

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Alicea Churchward
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Service information

Brief description of the service

A private organisation operates this children's home. This service is registered for one young person aged between 11 and 17 years of age. The home cares for children with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

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 home's overall effectiveness is one of a good service with some outstanding features.

The home provides young people with highly individualised care that promotes their needs effectively. Young people's needs are assessed comprehensively. This enables staff to promote their daily routines with a high level of awareness and consistency.

Young people benefit from excellent relationships with staff. As a result, they trust and value the adults who support them. This has resulted in positive behaviour management and a significant reduction in engaging in risk-taking behaviours.

Staff in the home demonstrate a good understanding of safe working practice. Unsafe situations and behaviour are well managed by staff. Boundaries and expectations about living in the home are consistently followed. Leadership and management arrangements are strong and leaders and managers are effective at tackling weaknesses and securing improvement.

Areas for improvement

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the

National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
4 (2001)	keep under review and revise the statement of purpose and notify Ofsted of any such revision within 28 days. (Regulation 5 (a)(b))	31/08/2012

Recommendations

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

- revise the children's guide to include contact details for the Children's Rights Director. (NMS 1.5)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people are enabled to develop a positive self view through regular key work sessions. Their level of engagement demonstrates that they have the ability to form positive attachments with the staff in the home. Staff seek day-to-day opportunities to help young people make some sense of their lives. For example, staff consistently and positively reinforcing the progress that young people have made since their admission to the home. Young people are cared for and respected as individuals and are given positive choices. This builds self-esteem and promotes feelings of self-worth.

Young people's health needs are very well met. Each young person is registered with a local doctor, dentist and optician to ensure that they can quickly access the services they need. All health appointments are attended. Young people understand the importance of healthy lifestyles and take responsibility for their own health.

Young people physically benefit from an active and lifestyle enjoying football, going fishing and regularly attending the local gym. This participation enhances young people's social skills and promotes their sense of belonging. Since their admission to the home, young people do not engage in risk-taking behaviours or offending. This is noteworthy and an excellent indicator of how settled young people are in the home.

Young people are making significant progress in terms of education attendance and achievement. This an excellent outcome, given their starting points upon admission to the home. Young people receive excellent levels of support to ensure that they attend school. Staff positively address challenges and barriers to their educational progress and achievement. This helps to ensure that young people are positive about the opportunities they have to improve their educational attainment. This in turn enhances their future employment opportunities.

Young people are able to build and sustain positive relationships with those people who are important to them. Well-managed contact arrangements, in line with local authority care plans, take individual needs into account. Young people are encouraged to maintain links with their families and friends and enjoy the opportunities to see them on a regular basis. This helps to promote their sense of identity.

Quality of care

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

Relationships between staff and young people are friendly, meaningful and good natured. Staff are very committed to the young people and this is reflected in their positive relationships. Interactions are appropriate and relaxed and young people respond appropriately to the staff who care for them. Young people benefit from excellent relationships that are based on mutual respect. This assists young people to develop skills to build and maintain positive relationships and resolve conflicts positively.

Staff have consistently high aspirations for all children and young people in the home. They are proactive and effective in finding ways to support children and young people in making progress in every aspect of their lives. Staff build exceptionally effective partnerships with external agencies and social work services. The home consistently and effectively challenges any shortfalls in partner organisations' delivery. This helps to ensure that children receive the support that they need.

Placement plans are thorough and show the work and clear targeted outcomes to be achieved. Young people are involved in all aspects of their care and the progress they have made. Placement plans reflect the current assessment of need which young people comment on and include the culture, race, religion and gender of young people. This means that the individuality of young people is fully acknowledged and staff can give individualised care to meet these needs. Young people are fully consulted about all aspects of their care. They are able to discuss their progress and make decisions about their future with staff and attend their review meetings.

Clear information is given to young people if they wish to make a complaint about any aspect of their care. No complaints have been made by young people since the previous inspection and young people confirm 'I like living here – it's sound'.

Young people benefit from high quality living accommodation. The home is not recognisable or distinguishable as a children's home. As a result, young people do not suffer from stigma or disadvantage. The accommodation provides young people with a homely environment.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Staff adhere to safe working practices to protect young people and keep them safe from the risk of abuse, accident, bullying and exploitation. Young people are taught to keep themselves safe, so they do not place themselves at risk of significant harm. There are no issues with bullying, anti-social behaviour or offending. Incidents of young people going missing from the home have reduced. Risk assessments and clear behaviour management strategies are used very effectively to promote young people's safety.

The home's ethos is of staff being a positive role model and showing mutual respect. Staff use effective approaches that actively encourage and promote positive behaviour. Young people learn to take responsibility for their actions and maintain socially acceptable behaviour. Sanctions are fair and generally restorative. There is good evidence of positive behaviour being promoted within the home. This helps young people to interact positively and behave appropriately. There has been minimal use of physical intervention within the home since their last inspection.

Young people live in a nurturing, supportive environment. Staff are trained in safeguarding so they how to recognise and respond to suspected abuse and deal with any allegations or concerns. Staff are carefully vetted to ensure that those who work with young people are safe and suitable people. As a result, young people are protected through robust recruitment and vetting procedures. No new staff have been appointed since the time of the last inspection.

Young people live in a safe environment. Fire safety is well maintained. The home carries out regular fire evacuation drills and health and safety risk assessments, which serves to safeguard young people.

Leadership and management

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

The home benefits from a committed, competent, child-focused Registered Manager who provides effective leadership to the staff team. The manager and staff team work consistently to ensure young people's identified needs are addressed. The home is effectively managed to provide a safe, homely environment for young people. The home is well organised and all administration tasks are completed to a good standard.

Appropriate steps have been taken to meet the recommendations arising from the previous inspection and they have been fully addressed. Specifically, the recommendations stated that young people should agree with the purpose and content of their placement plans and that plans for their futures should be clear. This action has resulted in a settled placement where young people can build towards their future.

The home is achieving very positive outcomes for young people; for example, by supporting them to make good choices, lead healthier lifestyles and attend education regularly. The home now also obtains feedback from partners about the quality of care. This includes seeking an opinion about what is going well and how the home can develop further. Responses to date are on file in the home and have been favourable.

At the time of this inspection, there is a vacant deputy post. The post was advertised internally and no appointment was made. An external advert to fill this vacancy is underway. The absence of a deputy is not impacting upon the quality of care that young people receive in this home. However, it is acknowledged that remedial action is necessary, as this may impact negatively in the future.

The Registered Manager is also registered to manage two other single placement homes within the organisation. There is some concern about the manager's span of control. However, in this home, the manager is exercising competent and effective leadership and achieving very positive outcomes for children.

The home has a Statement of Purpose and this document is currently under review. The children's guide is very child-centred. It offers a clear informative outline of the home and what is to be expected whilst living there. In addition, the guide includes information about access to independent advocacy should young people feel that they need this. There is one minor shortfall, in that the contact details of the Children's Rights Director are not included.

The staff provide a good level of care and ensure that they have the necessary training and support to work effectively. The organisation demonstrates a commitment for staff to undertake training on a variety of topics which reflect the diverse needs of young people. Training programmes include all mandatory areas, with new staff completing an induction programme. Staff say that the support that they receive is 'brilliant'. They confirm that they benefit from regular supervision and staff team meetings to support their professional development.

There are robust systems in place to monitor the home's performance. There is a clear audit trail that shows outcomes from Regulation 33 reports are included in the manager's monitoring to ensure that any shortfalls are addressed promptly. This monitoring of administrative records focuses on the home's strengths and weaknesses, highlighting any areas for improvement. This means that the home's capacity to improve is good.

Young people are consulted regularly to ascertain their views and placing social workers report very favourably about the home. Comments include 'excellent communication ... a huge reduction in risk taking behaviours ... safeguarding is really good ... relationships have been built upon trust ... superb placement ... very realistic boundaries ... would absolutely recommend the placement to other local authorities.' Young people's records reflect their lives well and how it has been for them to live in the children's home. All records are stored securely to respect privacy and confidentiality.

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.