

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Julia Toller
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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 outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

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 home is a detached house with grounds to the front and rear of the property. Downstairs there are three reception rooms, a hallway and a kitchen/dining area. On the first floor there are two bedrooms for young people and a bathroom with bath and shower facilities. There is also a staff bedroom with separate en-suite facilities. The second floor has a further two bedrooms for use by young people. Outside there is a secure back garden. Although situated in a quiet area, the property is located close to town centres and close to transport networks, leisure facilities and schools for young people.

Summary

At this unannounced full inspection, all key standards were inspected. This is a satisfactory service overall, with some elements that are good.

Young people benefit from positive relationships with staff. Young people are afforded a range of facilities and opportunities to encourage and support a healthy lifestyle, to develop their life skills and to reach good outcomes from education.

Staff benefit from a good level of training and support, they work well with other professionals to meet the complex and holistic needs of young people in areas such as emotional and physical wellbeing.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Three recommendations were raised at the last inspection regarding health care plans, consultation and direct work sessions.

Following the recruitment of a new manager, some health care plans are now in place; these hold details of the health care needs of young people and identify actions that need to be taken to meet their needs.

Direct work sessions are taking place with young people regularly; these reflect that a variety of issues are addressed with young people to ensure that their care needs are met and that their safety is promoted.

Staff consult and negotiate with young people on a daily basis about their care needs and the running of the home. This shows that staff see the views of young people as important.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

The home has satisfactory monitoring systems in place to meet the health needs of young people; this includes regular key working sessions that provide opportunities for staff and young people to discuss individual issues. They have plans showing their health needs and the arrangements for meeting them. These plans reflect the level of work being carried out to meet the health care needs of young people.

Staff monitor young people to make sure they are healthy by encouraging them to attend routine health checks and by ensuring they get medical treatment when they are unwell. This ensures that all staff are kept aware of the individual and ongoing health care needs of young people.

Staff deal with health issues sensitively and make sure young people get appropriate support and advice to promote healthy lifestyles. The home has good links with specialist health and advisory services to make sure that young people get suitable support with specific health issues.

There are safe and suitable facilities for the storage of medication at the home. The induction programme for staff ensures that staff are trained so that they are competent to give medicines safely. The home has in place an effective system for the safe administration of medicines. While there is suitable safe storage for medication at the home, medication sheets are not always completed fully to reflect the medication that young people have received. This does not fully demonstrate how the home is meeting the health care needs of young people.

Young people are encouraged to eat healthy and nutritious meals, and staff encourage young people to develop healthy eating habits. They are encouraged to plan and choose what they have to eat. Staff are appropriately trained in food hygiene and have the skills and knowledge to ensure that the dietary needs of young people are met.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

There are appropriate policies and procedures in place regarding safeguarding and anti-bullying which help staff to keep young people safe. Staff also receive formal safeguarding training which includes the signs and symptoms of abuse. This helps to keep young people safe. Young people say they feel safe living in the home.

Staff have created an environment where young people are treated with respect and get on well. Any disagreements are resolved amicably and bullying is not usually a problem.

Staff respect young people's privacy and confidentiality which is consistent with good parenting and the need to protect young people. Staff understand about their roles and responsibilities to promote and safeguard young people's welfare.

Staff provide a satisfactory level of supervision for young people based on their age to make sure they are safe in the home and in the community. They also give young people good advice about personal safety.

Staff use good communication skills to encourage young people to develop socially acceptable behaviour. Young people have clear and consistent boundaries and know what is expected of them and what is unacceptable. Staff praise young people when they do well and reward them. They also reassure young people when they are upset and help them deal with their anxieties and frustrations in a positive way. Staff do not condone unacceptable behaviour and assist young people to learn to manage their behaviour and solve problems. Young people say they know what they need to do to earn incentives for good behaviour, and do so regularly.

The home makes sure that young people have access to information about their rights and how to deal with their concerns through the complaints procedure. Young people know how to make a complaint if they are unhappy. The home keeps a written record of any complaint and the action taken to deal with them. Young people say that they prefer to discuss any issues they may have with staff on an informal basis, but know who they could go to outside of the home if necessary. However, the recording of complaints does not always reflect that appropriate action has been taken to safeguard young people.

Young people live in a safe and secure environment. Regular health and safety checks of the home, including environmental and fire safety risk assessments help to keep the home a safe place for young people to live in. There are minimal gaps in fire safety checks; this does not fully promote the safety and welfare of young people and staff at the home.

The vetting of people wishing to work at the home is generally sound. The home carries out checks with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB). This makes sure that young people are kept safe.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people are able to talk to staff about problems and receive individual support when they need it. Staff spend a lot of time individually with young people. There are examples of young people getting advice and support with a broad range of possible needs including sexuality, healthy lifestyles and relationships.

Staff support young people's education. Their educational needs are identified in written plans and there are clear arrangements for meeting these. Staff support young people in achieving success in education and jobs and promote the benefits of achieving a successful future.

The home works well with professionals to secure suitable schools and work placements for young people who are not in full-time education. Young people's preferences are taken into account and they have opportunities to study and get work experience in areas that interest them.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people have clear written placement plans, identifying their needs and outlining the arrangements for meeting them. Staff put the plans into practice and keep some records about young people's progress and experiences. The plans are reviewed regularly to make sure that they are up to date and continue to meet the individual needs of young people. Contact records are maintained to ensure staff are aware of the arrangements for young people to meet with their family where appropriate.

Young people are listened to and their views about their lives are taken into account. They are fully involved in reviewing their placement plans and play an active role in making decisions about their future.

Staff work with young people to consult with them and influence the way the home is run. They are involved in decisions about what food they eat, what they do in their spare time and how the home is decorated.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Staff prepare young people for adult life; they are encouraged to take more responsibility for themselves, suitable to their age and understanding. They routinely learn skills through taking part in the running of the home, such as shopping, planning meals, cooking, using money and household tasks. They are also encouraged to develop their personal care, organisational and social skills. This helps them to develop the necessary skills for independent life.

Young people enjoy homely and comfortable accommodation. The home is decorated, furnished and maintained to a good standard. Young people personalise their bedrooms and have enough personal space to meet their needs.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. The cultural and individual care needs of young people are identified and met. Young people are listened to and their views are taken into account regarding their care, for example, daily routines and leisure activities.

Young people and referring professionals are provided with the Statement of Purpose and the children's guide; this is updated annually in line with regulations to ensure it is an accurate reflection of the services offered at the home.

Staff are offered training that is reflective of the young people's needs. Formal planned staff supervision takes place monthly, this provides staff with the necessary guidance and assessment that evaluates their care practices and promotes the welfare of young people.

A manager has recently been recruited to the home and Ofsted now awaits their application.

The manager monitors standards at the home in line with regulations. A representative of the organisation also carries out monthly visits to the home in line with Regulation 33. This helps to monitor and evaluate standards at the home and therefore improve the service they offer to young people.

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 meets the Care Standards Act 2000, The Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
16	ensure that complaints records identify the steps that have been taken to liaise with safeguarding professionals around the investigation of complaints following allegations (Reg 24)	7 June 2010

26	ensure that fire safety checks are completed in line with regulatory requirements (Reg 32)	7 June 2010
24	ensure that the home is maintained to a satisfactory standard in particular that the drains are attended to and that all windows are fitted with restrictors. (Reg 31)	7 June 2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure that medication sheets are maintained without gaps (NMS 13)
- ensure that staff employed at the home have sufficient skills and knowledge appropriate to the conditions of registration for the home, in particular the condition regarding ages of children to be cared for. (NMS 29)