

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Pete Hylton
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home provides care for up to four young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. It provides medium to long-term residential care and is owned by a private company.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements

Adequate: a service that only meets minimum requirements

Inadequate: a service that does not meet minimum requirements

Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be **good**.

The staff team ensure that highly individualised care is given to young people at all times. Care plans reflect the diversity of the young people and their wishes, feelings and views inform choices and decisions in the home. Young people know that the staff team care about their safety, welfare and progress. Positive outcomes are promoted and young people are encouraged and supported to make progress in all areas of their lives.

Relationships between staff and young people are good. Young people feel listened to, respected and valued. Regular individual and group meetings with young people ensure that their voices are heard and acted upon. Comments from young people include; 'I am happy here', 'staff are nice' and 'it's good.'

The home is well managed and safely maintained. All required checks are in place and regular audits of the home ensure that any defects are identified and resolved. Young people are safe and feel safe in the home.

The management and leadership of the home are positive. The staff team are stable, settled and competent in their duties. Areas of development are appropriately addressed and actions taken where necessary.

As a result of this inspection, two recommendations have been made. These relate to ensuring that sanctions are clear and easily understood and ensuring that young people are encouraged to engage in life-story work.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure that sanctions and rewards for behaviour are clear, reasonable and fair and are understood by all staff and children (NMS 3.8)
- ensure that staff support and encourage the child to reflect on and understand their history, according to their age and understanding, and to keep appropriate memorabilia of their time in the placement. Staff record and help children make a record of (subject to age and understanding), significant life events. (NMS 22.6)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

The educational achievement of young people, in relation to their starting points, is good. A teacher commented with regards to the progress of a young person they had 'made fantastic progress and thoroughly enjoys and loves school.' Where young people are disengaged from education, the staff team ensure that appropriate programmes are implemented and robust actions are taken to source more appropriate placements. As a result, young people know that education is an integral part of their development.

The health of young people is good. All young people are up-to-date with their immunisations, health appointments and, where necessary, specialist appointments. As a result, young people benefit from access to services of support and this supports their continuing health development. Where young people are able, they take responsibility for their own medication needs. This ensures that young people develop a sense of responsibility and independence with managing their own health. Young people are aware of the risks of smoking, substance misuse, sexualised behaviour and other forms of risk taking.

Young people are able to maintain relationships with their friends, families and other people who are important to them. This ensures that young people can maintain their identity and sense of belonging and attachment. Furthermore, relationships between young people in the home are positive and young people enjoy communal activities. For example, cinema trips, visiting the local pool centre and playing with their friends outside. As a result, young people develop an attachment to the local community and enjoy spending time with their friends, the staff and each other.

All young people develop their independence as a result of living at the home. They are encouraged to take pride in their personal space and maintain a clean, tidy and attractive environment. As a result, young people develop skills in completing a range of domestic tasks. Furthermore, young people regularly help prepare meals

and complete additional tasks around the home. An independence programme is followed by young people and this ensures that they develop further skills in a structured and age-appropriate manner. For example, young people learn how to write a job application, complete their curriculum vitae and learn how to budget for household bills. This ensures that young people are equipped with a range of appropriate skills in readiness for adulthood.

Quality of care

The quality of the care is **good**.

Regular key working sessions ensure that young people are able to discuss their feelings, wishes and plans for the future. Some young people are supported to keep memorabilia and record key events in their lives. This ensures that young people develop an understanding of their lives in the home and are able to recognise their achievements. However, to date, some young people have not completed any work in this area. As a result, they are not fully able to develop their understanding of their life history. Medication procedures are safe and effective. All medicines are securely held in the home and carefully administered. This ensures that the health needs of young people are promoted and prescribed medication is given as directed. Young people are encouraged to develop and maintain healthy lifestyles. Food provided to young people is balanced, nutritious and reflects their individual choices and preferences. A range of positive activities are promoted and young people are encouraged to maintain their personal fitness. As a result, the health outcomes for young people are positively addressed as young people lead active lives.

Complaints from young people are rare and where they do occur, are quickly and appropriately managed and resolved. The home has a clear and accessible complaints policy for young people. As a result, young people know that they can raise their concerns and that they will be responded to. The young person's guide contains all required details and is readily accessible around the home. The provision of a telephone for young people ensures that they can ring services of support if they so wish.

Care plans are highly personalised and all required details are recorded. The staff team ensure that comprehensive reports of young people's progress are collated and shared with parents, carers and placing authorities. As a result, concerns are quickly identified, swiftly shared and appropriately resolved. A social worker commented that 'communication is good.'

Where young people regularly attend school, they do so with success and make progress. Where young people are facing difficulties in their current education placement, the staff team ensure that appropriate referrals to alternative services are made. A teacher commented that 'the home have been very proactive in arranging a new educational placement.' As a result, young people are encouraged to develop and maintain their academic progress and attendance.

The views of young people are sought and influence changes in the home. For

example, regular meetings with young people ensure that their choices about meals, activities and ideas are captured and acted upon. Young people are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms and take pride in their personal space and the communal areas of the home.

The physical environment has improved since the last inspection. Redecoration of communal areas means that the home is bright, nicely presented and homely. Young people are encouraged to develop a sense of pride in their bedrooms and personalise these to their individual tastes. Furthermore, young people are encouraged to complete domestic chores and keep their personal space tidy and organised. This ensures that young people are starting to develop key skills for adulthood and independence. A young person commented, in relation to their developing independence, that the staff 'are helping me to get myself ready for moving on.'

Safeguarding children and young people

The service is **adequate** at keeping children and young people safe and feeling safe.

All staff are trained in the home's chosen method of restraint and regularly refresh their training. Incidents of restraint occur infrequently and are appropriately managed. All relevant details, including the views of young people, are explored and recorded. Young people are encouraged to display positive behaviour in the home and wider community. The use of rewards and incentives ensures that young people are praised for positive behaviour. Sanctions are used to discourage socially unacceptable behaviours. However, sanctions are not always clear or easily understood by young people or staff. For example, where young people display different behaviours, they are given the same sanction. As a result, the effectiveness of sanctions is diluted as the same sanction is routinely given. A recommendation has been made to improve this area of practice.

Since the last inspection, there have been frequent incidents of young people going missing for short periods of time. The staff team ensure that the reasons behind these behaviours are discussed with young people and shared with appropriate parties. The staff team are proactive in working with key agencies to reduce the risks faced by young people. A police officer commented that the 'management of the home are good at raising concerns' and that 'the staff actively search for young people when they go missing.' Furthermore, a social worker commented that they have 'no concerns with how the home is managing the missing behaviour.' The Registered Manager ensures that all protocols are closely followed and concerns about the safety and wellbeing of young people is robustly brought to the attention of relevant agencies.

Young people are safe and feel safe in the home. Effective risk assessment ensures that all known vulnerabilities are identified and robust plans are in place to address them. Young people know that staff care about them and are genuinely committed to ensuring their safety at all times. Regular key work sessions focus on specific behaviours and issues. As a result, young people are supported in discussing the reasons behind their behaviours and are encouraged to reduce these. This has had

some impact and young people are developing more positive behaviours as a result. A young person commented that 'I behave better now, I have calmed down a lot.'

Staff are safely recruited to the home and all required checks are made prior to their employment starting. This ensures that only suitable adults come into contact with young people in the home. Visitors to the home are appropriately vetted and where necessary, escorted around the home. This further promotes the safety of young people in the home.

The home is safely maintained. All required checks on electrical and gas installations are up to date. Regular checks of the physical environment ensure that any defects are swiftly identified and appropriately resolved. Fire safety is very well managed in the home. Regular fire drills, including evening and daytime drills, ensure that all young people and staff know how to evacuate in the event of fire. This is further enhanced by regular checks of all fire detection systems and fire-fighting equipment.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of the children's home are **good**.

The home was last inspected in February 2013 and was judged to be making good progress. The Registered Manager has taken appropriate action to meet the one requirement from this inspection. This related to the condition of some parts of the home. Redecoration and where necessary, repair, has improved the internal appearance of the home. As a result, young people live in a home that is now appropriately maintained and presented.

A clear development plan is in place and regularly reviewed. This ensures that the home's progress is monitored and identified improvements are acted upon. The home's Statement of Purpose is clear, up to date and includes all required details. As a result, young people, parents, carers and placing authorities are able to review the service offered by the home. The Registered Manager ensures that the home has positive relationships within the local community. Complaints from external sources are rare and where they do occur are quickly and amicably resolved. Relationships with outside agencies are similarly positive. A police officer commented that they have 'no concerns about the home.'

The Registered Manager ensures that the home is well managed and appropriately monitored. In addition to the required monitoring reports, monthly reviews of young people's progress ensure that care plans are up to date, relevant and have a positive impact. Files are regularly audited and any areas to improve are acted upon. The organisation ensures that the home is regularly monitored and young people are encouraged to share their views with the monitoring visitor. Reports from these visits are sent to the home and used to identify areas for improvement and further development.

The stable and committed staff team are well managed and clear in their duties and responsibilities. All staff are up to date with their training and regular supervisions

ensure that staff are able to discuss the progress of young people and ideas for further improvement. The Registered Manager has developed additional in-house training and guidance for staff. As a result, staff are encouraged to develop their knowledge of regulations, national minimum standards and current practice issues in social care. For example, staff are provided with additional guidance around recognising and responding to concerns around child sexual exploitation. This is further enhanced through additional external training with the local police force. As a result, young people are cared for by a staff team who are knowledgeable, confident and competent in managing their safety and well-being.

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 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the *Inspections of children's homes – framework for inspection* and the evaluation schedule for the inspection of children's homes.