

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Joanna Heller
Type of Inspection	Key

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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 is a registered care home for five young people of either sex aged between 12 years and 18 years old. The home provides 24 hour care for young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties. The home is part of a small private organisation which provides residential childcare, leaving care services, fostering services, family outreach and a residential family centre.

The home is situated on the outskirts of a residential area. The house is indistinguishable from other houses as a children's home. The home has easy access to local amenities including stations. The home consists of five young people's bedrooms, two staff sleeping rooms/offices, two receptions, a kitchen/dining room, one separate toilet, one toilet/bathroom and a separate shower room. Externally, there is an 80 feet garden and a front garden area.

Summary

This was an unannounced full inspection which reviewed all the key national minimum standards. The home works exceptionally well with young people successfully ensuring engagement in almost all aspects of their lives. The home demonstrates a deep commitment to securing the best outcomes possible for young people and works well in partnership with all key stakeholders. Staff are competent well trained and well supported.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The home continues to strive to improve the services offered at the home and to be a beacon for good practice. The home has at this inspection succeeded in improving services to a level where it is viewed as outstanding.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The home has excellent systems for the management of healthcare and the promotion of being healthy. Young people have access to appropriate health services such as doctors, dentists and opticians. Specialist health services are sought where required. Young people of all ages are supported in attending appointments and systems are in place to reward engaging with services. Information about health promotion services is freely accessible. Issues such as substance misuse are discussed in one to one sessions. Health promotion DVDs presented by teenagers are provided to explore key issues around emotional and physical wellbeing both in one to one or group work discussions.

The home has safe systems in place for the storage and administration of medication. Staff are trained in managing medication. Clear records are held of medication coming into and leaving the home. Clear records are maintained of medication given.

Young people benefit from a variety of nutritious home cooked foods which reflect peoples choices and cultural heritage. Young people are able to help themselves to healthy snacks at any time of the day.

Staff have received training in key areas such as first aid, food handling, as well as emotional wellbeing and issues which affect young people.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The home has excellent systems in place to safeguard young people. Young people say they feel safe living at the home and that it is a place which offers them some escape from the pressures which face them outside. From discussions with the young people and observations of interaction it was clear that young people and staff enjoy positive relationships.

Regular one to one discussions evidence how young people are encouraged to learn about keeping them self safe and to take responsibility for their actions. Risk assessments are in place for young people which identify their vulnerability and any risks they may pose to others. Activity based risk assessments are also in place. These assessments are regularly reviewed and updated. Issues such as offending behaviour and how it may place their placement and future plans at risk are discussed. The home provides a variety of information in alternative media such as DVDs developed by teenagers to discuss key issues around staying safe such as bullying and absconding. A policy relating to bullying is in place and information is displayed in the home. The home is proactive in addressing any issues of bullying. Young people say they feel able to talk to staff about such issues and are confident that the staff team will address them.

Clear systems are in place to promote good behaviour and the home is highly successful in engaging with young people to effect change. Individual reward programs are in place which are geared to the individual goals for each young person, using a menu of rewards which are relevant to them. Sanctions applied are appropriate, clearly recorded and monitored. Staff have received training in restraint, however, no restraints have taken place. Young people say that the rules in the home are fair and that sanctions applied are reasonable.

The home is able to demonstrate that complaints are effectively responded to, investigated and managed. Young people know how to complain and have confidence in the homes ability to respond to any issues of concern which they may raise. Staff are aware of the principles of confidentiality and files are securely stored.

Staff receive child protection training as part of their induction. This is then built on though external training which is regularly updated. Staff are aware of what to do in the event of an allegation or disclosure being made Where any concerns have previously arisen the home has managed these appropriately. Young people who go missing are notified to the appropriate agencies in line with local guidelines, individual risk assessments and any court orders.

The building is well maintained with regular checks in place to ensure safety is maintained. Fire precautionary arrangements in the home ensure young people and staff are safeguarded from fire in line with current good practice.

Young people are safeguarded from unsuitable people gaining employment in the home through robust vetting practices. No staff are employed in the home until essential checks such as verification of a persons identity, criminal record and employment history are carried out.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Each young person has a detailed individual plan of care developed from the comprehensive assessments carried out prior to admission. Care plans address all areas of need including emotional, social and cultural needs. Individual goals are set and levels of support directed to those areas of need. Young people are consulted on all aspects of their life.

The home has excellent systems in place to promote the educational and life achievements of young people. Management and staff demonstrate a clear commitment to securing the best possible educational outcomes for young people. The home ensures regular attendance at school through the reward systems in place. Staff are clear on the educational goals for young people, offer support with home work and attend all award ceremonies and parents evenings. Staff ensure that each young person has a suitable educational placement and ensures close links with schools, colleges and connexions. Each young person is developing, with staff support, a portfolio of their CV and educational and personal achievements in preparation for applying for jobs and college placements.

A wide variety of leisure opportunities are offered both within and outside of the home, which, are geared around the young people's interests. Books, games and games consoles are provided. Young people enjoy challenging staff in activities such as pool, football or on the 'Wii' fit. Opportunities to go to the theatre, meals out and trips to adventure parks such as Thorpe Park are organised. Time is set aside weekly for young people and their key workers to enjoy 'small activities' such as ice-skating or visit to the cinema according to the young people's choice. Two holidays funded by the home have been enjoyed and digital photo albums of the most recent trip have been ordered for each young person. Young people and placing authorities were highly positive about the leisure opportunities afforded the young people whilst living at the home.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The home has excellent systems in place to ensure the individual needs of young people are met. Before a referral to the home is accepted a comprehensive assessment process is followed from which an individual plan of care is developed. The care plan is kept under constant review and regularly updated to ensure any changes in need are identified. All needs detailed in the care plan are evidenced as followed through by staff. Any concerns about young people are fed back to the placing authority.

Placements are wherever possible planned. However, in those circumstances where an emergency placement is required, the home ensures that the placing authority core assessment is provided to ensure that the home is able to meet the young persons needs. The home has demonstrated success in ensuring positive placements for young people and ensuring minimum placement breakdown. The majority of young people move onto preparing for independence services or are successfully reintegrated into the family. Any moves on are part of a planned process for the young people and this is celebrated with a leaving party and gift.

Young people are effectively consulted on all aspects of their lives and the information on outside agencies such as children's rights are prominently displayed in the home. Residents meetings are scheduled weekly but an open door policy and free access to managers means that issues are addressed swiftly. Family members are able to visit the young people at the home and staff maintain regular telephone contact with key stakeholders.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The building provides the young people with welcoming homely accommodation that meets their needs. The home is well maintained and decorated, and young people have input into the choice of furnishings and fittings. Good systems are in place to ensure the ongoing safety of the building such as regular checks of electrical and gas safety. Fire precautionary arrangements in the home ensure young people and staff are safeguarded from fire in line with current good practice. The building is situated in a residential area close to good transport links into a major city.

The home has good systems in place to support young people through adolescence and into adulthood. Young people receive good emotional support and are actively encouraged to develop self reliance skills. Staff work with young people to secure appropriate education and work. Staff are in the process of developing portfolios and CV's with the young people. Young people are expected to care for their clothes, and are able to cook meals and are supported in learning budgeting skills. A life skills process is in place, however, young people are not fully engaging in this. The manager has identified that motivating young people in relation to preparing for semi independence is an area for development. The organisation has a semi independence service that young people are able to move on into if they wish.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Young people's individual needs are well met in practice. The home ensures the language, racial and cultural needs of all the young people are met and staff provide positive role models for young people.

The statement of purpose and children's guide are useful documents which serve to inform young people and placing authorities about the services available within the home. These documents are reviewed annually.

Staffing levels are suitable to meet the needs of the young people. A minimum of two staff are on duty at any given time day or night with additional staffing as required. Staffing is deployed flexibly to meet the needs of the young people. Where extra staffing is required this is covered by staff from the home or staff from another 'partner home' to maintain continuity of care.

This is a well managed home which ensures staff are competent, well trained and supported. Staff enjoy working at the home and feel well supported by the manager. Staff say that the manager and management team as a whole are approachable, flexible and supportive. The manager describes the staff team as deeply committed to the welfare and development of the young people. Regular staff meetings and supervision ensure that staff are aware of key issues within the home.

Staff serve a formal probationary period before being able to take on responsibility of being shift leader. However there is no written confirmation to staff that they have successfully completed their probationary period. The organisation demonstrates a good commitment to staff training and staff benefit from a wealth of training relevant to the roles they perform. Staff say that training is well funded and they are able to access relevant training of their

choice. Core training such as child protection, first aid, food hygiene, behaviour management and health and safety is provided to all staff.

Staff consistently demonstrate a deep commitment to working with young people to secure the best life outcomes possible. Staff are professional and competent and receive very positive comments from placing authorities such as.. ' I use the home regularly for placements because I trust that the management and staff team are reliable, responsible, consistent and dedicated to producing good outcomes for the young people in their care. Young people have reported feeling happy and valued and able to contribute. I have often had requests from young people to either return to this home or to remain there as long as possible.'

The organisation has good systems in place for monitoring the standards of care within the home. The registered person/ manager arranges for the manager of the sister home to visit the home monthly to carry out quality audits. Any issues identified are swiftly addressed. Young people are involved in feeding back on the service through young people meetings and through an open door policy.

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 Childrens Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
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Recommendations

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

- ensure written evidence is in place to demonstrate staff have successfully completed their probationary period (29.3).