

Inspection report for Children's Home

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| Inspector | Mark Kersh |
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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

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| 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 one of a number of children's homes run by a private organisation. The home is located in a diverse area of a city. The home provides medium- to long-term accommodation for up to four young people of either sex, between the ages of 11 to 17 years. The accommodation comprises single bedrooms, a lounge, dining room, kitchen and a communal area. Local shops are easily accessible, as is the bus route into the city centre.

Four young people currently live in this home of whom three were present during this inspection.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

At this unannounced key inspection, all key standards were inspected. This is an outstanding service in most respects, and the home provides care for young people to high quality standards. Young people clearly benefit from the services provided to them, and they thrive and make excellent progress in this home.

Staff provide young people with excellent support, and they strive to achieve the best possible outcomes for them in areas, such as, health, safety, enjoyment, participation and preparation into adulthood. Staff and young people have established trusting relationships and young people respond to this in a positive way. Feedback forms provide evidence that the home is operating to high standards and achieving positive outcomes for young people.

There are no actions or recommendations for improvement following this inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Young people's health needs are met exceptionally well. Young people are fully involved in the planning of meals, all of which are provided in accordance with their individual dietary needs. Young people plan, shop, prepare and cook meals for themselves as part of their independence programme. Specific dietary requirements

are catered for and young people experience foods from other cultures through well-planned themed nights. Healthy eating is promoted and young people confirm mealtimes are organised to be pleasant, friendly and sociable occasions. Young people look after themselves and show pride in their appearance. Physical exercise is routinely promoted by staff and incorporated into activities young people enjoy.

Young people's health needs are promoted extremely well and all are registered with health services locally. Young people's individual health needs are identified and assessed. This is recorded in a detailed, easily accessible plans which staff use and monitor ensuring specific health issues are addressed. There are excellent links maintained with health professionals outside of the home and services are available for young people to meet their specific health related matters.

Medication is safely managed and an accountable system is in place. Staff are knowledgeable and trained to administer all medication safely, in line with the home's procedure. Medication is consistently administered as prescribed and safely stored. All staff are trained in first aid and can respond to minor illnesses or injury before professional health advice is sought.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Staff respect young people and have developed strong positive relationships because they listen well and take an interest in meeting young people's needs. Young people have regular opportunities to discuss personal issues individually and confidentially with staff, and staff are sensitive to these needs. Young people's privacy is respected and they can make and receive telephone calls in private.

Young people understand the home's complaints procedure as well as knowing other agencies can advocate a complaint on their behalf, for example the children's rights service. This has been tested with a positive outcome being achieved for young people.

Staff play a strong parenting role with the young people and are committed and focused about their safety. Safeguarding issues are promptly responded to by trained staff. Appropriate action is taken to seek advice or involve outside professional agencies charged with protecting young people. Staff support young people well and advocate for them to ensure strategies are in place that keep them safe from abuse and sexual exploitation.

There are no current issues with young people going missing from care, or with them placing themselves, or others, at risk from harm. The home works in line with the local police protocol for reporting and attending strategy meetings should young people be missing from care. Equally, there are no issues to do with bullying inside or outside of the home. All staff are fully aware and demonstrate well their responsibilities of informing appropriate authorities should a significant event occur and this further protects young people. Issues to do with unacceptable behaviour are

managed well by staff. Restraint has not taken place and sanctions imposed are fair and agreed by young people. Rewards feature far more than sanction in the records kept by the home.

Young people live in a safe environment where safety systems are tested regularly. There are regular fire drills, and comprehensive risk assessments in place for health and safety matters and young people's activities and outings.

The recruitment of the right type of staff is a high priority for the home's manager. Recruitment practices are rigorous and ensure staff are vetted and police checked, to assess their suitability to provide care. Such checks are legally required and necessary. One new member of staff confirms the recruitment process to be rigorous and fair. All visitors to the home are asked for identification, sign in and are briefed in respect of the fire evacuation procedure and assembly point.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are supported very well by staff so as their identified goals can be met, with positive outcomes achieved. Staff meet a diverse range of individual needs exceptionally well. Their approach is open and they share a commitment to ensure an understanding of young people. Young people fully participate in one-to-one meetings with staff as well as meeting with other young people accommodated. This gives them good opportunities to share their views and influence the way the home is run. Detailed key worker reports and young people's meeting records support such discussions and are monitored for outcomes to be achieved within realistic timescales.

Educational attendance is excellent with all young people being involved at local schools or training projects. There is a very good selection of education materials within the home and young people have access to computers with internet access. Staff are extremely supportive of young people's education and are highly motivated and encourage young people to identify and reach their goals. Young people's individual achievements are celebrated and a very good level of support is provided to young people preparing for their exams.

Young people are provided with positive opportunities to enhance their social skills. They attend a wide range of activities outside of the home which broadens their experiences and share fun with their peers. This participation and involvement in community-based activities ensures they receive the same opportunities as other young people. Hobbies and individual interests are pursued and annual holidays are provided for young people with staff. There are sufficient funds to meet individual and group needs in respect of leisure opportunities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Young people's placement plans are well written, informative and clear. Their needs are carefully assessed and their plans are regularly reviewed. Statutory reviews take place within recommended timescales. This ensures young people's progress and development is formally reviewed. Young people's progress is also reviewed by staff and regular reports are sent to their placing social workers of the progress they make in this home. The home consults regularly with young people, their placing social workers, parents and schools. Consultation is purposeful and enables the manager and staff to act on suggestions made in order to maintain the high quality of care and support this home provides to young people.

Staff are proactive in providing support to ensure young people sustain contact with their families and friends. Where contact arrangements are supervised all of the necessary arrangements are in place to facilitate this.

Admissions to the home are generally planned to enable young people and their families to meet with staff and receive information about the services the home provides. Where emergency admissions take place planning meetings are promptly arranged to consider if this home can meet the identified needs of an admission. In both cases the likely impact on the existing resident group is considered. Young people, their placing social workers, parents and schools are consulted when placements end and young people move on.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people's independence programmes are developing well in the home. Staff support young people in preparing them for independence and go the extra mile to ensure suitable supported provision is available to young people when they leave this home. Excellent leaving care packs are available to young people which inform them of health and safety issues and services they can access for support once they move on from this home. All young people take part in daily living tasks and set days are planned for individual young people to prepare and cook their own meals.

The home is situated within a local community. The planned refurbishment programme has been completed and the interior of the home is maintained well with new furniture being purchased and homely touches throughout. There is a good maintenance and repair programme for the building, furniture and equipment, and any damage is repaired promptly. The home is kept clean and young people contribute to this. There are a sufficient number of toilet and washing facilities for young people. Staff and visitors, all of which provide them with privacy.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. The management and staff team continue to maintain a high focus in this area. Young people have the opportunity to experience positive life experiences, for example, life and culture within another country. They have individual opportunities provided for them to develop their own unique identities, interests and hobbies. Issues to do with culture and identity are handled sensitively and met. Young people and staff have access to a wide range of information to assist them to learn and promote equality and diversity. This encourages them to develop an awareness of themselves, and the various faiths, cultures and traditions that make up our diverse society.

The home's Statement of Purpose document is well written and is made available to those who request it. The children's guide informs young people of the services the home provides and together with a welcome pack provides them with information about services available to them outside of the home.

Young people continue to benefit from the care provided by an experienced and qualified staff team. They are provided with a continuity of care by staff who all work together consistently to meet the needs of young people. All staff have completed mandatory training and refresher courses ensure staff are up to date with current legislation.

Leadership and management of the home is strong. There is a genuine commitment from staff to achieve the best possible outcomes for young people. Feedback forms from young people, their parents, placing social workers and schools are analysed and used to inform best practice outcomes. The home's performance is consistently monitored each month, internally by the management team and externally by an independent person. The reports from such monitoring arrangements demonstrate the high level of care this home provides.

Young people's case files and other information written about them is of a high standard. This facilitates excellent communication with other professionals. Young people's case files provide them with information and history of their time spent in the home.