

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Norma Welsby
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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 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.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service that exceeds minimum requirements

Satisfactory: a service that only meets minimum requirements

Inadequate: a service that does not meet minimum requirements

Service information

Brief description of the service

This private children's home provides residential care and accommodation for one young person.

Overall effectiveness

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

This is a well run home, in which the staff team work effectively together to enable young people to achieve good outcomes. Staff are committed to supporting young people in all aspects of their life including their education and contact and in developing behaviour that supports their safety and wellbeing. Professionals involved in the service are complimentary about how well the home supports and protects young people.

There is a very positive and relaxed atmosphere in the home. Young people benefit from the very good relationships they enjoy with staff. Staff provide excellent role models and young people are clear about what is expected of them in respect of their behaviour and engagement in the placement.

Young people enjoy living at the home and acknowledge how well they are doing. They feel that staff care about them and want them to do well. An issue that exists, namely the absence of peer relationships and opportunities that develop from having appropriate friendships, is acknowledged by the home's staff and other professionals and is being addressed.

During this inspection there were three areas identified for improvement. These relate to parents being consulted about their views on the quality of care provided by the home, increasing the number of staff with a National Vocational Qualification level 3 (or equivalent) and doing more to help young people enjoy a healthier lifestyle especially in respect of sleep patterns and taking regular exercise.

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
33	ensure that monitoring visits made on behalf of the provider	31/12/2011

(2001)	include periodic consultation with young people's parents and relatives as deemed necessary to form an opinion of the standard of care provided (Regulation 33).	
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Recommendations

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

- ensure young people live in a healthy environment where their physical, emotional and psychological health is promoted and where they are able to access services to meet their health needs (NMS 6)
- ensure all existing care staff have attained a minimum level 3 qualification (NMS 18.5)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Overall, the outcomes for young people living at this service are good. Young people are positive about their placement at this home and recognise how well they are doing. Young people benefit from being supported by staff who have high expectations and are prepared to work extremely hard to help them achieve as much as possible from their placement and to fulfil their individual potential.

Young people feel happy because they live in a positive, calm and nurturing environment. Staff have an excellent understanding of their individual needs and personal aspirations. Young people receive personalised care that promotes their individual identity. For example, while staff facilitate access to specialist services, such as counselling, they also work directly with individuals to achieve meaningful targets that will enrich their lives. For example, by being able to enjoy regular positive contact and to extend these opportunities further to enjoy overnight contact. Staff recognise that this is particularly meaningful to young people who are living a long way from their home area.

Staff recognise the importance of young people's education and attainment. Staff support young people by providing lots of encouragement and by celebrating their progress and achievements. Young people attend an educational resource that best meets their needs and very good attention is given to improving attendance. Young people make very good progress, considering their starting points, in respect of improving attendance and in catching up and working towards gaining qualifications.

Young people enjoy a nutritional and healthy diet. They are learning key skills and knowledge that will help them in adult life, such as planning a healthy meal, budgeting and shopping for ingredients. Staff encourage young people to enjoy a diverse range of meals and to be mindful of having five portions of fruit and

vegetables a day. Mealtimes are well managed, orderly and sociable occasions where young people and staff sit down together. However outcomes in respect of related health matters, such as sleep patterns and regular physical activity are not addressed or evidenced as robustly. This is important to ensure that young people develop a holistic approach to achieving a healthy lifestyle as they mature into young adults.

Staff have an excellent understanding of the benefits of young people sustaining positive contact. Young people benefit greatly from having lots of contact, both within the home and externally with family. Young people are supported to achieve personal targets in respect of contact. This reinforces the view that young people are empowered to influence important decisions about their lives. There are plans to provide increased opportunities for young people to develop peer friendships locally. This is important to ensure that young people learn how to establish and sustain appropriate peer relationships.

When appropriate, young people are encouraged to learn a diverse range of skills, such as budgeting, shopping, preparing meals and accessing local services. These skills and the confidence they promote will help to prepare them for increased independence and adulthood. When there are plans for young people to move on, staff ensure that their views are listened to and they work enthusiastically in the best interest of the young person.

Quality of care

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

Staff have a very positive attitude and are highly motivated to provide quality of care that supports young people effectively during their placement. Each young person has an up-to-date placement plan, to which they have contributed. Individual diverse needs are appropriately identified and addressed, both in daily living and care planning.

Consultation with young people is thoughtful and purposeful. Consequently young people are able to influence decisions made in respect of their day to day support, meals, activities and contact, but also their future. This helps young people to feel valued and to achieve a healthy and positive personal identity. Individual files are well organised and include identification of health needs and how these will be met. However one specific issue, relating to sleep patterns, is not evidenced as being robustly addressed.

The management and administration of medication is safe and effective. There are detailed records in place demonstrating thorough and safe procedures are followed, including signed consent forms for homely remedies.

Staff and young people have very good relationships. They enjoy an open and positive rapport. The service employs a good mix of staff who provide positive role

models and who work effectively with young people to establish good values such as respect and tolerance. Staff treat young people respectfully and reciprocal respect is encouraged between young people, staff and also neighbours.

Young people confirm that they know about the complaints procedure and that they are confident that staff would listen to them should they have a complaint. Staff provide appropriate support when young people wish to raise issues. Any concerns raised, either formally or informally, are managed quickly and effectively.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people live in a safe environment. Young people say that they feel very safe living here and that they are confident in talking to staff if they have any worries or concerns. There are comprehensive risk assessments in place. Staff have a very good understanding of safeguarding procedures. Child protection training is up-to-date and staff members are clear about the procedures to follow in the event of a safeguarding issue. A recent incident that came to light was thoroughly addressed, supporting the view that young people living at this home are very well protected.

The home takes appropriate steps to ensure that young people do not go missing from care. Suitable supervision by staff is evident. There have only been a small number of incidents, which are recorded appropriately. The young people are welcomed home and given the opportunity to talk about the incident on their return.

Staff are trained in behaviour management, including physical restraint. However, restraints are very rarely used. Young people benefit from rewards to promote positive behaviour. Reparations are also used occasionally if property is deliberately damaged. This combined approach is effective in providing young people with clear boundaries and helps to demonstrate to them how their behaviour determines outcomes.

Young people live in a physically safe environment. Routine maintenance tasks are carried out in a timely way. Young people are protected from hazards, as the home has an ongoing programme of safety checks and servicing, including gas, electrical and fire safety. The fire alarm system is regularly checked and fire drills are routinely carried out involving young people. This means that young people feel confident and know how to respond should an emergency occur.

Comprehensive and safe recruitment processes within the organisation ensure the completion of all the necessary checks on staff prior to them commencing work with young people. All visitors to the home are required to sign in and out and they receive appropriate supervision whilst on the premises. This supports the view that the home protects young people from anyone who may pose harm to them.

Leadership and management

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

The home has a detailed Statement of Purpose and children's guide. Information is regularly reviewed and updated.

The home has a history of good compliance. Six recommendations made at the last inspection in January 2011 have been satisfactorily addressed. Two of these recommendations related to the management and administration of medication and first aid. The manager was also asked to ensure staff fully understand what to do if a young person makes a disclosure or allegation of abuse and to keep a record of sanctions in a dedicated bound book. The final recommendations identified the need to implement requirements of the local fire authority in a timely way and to ensure young people have access to a nominated member of staff for individual guidance and support. In addressing each of these areas positively the home has demonstrated its capacity to improve the service and its commitment to further improving outcomes for young people.

Completion of monthly Regulation 33 visits ensure effective review of the home and serves to monitor developments in the home and highlight any shortfalls. However, these visits do not include periodic consultation with parents to ascertain their views on the quality of care their child is receiving. Internal monitoring by the manager is also in place. This includes an action plan for any outstanding issues. These processes ensure the home effectively identifies shortfalls and makes ongoing improvements to benefit young people living there.

Young people benefit from a largely stable and established staff group. This results in them receiving a consistent approach that enables them to build positive relationships over the longer term. The staff team is appropriately gender balanced to support the needs of young people. Currently however only 66% of staff, including the manager and deputy, have achieved at least a national vocational qualification at level 3 or equivalent in caring for children and young people. Staff are positive about the quality and diverse range of training available to them, including for example in countering bullying, equality and diversity, safeguarding, self harm and sexual health. Staff also receive ongoing support through regular staff meetings and individual supervision.

Records are appropriately maintained and kept securely. Staff are committed to maintaining young people's files and in keeping detailed records of their work with young people. This is important as these records can be accessed by young people and will help to provide an insight and understanding into their childhood. Information relating to significant events affecting young people's safety is notified to relevant agencies, including Ofsted, and placing authorities. This ensures that issues relating to young people's safety is appropriately shared and effectively managed.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.

