

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Debbie Foster
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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

The home provides long-term care and accommodation for up to four young people aged from 11 to 17 year-olds with emotional or behavioural difficulties. Admissions to the home are on a planned or emergency basis.

Overall effectiveness

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

The home has no young people in residence at the time of this inspection.

Young people benefit from strong and positive relationships being forged by the staff. This enables young people to build trust and in turn this enables young people to work well with staff. The staff team persevere in a child-focussed way to support young people to reach their potential and keep them safe. Young people's safety has been well promoted and safety measures implemented, to bring about improved outcomes for young people.

Young people receive personalised and well-planned care which reflects their individual needs. Good opportunities exist for young people to give their views on the care they receive. Staff use and implement the agreed placement plans and strategies to support young people well. However, aspects of care plans relating to behaviour and some risk assessments are not in sufficient detail. Wide ranging mandatory training is provided to the staff. However, not all staff have attained the level 3 Children and Young People Workforce Diploma qualification. Ofsted have not been notified of all significant events as required by the regulations.

Areas for improvementStatutory 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
30 (2001)	ensure that any significant event listed in column 1 of the Schedule 5 table is reported without delay to the appropriate persons indicated in column 2 of the table, in particular Ofsted (Regulation 30, Schedule 5)	28/10/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure all staff attain a level 3 Children and Young People Workforce Diploma qualification (NMS 18)
- ensure each young person's placement plan details all the day-to-day care of that young person; in particular the specifics about how behaviour is managed, the safeguarding strategies used and the progress made by young people (NMS 25.1)
- ensure young people's safety is promoted in the home through specific and clear risk assessments including bullying (NMS 4.1)
- ensure the home's development plan identifies any planned changes in the operation, in particular areas for improvement. (NMS 15.2)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

The health of young people is strongly promoted. Young people are supported by staff to all required health appointments. Young people benefit from planning and cooking basic meals, to learn about the importance of following a healthy diet and life skills. Young people frequently participate in physical exercise. This includes football, squash, swimming and the use of local parks to keep active and fit. Young people have received frequent guidance on other health matters from staff and professionals. Life stories have been undertaken with young people to assist young people in developing emotional security.

Young people have good opportunities to achieve in education. School attendance has improved for some young people with academic achievements being made whilst attending the school on site. Young people are supported through important transitions, for example, from school to college or employment. As a result, young people have improved educational experiences which aids learning and increases their knowledge. Therefore young people receive care which is preparing them to live independently.

Young people are actively supported to keep in touch with family members and maintain important relationships. Young people have benefitted greatly in building back links with relatives to have regular contact with family members who are very important too them.

Young people are well supported and encouraged to learn life skills through taking part in daily tasks around the home. They have participated in an independence

programme which has included such areas as budgeting their money, food shopping, processing their laundry and keeping their own bedrooms clean. Links in education have informed young people about college, employment and being unemployed. Therefore, young people receive care which prepares them well for adulthood.

Quality of care

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

Strong and positive relationships exist between the young people and the staff. Relationships flourish as a result of the staff demonstrating a child-focussed approach, consistency and commitment to young people. The staff address young people's care and safety needs through actively involving the young people in decision making.

Young people benefit from the positive behaviour strategies implemented by staff. These include rewards for their achievements. Staff say young people are safe when in the home but have put themselves at risk in the community. The staff team explain consistently how they support each young person with their behaviour and the strategies they use. Other professionals working with young people say the staff work consistently and address negative behaviour with young people which also reflects the work they are supporting them with too. Young people have succeeded in developing more socially acceptable behaviour and positive relationships with their carers. However, the records for behaviour management do not reflect the strategies the staff are implementing to assist and support the positive behaviour of young people.

The wishes, views and feelings of young people are consistently promoted. Young people have been central in the planning and reviewing of their own care to ensure they are consulted about their own lives and any changes which may affect them. A number of care approaches assist to obtain the views and wishes of young people. These include daily discussions, young people's meetings, young people being invited to complete a questionnaire to give their views and opinions on the care they receive and to attend their statutory review.

Young people are well informed and know how to make a complaint. There is also good, clear information in the children's guide about how to complain and contact details of independent advocate service. The staff will assist young people in making complaints and they understand their role as advocates. Some young people have made a complaint. The service has addressed four formal complaints since the last inspection. There is a recording system, which details the action taken and the outcomes when a complaint is investigated. However, this does not indicate whether the complainant is satisfied or not with the outcome.

Young people's medication is administered by trained staff. All staff have received training in basic first aid to enable them to respond to minor medical occurrences where required. Safe medication practices and monitoring of the system are implemented and supported by suitable records. This ensures medical support is

provided to young people appropriately and their health needs are well met.

Young people have their needs assessed well and appropriately-written placement plans give overall, good clarity how these individual needs will be met. Staff demonstrate an excellent knowledge of each young person, which is reflected in their individual written placement plans. This informs and equips the staff team on how the each young person is to be cared for. This promotes a consistent care approach, greatly benefiting the young person. The case file contains copies of the statutory review minutes and the recommendations made for the young person's care. There is some evidence to show the progress the individual young person is making. However, this does not always specifically demonstrate all the progress young people are making. The placement plans are reviewed frequently.

The case file contains copies of the statutory review minutes and the recommendations made for the young person's care. There is detailed evidence to show the progress the individual young person is making, through focus work sessions and two-weekly progress reports. The placement plans are reviewed frequently. Young people said they are doing well and have met their target goals. This has meant they have received numerous incentives and rewards for their success.

Young people enjoy living in a home with a good amount of living space. On the ground floor lounge, kitchen, dining room, toilet, a staff office and an joint education and chill out room. On the first floor include individual bedrooms for the young people and two bathrooms. At the rear of the house is a garden and car parking space. The home is centrally placed for public transport, shops and leisure facilities. The house has been decorated throughout; furnishings are to a good standard. There is a satisfactory maintenance and repairs are promptly addressed.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are safe within the home. Staff give high importance to the safeguarding of young people. Clear safeguarding procedures and guidance to promote young people's welfare are followed. Staff members benefit from mandatory training on signs and symptoms of abuse to be alert to any concerns. The staff are aware of good anti-bullying practices and are vigilant to any signs of this. Staff and young people say there has been some bullying occurring; direct work has been undertaken with young people, staff have put strategies in place and staffing levels allow close supervision of young people to keep them safe. However, the risk assessment for bullying is not specific to reflect the care work and support being undertaken in practice. This could affect safe practices for young people, when new staff are working within the home.

Young people do go missing; if they do, they return quickly. Staff have worked well with young people and identified support strategies to reduce the number of these incidents. Focus work has been undertaken with young people assist them the

importance of returning home on time, also to assist them in understanding the dangers they may find themselves in and reduce or prevent the young people going missing again. When such an event occurs the staff deploy effective measures to search, report and then return young people safely. Links have been forged with the police to support keeping young people safe.

Staff focus and promote the good behaviour of young people. The ethos of the home is to de-escalate any challenging behaviour and the staff strongly reinforce this practice. As a result restraints rarely happen and young people are effectively supported to manage their frustration in other ways. The monitoring systems of the home have identified that not all sanctions have been effective and this has been discussed with the staff team and action taken to address this.

Young people have care plans and risk assessments, which set out how the staff are to support and manage each young person's behaviour. Staff are knowledgeable on the individual strategies they use to support young people with their behaviour. However, the care plans and supporting risk assessments do not give specific detail on the strategies to use for each young person. For any new staff working in the home this could present difficulties in their approach and dealing with behaviours in a clear and consistent manner. In turn this could impact on the young person and their behaviour.

Health, safety and fire safety is maintained effectively. The home carries out regular fire evacuation drills and health and safety risk assessments for the protection of young people. The health and safety of the young people and the safety of the building is successfully well managed with regular reviews and oversight by the manager. Young people benefit from overall sound risk assessment and plans, covering both environmental risks and risks based on likely and known behaviours. However, not all risk assessments clearly state what the specific risk is before setting out the precautions to reduce or eliminate the risks for young people.

All visitors to the building are strictly monitored and they must identify themselves and sign in and out of the home. All staff are employed through robust recruitment process ensuring persons employed are safe and suitable to work with children.

Leadership and management

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

The management team supports staff well to provide a stable home environment with improved care outcomes for young people. The staff team have experience and this assist them to provide consistent care to young people. This is enhanced further by a good quality induction and continued training in all areas relating to the care of young people being provided to the staff team. Management support and supervision are described as 'good' by a staff team. Progress is being made to address the previous recommendation made on the last inspection, although this is not yet met. Existing staff are completing and new staff are enrolling on the level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People Workforce Diploma qualification.

A Statement of Purpose outlines the aims and objectives of the home. Young people receive information in the form of a welcome pack to inform them about the home, prior to or on arrival. Young people's case files are stored confidentially and are arranged in a manner that makes them useable by staff and yet accessible to young people. These records and other written documentation are overall of a good standard. This facilitates positive communication with other professionals as well as ensuring young people have a permanent record of their history.

The rota ensures that there is always a balance of experienced staff on duty with those who are fairly new to caring for young people in a residential setting, to make sure young people are familiar with the staff caring for them and to again aid their care being consistently delivered.

The manager has a strong system in place to monitor, report and evaluate the administration systems of the home. Where weaknesses are identified they are promptly acted upon. The monthly monitoring undertaken by the Regulation 33 visitor covers the required areas set out in the regulation. There is a development plan, setting out any the operation or resources of the service. However, it does not always identify specific areas for improvement for the service and how these are to be addressed. Although appropriate action has been taken to protect young people in the event of a significant event, these have not all been reported to Ofsted as required by the regulations.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.