of young people are central to operations. Monitoring is undertaken by the Registered Manager to assess the performance of the home in meeting young people's needs and identifying areas for improvement, with evidence of consultation with young people as part of this process. There is evidence that the manager and staff team consult with parents or placing authorities to determine whether the service being delivered is in line with the Statement of Purpose.

There is a regular senior management presence within the home, including time spent directly with young people. There are systems in place for someone to deputise in the absence of the manager. This procedure upholds the effective organisation of the home and helps to deliver the best possible care.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Young people receive a service designed to meet their diverse needs. This is evidenced by the detailed level of care planning and the response to changing individual need. Young people are looked after by a team that has a good balance of age, race and gender.

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
26	ensure staff receive up to date training in fire prevention (Regulation 32 (1)(d))	28/02/2011
26	ensure that all parts of the home are so far as is reasonably practical free from hazards, in particular by undertaking comprehensive risk assessments (Regulation 23 (a))	28/02/2011
1	review the content of the young people's hand book, ensuring it is in a form that is appropriate to the age and understanding of the young person to be accommodated. (Regulation 4 (3)(4))	31/03/2011

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- maintain the system that is in place and record any measure of control or discipline (NMS 22.10)
- ensure that the identified member of staff undertakes a fire drill practice on or before their next duty (NMS 26.8)
- review the current fire risk assessment, in particular the evacuation procedures from the home at night (NMS 26.7)
- provide each bedroom with a key and safe lockable storage for personal possessions. (NMS 24.5)