

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 provides care and accommodation for two young people of either gender, aged between 10 and 18 years of age who present emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is in a rural location but close to a town where there are local shops. The home has its own transport.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This was an unannounced full inspection in which all key standards were assessed. This is a good service with outstanding features. Staff work well as a team to care for young people with complex and challenging emotional and behavioural difficulties. The service provides a structured and nurturing environment for young people and behaviour is well managed. There are clear boundaries, consistent reward and celebration for improved behaviour. Young people identify significant improvements in their behaviour, safety and education opportunities. They fully contribute to the discussions and outstanding outcomes regarding their placement plans, the running of the home and their future plans. An outstanding strength of the service is the proactive and dedicated support for young people to access, maintain and feel positive about education. The service has effective monitoring processes

Three recommendations were set as a result of this inspection visit.

Improvements since the last inspection

This is the home's first inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people benefit from good arrangements to support their medical needs and promote their good health. Young people say they are healthier since living at the home. Health care plans are generally well-recorded and show that young people's medical appointments are arranged and their health closely monitored. Some updating between the health care files was addressed at the time of this inspection. Young people say they are given good encouragement and opportunities to have their health and medical needs improved and met. There is a clear focus on young people's mental and emotional health in conjunction with their physical needs.

Staff have a clear commitment to, and good understanding of, the health issues relating to young people, including sexual health, safer drug use and leading healthier lifestyles and they liaise with relevant health agencies. Young people are encouraged to have a greater awareness of and take more responsibility for their own health care arrangements. Young people say they are encouraged to give up smoking, go to the gym and they feel comfortable discussing personal health issues with their key workers.

Healthy eating is promoted and discussed with young people, including menus that are varied and include choice. Young people are able to take responsibility for shopping and cooking their own meals and are encouraged to develop an understanding of healthy eating which promotes their independence and life skills.

Young people's health is protected with clear medication procedures which are effectively implemented by knowledgeable staff. Staff are trained in first aid. Young people are positive about how staff look after them when they are ill or have had an accident.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people are protected by effectively managed procedures and practices for promoting their welfare and safety. There is a robust staff recruitment and selection process and all staff are trained in safeguarding children procedures. Staff are fully aware of the procedures regarding young people going missing and who to notify about serious incidents in the home. Written guidance regarding the local authority's child protection procedures is available in the home but is outdated. While staff are aware the guidance is superseded by electronic guidance this is not currently easily accessible.

Young people say they feel safe at the home and positively acknowledge that high levels of staff supervision have helped to promote personal safety and improve behaviour. Young people are particularly proud of not going missing from care so frequently and being able to calm down without staff having to use physical intervention.

Young people's behaviour is managed and significantly improved with clear written behaviour management policies, procedures and placement care planning. Young people's behaviour and welfare is further protected and supported by staff who promote and implement effective risk and behaviour management strategies in their day-to-day practice. Although staff are trained in behaviour management and physical intervention, the physical intervention part of individual behaviour management plans are not fully completed. There are clear boundaries and an emphasis on promoting incentives and rewarding positive and improved behaviour. Young people have positive relationships with staff and do not want to disappoint with poor behaviour. They are particularly proud of the praise, rewards and incentives that they receive for their efforts and achievements. They are clear about

what happens when their behaviour does not go so well, saying they can be grounded or have to repay money for damage they cause to the home. Young people feel these consequences are fair. Records are maintained and show good accountability for when sanctions and physical intervention are used in the home.

The privacy of young people is respected and they enjoy their own private space. Young people understand and are protected by the clear written complaints procedure and the additional information included in the young people's guide. Young people feel valued because the manager shows a good level of commitment to listening to them and ensuring their concerns are taken seriously. There is an anti-bullying policy and young people say they feel protected because bullying is not tolerated and staff will always do something, including when it happens outside of the home.

The physical environment is well maintained and monitored in terms of health and safety, with comprehensive and detailed documentation. Fire safety procedures are checked, monitored and young people know what to do if there is a fire.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Young people's individual needs are identified and supported by staff who present a clear and enthusiastic commitment to developing individuality and enabling a clear sense of achievement. Young people develop confidence in their personal identities, social relationships and educational capabilities.

Needs are assessed on an individual basis and support is afforded to each young person. Staff are sensitive to young people's needs and their own ways of doing things. Young people receive support in individual key working sessions and staff also liaise with appropriate agencies in terms of more specialised needs. Records relating to one-to-one key working sessions show sessions are relevant to and fully include the young person and are consistent with the young person's placement care plans. There is consistent teamwork to meet the complex and challenging needs of the young people and this leads to a key strength where young people value their relationships with staff and accept their support.

Young people clearly benefit from the individual support they receive in terms of education, both in terms of attendance and being able to effectively contribute and achieve. Young people acknowledge they have not attended and have had previous difficulties within the education system. They also acknowledge that the high staffing and supervision levels that were initially perceived as intrusive have been the key to their improved attendance and engagement with education. Young people have individual education plans which include a combination of college placement, physical activities and social and independence skills. Staff are fully committed to providing and supporting young people to try out different opportunities and they enjoy going to the gym, walking, cycling, shopping, cooking and a variety of trips. Young people say they enjoy all of these opportunities and like having staff to do things with. They

say are engaged in positive activities and therefore they now have little time to make some of the negative choices they had previously followed. Plans for young people to enjoy and achieve take into account each young person's current needs, as well as their potential. As a result, young people see themselves as making excellent progress and look forward to how much more they can achieve in the future, including a good job and getting on better with people socially.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Staff have excellent knowledge of the young people's needs and provide consistent care on a day-to-day basis, resulting in significant improvement in the welfare, behaviour and safeguarding of all young people living at the home.

Young people are supported when they move into the home, saying they receive a young person's guide and they have settled well due to the support provided by staff. Young people are empowered to understand the reason for their placements and to feel part of the running of the home. There are regular young people's meetings and key working sessions which work well, and more informal support is offered consistently on each shift. The good relationships between the staff and the young people ensure positive lines of communication.

All young people have a placement plan that contains detailed up-to-date information. These are monitored and updated by young people's key workers and the manager. Young people are very informed about their placements, the content of their care plans and how they are progressing. Consultation with and involvement of the young people is an integral part of the home. Young people's views are valued and this is excellently demonstrated in lively, respectful and meaningful discussions between them and the staff and by their written comments and signatures in the records kept about them.

Young people are supported to maintain safe and meaningful contact with family and significant others. Contact arrangements are clear to young people because they are recorded in placement plans. The staff team are well informed about how young people view the importance of their family and friendships and how these relationships can be best and positively facilitated.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people are proactively supported to develop the skills and knowledge to help them with their transition to adulthood. There is an established independence preparation package available in the home and staff focus on each young person's individual needs and situation. Young people say they are positive about their developing skills and contribution to doing more for themselves. They feel good about their abilities including cooking, domestic skills, developing good relationships

and trying out new opportunities in the community.

Young people live in a well-maintained and comfortable home. The home is furnished, decorated, maintained to a good standard and young people say it feels homely and they always try to keep it looking nice.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Young people are looked after in a service that is well managed and promotes their needs, safety and welfare. Young people and others are informed about the home with an up-to-date Statement of Purpose and young people's guide. Young people say staff help them understand how the home is run.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Discussion with staff shows that understanding and tolerance of difference is promoted and discriminatory behaviour and bullying is challenged and addressed. The staff team provide a clear commitment and environment of care to meet the needs of all young people currently living at the home.

This home was re-registered six months previous to this inspection. There is a new manager and an established staff team. Young people are looked after by a staff team with a good balance of experience. New staff are supported with an induction programme and supervision from the manager. Staffing arrangements are adequate, with some lone working, to provide good quality care and young people progressing and achieving in their placements. Training is well organised, staff say they have received regular training and supervision. However there is a deficit in the proportion of staff having the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People.

Each child has a permanent and private file, which is comprehensive, well organised and shows a clear record of each young person's progress.

The service is monitored through independent Regulation 33 visits and monthly checks by the manager.

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 the most current copy of the local safeguarding children board's procedures is kept in the home and staff have read, understand and are

knowledgeable about them (NMS 17.2)

- ensure measures of control, discipline and restraint used by the home are made clear to the placing authority, child, parent/s or carers; this is with particular reference to the documented behaviour management plans for young people (NMS 22.12)
- ensure a ratio of 80% of all care staff have completed their National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3 in the Caring for Children and Young People.(NMS 29.5)