

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

This home is operated by the local authority and provides a residential service for eight young people, aged 7 to 18 years, and a short break service for four young people, aged 4 to 18 years. The home additionally has an emergency bed on the short breaks unit. All the young people have severe learning disabilities and challenging behaviours. This home is a large house that is divided into two designated areas to accommodate the two aspects of service provision. Both areas provide communal rooms, play areas, bedrooms and bathroom facilities. The home is in a rural area close to a large town. Local shopping and recreational amenities are also close by.

Six young people participated in this inspection.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

At this full unannounced inspection all key standards were inspected.

This is an inspiring service where young people with learning disabilities and behaviour that challenges thrive and make clear and positive progress. Young people are appropriately challenged and effectively supported to develop their confidence, abilities and understanding of themselves and the world around them. The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding throughout the standards inspected. A parent said, 'They provide a safe, caring, structured and enjoyable environment for children and young people.' Young people are clearly enabled to make positive choices and express their views and wishes. The key strengths of this home are its management and staff. The individual needs and aspirations of young people lie at the heart of this home driving staff to provide a high quality service leading to outstanding outcomes for young people.

Improvements since the last inspection

The Registered Manager has fully complied with both recommendations made at the previous inspection. The effectiveness of any sanctions applied is clearly recorded and there is clear written guidance about all 'breakaway' techniques staff might use.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Staff know what the young people like and do not like to eat. They also actively encourage young people to try new foods. A parent said, 'My daughter has the choice of a healthy range of food there and they have been very supportive of my work to get her to eat a wider range of foods.' Young people said that they like the food on offer. They are provided with appropriate equipment to help them to eat their meals independently. Cultural preferences are catered for. Young people grow and eat fruit and vegetables from their garden. This year they have harvested carrots, tomatoes, strawberries, parsley and raspberries as well as giant sunflowers! They enjoy healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs.

Staff are focused and committed to ensuring a high quality provision of health care for young people living at this home. Staff are proactive and responsive to the emotional and health care needs of the young people. All young people are registered with doctors, dentists and opticians. A variety of healthcare professionals including mental health services can be accessed. Each young person has a comprehensive health plan which is up to date and states separate health needs including those arising from cultural needs. Key working sessions with young people help them to understand their own health and make healthy choices.

The safe handling of medication is well managed in this home. The home mostly uses prescribed medication. Staff receive training in the safe handling of medication for which they are assessed on an annual basis. Two staff always prepare and administer medication. Medication is accurately recorded, received and disposed of appropriately. The medication cupboard is secure. All accidents are recorded and first aid is given as appropriate. All staff are trained in first aid and renew their training as required.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The safety and rights of both staff and young people are protected. Staff prioritise the safety of young people and are competent in their knowledge of protecting them. Staff receive training on safeguarding young people as part of their induction and then at regular intervals. It is an intrinsic part of the home. A social worker said, 'A keyworker has done role play as part of a key work session on keeping safe with a young person who had high levels of anxiety relating to this. A lot of work went into creating strategies to make the young person safe and feel safe.' Staff have a good knowledge of the bullying policy and ensure any bullying is immediately dealt with. Keyworker sessions are also used to help young people accept difference. There are no incidents of young people going missing from the home.

No complaints or concerns have been raised by parents or young people but procedures are in place to ensure they would be appropriately and swiftly resolved.

An advocate for the young people visits them on a regular basis to ensure their views are communicated effectively.

The privacy of young people is respected by staff. The living arrangements provide space where they can relax and easily find privacy away from others if they wish. Staff ensure the privacy and dignity of the young people, such as by keeping bathroom and toilet doors shut when young people are receiving personal care. All records are kept confidentially. Young people's issues are not discussed openly.

Staff view young people positively and young people are relaxed around staff. Staff find creative and innovative strategies to manage behaviour that challenges. There are exceptional training and communication systems in place ensuring staff provide a planned and consistent approach. Young people make good progress enabling them to become accepted members of society. Physical intervention is used as a last resort. There is a minimal amount of physical intervention carried out in this home. Sanctions are applied fairly and appropriately although rarely due to the level of understanding some young people have. Staff effectively manage challenging behaviour in a calm and professional manner.

Young people are protected by robust recruitment procedures and monitoring of visitors. Safety checks are completed and staff only commence employment when they have a satisfactory Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) disclosure and two satisfactory references. All visitors sign into the building and must show identification.

The home has comprehensive risk assessments for all aspects of safety of the premises and grounds including fire and young people's behaviour and activities. These assessments have taken into account the daily activities in and outside the home. All staff are given fire safety training and fire drills are carried out regularly. Fire safety equipment is checked as appropriate and a detailed record kept. Young people are protected by robust health and safety procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Staff are positive in their approach to education and its value for young people. They work closely with schools ensuring a consistent approach to care and education is maintained. Shifts are well planned ensuring young people are engaged in activities throughout the evenings and weekends. All achievements are celebrated. Religious and cultural preferences are well supported. The home is well resourced making good use of art and craft rooms as well as a 'music shack' where young people can play instruments such as the guitar, keyboards and drums.

Individual support is comprehensively detailed in each young person's placement plan. Observations and discussions with staff demonstrate that staff ensure each young person's individual needs are fully met. Young people are encouraged to value their own culture, language and religion by a diverse staff team. The practical

individual support is reflected in the variety of planning documentation that is in place. This includes identifying any religious and cultural needs a young person may have. The staff know the young people well and are very knowledgeable of their individual needs and the implications this has for their care. The individual needs and aspirations of young people lie at the heart of this home driving staff to provide a high quality service, leading to outstanding outcomes for young people.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The Statement of Purpose clearly sets out the home's admission policy. Young people are fully supported during the admission process and when leaving the home. Transitions to new services are carried out sensitively and on an individual basis. For example one young person might visit several new homes and decide which one they might like to move in to whereas another may need a great deal more preparation. Staff from both the existing home and the new home conduct visits and exchange photographs to be used with and on behalf of the young person. The young person may not know about the actual move until nearer the time. This is done to keep their anxiety to a minimum.

Staff provide a high standard of care to young people and meet their individual needs with the knowledge and understanding they have of them. A comprehensive assessment of need, placement plan (residential action plan) and risk assessments are in place for each young person. Monthly case management meetings are held for each young person between key workers and the case manager to inform placement planning reviews. Social workers and parents are also invited to these meetings. Any changes to the placement plans are effectively communicated to the team. Key working sessions occur regularly and are well planned covering a range of subjects such as what makes young people happy or sad, to sexual health.

Statutory reviews take place within the required timescale. Young people do not generally attend their reviews but photographic evidence of their progress is shown. Staff also carry out key work sessions with young people to ascertain their views and wishes so these can be put forward at their review.

Staff encourage and support young people in maintaining contact with parents and everyone else who is significant to them. Plans detail the role of contact in promoting cultural identity and experiences. A parent said, 'This is a service which is invaluable for our entire family well-being.' Parents agreed that the home provides excellent communication, one said, 'The services are excellent. The home phones us before visits to check on how my son is and phone the following morning. They also write in his diary so that the school is updated.'

Young people are given the opportunity to make choices and decisions through the use of appropriate communication systems such as symbols, signing and objects of reference. Staff are competent in their use of these systems and use them confidently to ensure they can communicate effectively with young people. Staff are

supportive in helping and guiding young people towards making positive decisions for themselves. Young people are relaxed in the company of staff and are quick to approach them with any issues they may have.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

Staff encourage young people to carry out a variety of tasks independently or with support. These include personal hygiene, cooking, shopping and cleaning. Staff provide a consistent and committed approach to enabling young people's successful transition into adulthood. A parent said, 'My son is coming to the end of his stay at the home, all I can say is that they have been absolutely brilliant. I will miss the contact and the staff. They have allowed my son to grow up into an independent capable young man. I know he will miss everyone. He has made some fantastic friends in the young people and staff.'

Young people live in a homely environment with high quality furnishings. There is a large amount of communal space. The young people have excellent facilities such as sensory and soft play rooms, a secret sensory garden, the music shack and art rooms. Young people's bedrooms are personalised to ensure they meet their individual needs and communal areas are personalised with photographs of young people and their work that has been completed in the home. The home is clean, tidy and well maintained.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The home's ethos and underpinning philosophy is strong throughout. This ensures that young people are in a supportive and caring home within which they are valued and safe but enabled to thrive and develop.

There is a strong leadership and management team who provide staff with clear and consistent guidance and support. The organisation fully supports training and development ensuring staff are competent, caring and qualified to enable them to provide a high quality service to young people. This is a dedicated and professional team. The Registered Manager ensures the quality of the service through rigorous monitoring systems which monitor the performance of the home against its Statement of Purpose and address any shortfalls quickly and effectively. There is a strong commitment to improving practice through research and professional development. Young people are central to all decisions and are encouraged to take an active role within the home. Managers and staff provide strong and consistent role models for young people. Young people make clear progress within the home enabling them to realise their potential and providing them with the confidence to achieve their aspirations.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Evidence supports a strong

commitment to improving equality and diversity in practice. The quality and detail of young people's plans also supports this commitment. Young people receive an individual service in the home which is designed to meet their personal needs. All staff have in-depth knowledge of the young people they are working with to ensure their needs are consistently and appropriately met.