

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Sarah Oldham
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The company owned home provides care and accommodation for up to seven young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service 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 **outstanding**.

Young people benefit from highly individualised and consistent levels of care and support. They have excellent relationships with the staff who ensure that the young people's needs and development is the focus of their practice. Young people speak positively about the staff and the home. They say; 'it is great living here, I am really happy and staff encourage and support me to achieve so much.' They feel able to talk with staff and to share their views. Staff ensure that they support and advocate for young people to enable them to achieve their optimum potential in all aspects of their lives. Consequently, young people feel confident, safe and inspired to achieve positive outcomes in their education, health and all aspects of their daily lives.

Staff ensure that young people live in a homely environment that is safe. The views of the young people are gained through a number of different ways and this contributes to their sense of being valued. Anti-discriminatory practice runs through all aspects of the day to day care. Young people are supported to have a clear understanding of their background and identity. They are actively involved in planning their care and support. All young people have detailed placement plans that are reviewed and provide clear and realistic goals.

Effective management and monitoring of the home ensures that a consistently high standard of care and support is provided.

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for children and young people are **outstanding**.

Young people achieve exceptionally positive outcomes during their time at the home. They are supported by a dedicated and consistent staff team who are committed to ensuring that young people are provided with excellent opportunities to flourish in all aspects of their development. They play a full and active part in the daily running of the home. One young person said 'I am really happy here. Staff listen to me and help me. This has given me confidence to try new things and I am doing really well.'

Staff support and promote the health needs of young people. All young people are registered with health care professionals, including doctors, dentists and opticians. Staff ensure health care appointments are made within appropriate timescales and support young people to attend these. In addition, specialist health care workers visit the home to promote health care. This includes drug and alcohol awareness, sexual health and general health care promotion. Individual key worker sessions support and complement young people's learning to ensure that they have the knowledge to make informed decisions. Young people also take part in a range of activities, including swimming, dancing, bowling and holidays which helps to promote their physical health and well-being. These practices ensure that young people enjoy excellent health.

Young people's education is highly valued and supported by staff. All young people attend school. Staff have developed excellent links with schools and advocate on behalf of young people to ensure that they receive the support that they need. Young people are encouraged to continue their learning at home by being encouraged and supported with their homework. One young person said 'my work has really improved and I am getting higher grades than teachers thought I would.'

Contact with family, where appropriate, is supported and this enables young people to maintain a sense of their heritage and background. Staff are aware of the importance of contact for young people and the emotional impact that this may have. Therefore they ensure that all contact arrangements are sensitively supported.

Staff support and enable young people to develop a wide range of skills for independence and adult life. They are encouraged to take appropriate risks to support them in developing their skills and abilities.

Quality of care

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

All young people have comprehensive care plans in place that clearly identify individual needs and how those needs are to be met. These plans are reviewed on a regular basis to enable them to accurately reflect current care needs. Young people are actively involved in the development of these, including making pictorial care plans, demonstrating through photographs the things that are important to them. This has enabled them to be fully engaged in all aspects of their care plans. Young people say that the staff at the home are excellent and they have exceptionally positive relationships with them. One young person said 'I love living here, all of the staff really care and I can talk to any staff if anything is worrying me. This makes me

feel safe and happy.'

Young people have a wide range of opportunities to be involved in the running of the home. This is through young people's meetings, direct work and through speaking with the manager and staff. Their views are regularly obtained through the independent visitor who undertakes Regulation 33 monitoring visits. They know how to make a complaint and feel confident that any complaints will be addressed. They comment; 'I tell staff if something is wrong and it will get sorted out.' Information about complaints is also in the children's guide and all young people have information about contacting independent sources, including the Children's rights Director.

Young people live in a healthy environment where their physical, emotional and social wellbeing is effectively promoted. They contribute to the planning, shopping and preparation of meals and are supported to understand the importance of nutritionally balanced diets. They say that the staff support them well with their health care needs including attendance at specialist health care appointments. They ensure that good communication is provided to parents about these where this is appropriate. Medication is appropriately stored, administered and recorded.

Staff provide optimum support with education and attendance at school. They have developed excellent links with schools and individual teachers to ensure that the education is highly valued and consistently promoted. Achievements obtained are celebrated. This further encourages young people with their education. As a result of these measures, attendance at school is excellent and progress is extremely positive.

Young people live in comfortable and homely accommodation that blends into the neighbourhood. Refurbishment of bathrooms has recently been undertaken and on-going maintenance ensures that the décor and furnishings to the home provide a good standard of accommodation. Young people have their own bedrooms that they are able to personalise. The home provides space to enable them to have privacy to do their homework or to see family and friends. This affords respect and dignity to young people and they take pride in their home and the facilities it has.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people say that they feel very safe at the home. All staff have undertaken safeguarding training and have an excellent understanding of their role and responsibility in promoting the young people's welfare. Policies and procedures with regards safeguarding underpin staff's knowledge and ensure that clear procedures are in place to respond to any allegation of abuse. Recruitment and selection procedures are robust and all visitors to the home are appropriately checked. These measures further promote the safety and welfare of young people.

Young people are effectively supported in managing their behaviours. Consistent

expectations and boundaries provide a foundation for this along with the positive relationships that staff and young people have. The home has a clear reward and consequences procedure in place. This has been discussed and agreed within the young people's meetings to enable them to have a clear understanding and ownership of this. Young people say that staff are 'firm but fair'. Any sanctions implemented enable young people to have an understanding of their actions and to take responsibility for them. Young people are encouraged to behave appropriately and to inform staff if they are going to be absent from the home. This ensures that staff are aware of where the young people are. On the few occasions that young people have not informed staff of their whereabouts, the missing from home procedures have been implemented effectively. There have been some incidents of bullying at the home. These have been addressed appropriately and the young people supported to understand that bullying is not acceptable.

Staff receive training in order to manage any physical intervention within the home appropriately. They have a clear understanding that physical intervention is only used to prevent a young person harming themselves or others. Behaviour management strategies are discussed and agreed with placing social workers and with guidance from appropriate trained therapists. Detailed behaviour management plans are in place for individual young people and reviewed on a regular basis. Where physical intervention has been used, detailed records are maintained that record the action taken, duration and support offered to young people. The views of young people are gained following any intervention and recorded within their individual records. These records are monitored by the manager to examine any emerging patterns to inform future practice. This has resulted in a decrease in physical interventions and enables the home to demonstrate that reviewing and monitoring of behaviour management strategies enable positive outcomes for young people to be achieved.

The home provides a physically safe environment for the young people. Regular health and safety checks are undertaken and records maintained. These include regular fire checks and fire drills. Young people are included in these drills. This ensures that they are aware of what to do in the event of a fire. A comprehensive maintenance programme is in place to ensure that any repairs are undertaken promptly. These measures support the safety of the young people.

Leadership and management

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

The management team of the home comprises of a registered manager and two senior workers. The management team provide consistent and clear leadership. Staff are suitably qualified and have a range of experience in working with children and young people. There have been few changes to the staff team and this provides continuity of care and support for the young people. They have a thorough understanding of their role and responsibilities. They also have high aspirations for the young people and have a comprehensive understanding of individual needs and provide encouragement and support to enable them to reach their full potential. Staff

receive regular supervision and annual appraisals to enable them to reflect on their practice. A comprehensive induction and training programme is in place to ensure that staff have the necessary skills to fulfil their role.

Young people say that they get on exceptionally well with the staff and feel that they are listened too. Social workers comment positively on their relationship with the home and feel that there are good systems in place for effective communication. This includes monthly reports on the young people they have placed and demonstrates clearly the progress that they are making in all aspects of their lives.

Regulation 33 monitoring visits are undertaken by an independent visitor to the home on a regular basis. They provide a comprehensive report to the manager and identify any actions to be taken to improve care practices. In addition, the registered manager completes monthly Regulation 34 monitoring to ensure that the home continues to meet the needs of the young people and is compliant with the Children's Homes Regulations 2001. A summary of these reports is provided to Ofsted on a bi-annual basis, demonstrating the on-going development of the service. Records maintained within the home are comprehensive and provide a clear record of the lives of the young people and their achievements. All records are stored securely to protect their safety and privacy.

The service meets the aims and objectives of the Statement of Purpose and is available to interested parties. It is kept under review to ensure that information is current.

At the previous inspection there were no requirements or recommendations made. The manager and the staff are committed to achieving excellent outcomes for young people and therefore are continually developing and monitoring their practice to support this.

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* (March 2011) and the evaluation schedule for children's homes.