

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 is a children's home working in partnership with a Metropolitan Borough Council. The home is operated by a charitable trust that has a number of children's homes in addition to this home.

The home is a detached house situated within a semi-rural location and provides care and accommodation for up to four young people aged from 13 years to 17 years at any one time.

The ground floor has a lounge, a sensory room, a play room and a kitchen and dining room combined. The first floor has individual bedrooms for young people and a sleep-in room for staff. The home is not adapted for wheelchair users.

Four young people currently live in the home and were present during the inspection.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

This was an unannounced full inspection focusing upon 25 key national minimum standards (NMS) under the Every Child Matters outcomes for children and young people.

Young people have taken part in this inspection.

A healthy life style for young people is given high importance. This is being achieved by young people being able to access a wide range of health care professionals. The staff also receive training in a number of the relevant areas, giving them knowledge to pick up on and address areas of concern around young people's health.

Meticulous detail is given to the welfare and safety of young people in the home. Robust measures assist in keeping young people safe. There are specific and detailed plans in place to ensure this happens. Managing behaviour positively is a significant strength at the home. Young people benefit greatly from having a consistent staff team who implement clear boundaries and follow their care plans. This assists and supports the success the young people are achieving in this area. There are excellent communication systems in place, assisting staff significantly in their work with each young person to meet their diverse needs.

Comprehensive monitoring systems are in place. Each of these areas support young people to make continued progress in their lives.

The short fall found relates to the recording of fire instruction for relief staff once it has taken place.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were no actions or recommendations raised at the previous inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

A variety of meal options are on the menu which cater for young people's diverse needs. The young people are provided and encouraged to eat healthily. They make choices about the food they wish to eat on a weekly basis. This is achieved with the use of pictures of foods and meals. Staff have an excellent knowledge of young people's likes and dislikes to ensure they receive meals that they like and enjoy.

Meticulous care is taken to ensure the health, medical and medication information is recorded accurately. The service fully involves parents, keeping them up to date. This detailed and specific medical information is discussed with staff ensuring they are up to date and aware of each young person's needs. Young people have access to a number of specialist healthcare professionals.

Staff support young people to attend health care appointments. They have close links with health care professionals. Therefore, young people's needs are specifically identified and care is provided to ensure that their health is very well promoted and maintained whilst in the care of the home.

The medication is administered, recorded correctly and securely stored. Staff are trained on how to administer medication and in first aid. The medication system is monitored on a frequent basis to make sure policies, guidance and safe practices are being followed to ensure young people receive their medication safely and as prescribed.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

There is a great emphasis and importance given to ensuring young people have privacy. They are supported with personal care in a dignified way. Staff can explain how this is achieved to meet the diverse needs of each young person. The records are securely stored and the staff are aware of how to maintain confidentiality. This ensures young people's privacy is respected and information confidentially handled.

The staff, parents and some young people are aware of the procedure to follow if they have a complaint. Young people have access to the information in an inspiring, child-friendly format. The use of pictorial symbols assists the staff to communicate further with young people to establish their complaint. This allows the staff to

respond effectively to resolve any issues young people may have. The complaints information is a standing item in the weekly young people's meetings. This shows a commitment from the staff to support and make sure young people have the opportunity to raise concerns or complaints.

There is a very effective system in place to record and act on any external concerns made known by parents, placing social workers or the local community. There have been no complaints raised since the previous inspection. The action taken and the final outcome of a complaint have been recorded for complaints previously made. Staff said the complainant would be kept informed of the progress of their complaint. Parents said they have never needed to formally complain but any concern raised has been responded to immediately and staff always listen and sort the matter out quickly.

No incidents of bullying have occurred in the home since the last inspection. Staff are aware of how to deal with bullying and other related behaviours. High staffing levels and specific care planning enables staff to monitor young people closely. Young people are protected from bullying, through the home's policies, procedures and the good practice of the staff.

Good protection and security measures are in place to protect young people from going missing without authority. Staff are aware of the procedure to follow in the event of a young person going missing, to try and ensure their future safety. Each young person has an individual missing person protocol for the staff to follow. No young people have gone missing from the home since the last inspection.

Staff are aware of significant events relating to the protection of children living at the home, which they would report to the appropriate authorities. Where required this has been undertaken.

Managing behaviour positively is a high priority in the home and it is promoted and encouraged consistently by the staff team. This is to ensure young people behave in a socially acceptable way. Staff's approach to caring for young people is to have clear care plans, boundaries and good communication in place. Positive behaviour is the main focus and frequent praise is used to encourage individual young people's appropriate behaviour. Although, staff are clear on how they manage young people's behaviour, refresher training in behaviour management and physical intervention is provided to staff on a regular basis.

The sanctions and restraint records have a format which enables the required information to be recorded. They also include a section for young people to record their views and responses. No sanctions have taken place for some considerable length of time. Staff use physical restraint as a last resort to safeguard young people and others. There have been minimal interventions used.

Young people's safety is enhanced significantly through the very good practices and support of the staff. The home provides physical safety and security. For example, detailed and specific risk assessments are in place, which cover the relevant areas

and supporting safety measures which are implemented with young people to keep them safe. These have been reviewed on a frequent basis and updated where necessary.

Fire records indicate that frequent checks on the system and appropriate fire training, instruction and drills have taken place. Although, relief staff receive fire safety instruction this is not always recorded. All health and safety areas are monitored by the manager on a regular basis to ensure appropriate measures are in place to keep young people safe.

Staff recruitment files have not been checked on this inspection as these are held at the head office of the service. These will be checked at the next interim inspection.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The young people receive a wealth of individual support from the staff, health and other professionals when they need it, to assist them to make progress in their lives. These include such people as psychologists, speech therapists and education staff.

Education is a high priority at the home. All young people of school age received full time education or an education package is in place. Each young person has a annual school review and minutes are held on their file. There is a computer for young people to access for leisure or education. Young people are given both practical and individual encouragement to achieve goals and targets set within their education where appropriate.

Staff have very positive links with all the schools young people attend. Good communication is maintained by telephone calls, attending school reviews and communication dairies to ensure a consistent approach. Therefore, young people are very well supported and encouraged to attend school to ensure they attain the necessary education that will assist them into adulthood.

Young people are encouraged and supported by staff to play, undertake activities and go on outings which develops their confidence. For example, using the trampoline, assorted toys, watching their favourite DVDs, videos, visits to the local park, shops, going swimming, car rides to the coast and in the countryside .

During the inspection young people enjoyed going swimming, going out for a ride in the car and using the sensory room. Some young people have benefitted from an annual holiday, with some going with their family, supported by staff.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Young people's needs are robustly assessed by the staff and supporting professionals. This is documented within individual plans of care to outline in specific detail what their needs are and how they will be met and implemented. These work in conjunction with a number of other supporting documents. Such as health care plans, autism assessments, behaviour strategies and risk assessments. Staff can verbalise the care they provide to young people which reflects their individual plans of care. There is person centred plan, with assorted pictures to assist young people to understand the care and support they receive.

Care plans have been reviewed frequently to ensure that the appropriate care is being provided to the young person. There are individual goals and targets for each young person. Each young person is making progress. This is assisting them to move positively forward in their life. Staff and parents said progress is made in small steps by the young people and over a period of time this is built upon.

Statutory care reviews have taken place and parents are actively involved along with other relevant parties. Some young people attend reviews. Statutory review minutes are held on the case files. This ensures young people's progress is being closely monitored.

Staff have frequent and constructive contact with family members and significant others to ensure young people's care is appropriate. Parents commented on the consistency of the staff team, their caring approach to looking after their child and the excellent communication with them. They said they feel fully informed and involved and are able to discuss anything with the staff and manager. Parents also commented on the progress their children have made since living in the home.

Support and encouragement is given to young people to make decisions about their lives and the running of the home. Young people make decisions about the food they eat, daily routines, social and leisure activities.

There is a weekly young person's meeting held with standard items included to ensure young people's views can be gained. This ensures young people are consulted about their lives showing their opinions are valued.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people are being supported to develop their independence skills appropriate to their age and understanding. They are supported in a number of areas to undertake practical tasks, such as, their own personal care and daily living skills. A young person buttered their own toast in the morning. Parents said their child has made progress in feeding themselves since coming to live at the home.

Transition plans are in place for young people over 16 years of age. This supports the young person well into moving on and into adulthood services. The majority of areas are documented on how the young person will be supported. Parents did say that they are pleased with the work and support the staff are giving to prepare their child for moving on. However, they thought the local authority is not responding and making decisions about future adult services for their child in a timely fashion.

The accommodation is decorated and furnished to a good standard, providing a domestic style environment for the young people to live in. The home is clean, tidy and repairs are made quickly to maintain a positive environment. Bedrooms are personalised and equipped with a range of furniture. In recent months items from around the home have been removed to try and support a young person settling into the home. The manager said items will be re-introduced back over a period of time.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

An up to date Statement of Purpose is available to inform professionals and members of the public about how care is provided at the home. There is a very good children's guide. It is available in a number of formats. Before admission, wherever possible young people undertake a series of visits to the home to support them with settling in and assist with the staff getting to know them.

Staff receive strong leadership, support and guidance in promoting young people's welfare. Formal supervision is given to all staff at regular intervals. Staff meetings and daily handovers form part of the robust support system. The stable staff team work to provide a consistent care approach to young people. Staff said they have excellent communication systems and work extremely well together as a team. Parents said the staff are child centred.

Young people receive care from competent and experienced staff who can meet their needs. There are high staffing levels in place, to care of four young people. The staff team have a wealth of relevant experience of caring for young people with autism and learning disabilities.

The majority of staff have completed the National Vocational Qualification training at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People or have an equivalent qualification. The target of 80% of the work force achieving this qualification has been exceeded. When the one remaining person completes the qualification, 100% will be achieved.

The staff have access to a selection of training in current childcare practices to ensure they are competent to meet the individual needs of the young people. They have opportunities to undertake mandatory and other training areas, such as autism and epilepsy awareness. Staff benefit from having refresher training in a number of areas, which include; behaviour management, food hygiene and first aid.

Monthly monitoring visits take place to check how care is provided in the home. Further detailed monitoring is undertaken by the operations manager, manager and the senior staff team. This contributes further to provide a robust quality assurance system to ensure the young people living at the home are well cared for and NMS and regulations are being met.

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 records are kept after the fire procedures have been explained to relief staff. (NMS26)