

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Julian Parker
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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 is a rurally located children's home based in a large detached period property set on a country farm estate. The home looks after up to two young people who are assessed to be able to benefit from the absence of distraction and the high staffing levels that this setting provides. The home has been totally renovated and refurbished to provide a spacious living environment. Although rurally located the home has easy vehicular access to the recreational amenities in some nearby towns and the company's educational services.

Because of its rural location the home has been used as a setting for young people who have a propensity to run off (abscond) or be vulnerable from influences from peer groups.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This was a full unannounced key inspection. One young person presently living in the home was present during the inspection and contributed to the process. The inspection focused on all of the Every Child Matters outcome areas.

The home is judged as good. Young people receive an individualised care package that is effective in assessing need and promoting health and well-being. The home has been maintained to a very high standard throughout providing a comfortable, homely environment in which young people can be nurtured and enabled to develop socially acceptable behaviour.

The registered person provides good direction and leadership to a well-trained and complemented staff team thereby ensuring a very good quality of overall service. Staff are clear about their roles and are consistent in carrying out their responsibilities to address the care and therapeutic needs of the young people they look after. Record keeping is comprehensive and confirms the good service being provided

Inspection has not identified any necessary actions or recommendations resulting from this visit.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the registered provider was recommended to ensure that documentation confirming the review of placement plans were included within the young people's case files. They were further asked to, where applicable, include

pathway plans, and through the compilation of key worker reports ensure that young peoples views and opinions were recorded.

Although the young people for whom the above recommendations referred have now moved on from the home the registered person has fully complied with what was asked from them.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

An awareness of healthy eating and the importance of a balanced diet is promoted by the home. Menus are planned by young people with the supervision of staff. They aim to include choice, be healthy, nutritious and culturally diverse. Young people are able to take responsibility for shopping and cooking their own meals. They are also encouraged to develop an understanding of budgeting as well as healthy eating, which also promotes their independence and life skills. Mealtimes are enjoyable social events taking place within the homes kitchen dining room.

The health needs of young people are assessed prior to and during their placement to ensure that all their needs are being addressed. Young people have informative health plans and discrete records that indicate how relevant guidance, informed advice and practical support will be provided. personal and sexual health education is included in the registered providers school curriculum and introduced where appropriate within the home's practice and key worker sessions. Young people are assisted by having regular access to a range of services and professionals to help them with any specific emotional, social or medical needs. They are practically supported when they are unwell by staff arranging General Practitioner appointments and preventive routines such as optical and dental checks.

Young people's health and safety is actively promoted by the registered provider's policies, procedures, guidance and staff training. All staff receive training in the safe handling and administration of medication and first aid. Medicine is stored securely in lockable cabinets and thoroughly accounted for when dispensed. Good arrangements are in place for the treatment and recording of any accidents occurring within the home. Attention to detail ensures that young people have their health needs addressed safely and sensitively.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The home promotes the right to privacy for young people by ensuring high levels of administrative confidentiality. Also by providing young people with their own bedrooms, bathing and toilet facilities. Staff protect sensitive personal information and are careful when communicating any information about young people with parents and other professionals.

Young people know how to complain and can contact people they are confident to

Speak to. The young people and staff feel because issues are raised quickly and are promptly addressed, they do not need to use the formal complaints procedure. The clear and effective complaint policy is summarised by the young person's guide to the home and when used followed in practice. Young people have access to a visiting independent advocacy service should they require help or support in making their concerns known.

The welfare and safety of young people living at the home is consistently promoted by the policies produced by the registered provider. These policies recognise regulatory requirements and good practice in areas of child protection that include countering bullying, effective behaviour management and safeguarding children. Staff know how to access statutory guidance including the procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board. They are also trained how to recognise and report signs of abuse. The registered provider makes available regular staff development opportunities to ensure that staff are trained to look after young people safely. Young people have a positive relationship with staff which allows them to listen to and process both good and less favourable information rationally.

Routine monitoring by persons independent of the home ensures that young people can always make their views known. The home confirms the ongoing safety of young people by having tried and tested reporting systems in place to notify relevant authorities about significant events including any unauthorised absences. Young people who are absent from the home without permission are reported correctly to external agencies. Staff always try to locate young people. Staff maintain open communication with the local police and clear records have been maintained of all action taken to locate and find young people. Safe and well checks take place when young people return to the home.

Behaviour management is effective because it is based on the active encouragement of acceptable behaviour. This is achieved by providing consistent expectations and by a culture of always praising positive behaviour. Young people know what the standards of behaviour expected from them and what the rules of the home are. Resident numbers, individual care needs and risk assessment influence the home's staffing levels to establish and ensure that an appropriate, safe level of support is always present. Staff regularly receive statutory training in effective behaviour management. This includes the reasonable application of an accredited form of physical restraint where it may be necessary as a last resort. Any behavioural incidents or applied sanctions are reviewed by the home's manager and young people's feedback will help evaluate the safety, transparency and effectiveness of these practices.

The home confirms positive responses to the potential dangers to looked after children by producing a comprehensive range of risk assessments that cover all aspects of safety in the living environment, for example, the risk from fire and household hazards, or from young people's behaviour and recreational activities. Risk assessments are particularly effective because they are reviewed regularly and take into account daily tasks and any changes affecting the home such as changes of resident, revised personnel or staffing levels and changes to the home's routine.

The home employs robust procedures for monitoring all visitors. No unauthorised person can access the building or have access to the young people living there. Staff personnel files were examined ahead of this inspection and confirm that only appropriately checked and cleared staff are appointed to the home.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people living at the home are fully supported by the staff taking responsibility for the safe delivery and monitoring of care plans. Needs are assessed on an individual basis.

Compliant behaviour confirms that relationships between staff and young people are positive and enhance general socialisation. These relationships promote young people's general health and well-being, special interests and fully support particular religious and cultural needs.

Key workers show a good level of commitment and coordinate support for young people, provide individual key working sessions and liaise with appropriate agencies in terms of more specialised needs. Young people's understanding of their behaviour is helped further by being able to regularly access qualified therapists employed by the registered provider.

Educational attainment is promoted through the registered provider's education policy and the homes commitment to ensuring young people have realistic opportunities to achieve. Age appropriate education is provided, designed to build upon each young person's academic abilities and interests. Young people are accompanied and supported throughout their school day by residential staff working in partnership with teachers to promote the individualised curriculum and personal achievement. During the providers initial assessment educational needs are identified and recorded by in-house individual education plans.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people have individual care plans and designated key worker. Placement plans evaluate all aspects of daily living and the task set for the home. All staff provide encouragement and practical support to assist young people achieve positive outcomes in the different areas of their life.

Statutory reviews take place and the progress of young people is being fully monitored. These meetings are independently chaired and young people are encouraged to attend to express their views.

Young people are enabled to maintain meaningful contact with their families or other

people who are significant in their lives. Concise case records confirm that this is taking place in a manner that is consistent with each placing authorities agreements and the overall plan of care. Young people can access advocates and persons independent of the home to represent their views and promote their rights should they need to.

Young people are able to move into the home in a planned and sensitive manner that makes the young person feel comfortable, welcome and well informed.

Young people are encouraged to contribute to the running of the home and they formally comment about their placements by attending young people's meetings, key working sessions and spending time with staff. Young people communicate well with their key workers and feel well supported by the staff.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Opportunities to help young people develop life skills and prepare for more independent living are well supported by staff at the home. Young people living at the home are not currently involved in specific transition programmes because of their recent admission. There are plans for these to be implemented and formalised.

Young people are encouraged to develop confidence and skills that will contribute to their future economic wellbeing. Staff presently encourage young people to engage in opportunities that will enable them to achieve, develop skills, build confidence and facilitate a meaningful transition into young adulthood.

Young people are proud of their home and the facilities available to them. They live in a rurally located home that is domestic in style, very well maintained providing a homely environment. The entire home is comfortably furnished, brightly decorated and welcoming. Young people have personalised their bedrooms and enhanced the home with their woodworking accomplishments.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The Statement of Purpose for the home includes all information required by Schedule 1 of the Children's Home Regulations, including details of the staffing complement deployed to look after young people at the home. Young people receive useful details about the home from the children's guide and talking with staff.

Young people are looked after by a very competent staff team who are thoroughly supported by their newly appointed manager and her deputy. Importance is placed by the manager on regular staff supervision to ensure the quality and consistency of day-to-day care. Staff develop their practice by having access to comprehensive policies, procedures and guidance which is enhanced by regular personal

development and training opportunities. The home aspires to complement the therapeutic aspects of the registered providers work.

The home has well established internal and independent quality monitoring systems that effectively highlight and address all aspects of the care being provided by the home. These systems underline the effectiveness of the home's management in safeguarding the welfare and interests and the specific needs of each young person living there. The production of a development plan confirms the registered person's commitment by outlining the home's baseline future objectives.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Young people receive an individualised service in a home chosen to provide a package of care befitting age, ability and potential risk while not isolating young people from the community of origin. All staff have a good knowledge of the young people they are working with, including their cultural and disability background, which helps ensure that holistic needs are being addressed. The home has developed explicit policies and procedures promoting equality and diversity in all aspects of their service for children from differing cultures and heritage.

Each child has a permanent and private file, which is comprehensive, well organised and shows a clear record of each young person's progress. Young people are made aware of the contents of their files and know they can request access to them should they need to.