

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Cheryl Carter
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is registered to accommodate and provide education for up to five children or young people. The provider is an organisation and a limited company, with a number of children's homes.

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**.

This home provides good outcomes for young people and the quality of care is also good. The care provided is personalised and well planned and focuses on the individual needs of the young person. Young people have gained confidence which has enabled them to express their views and wishes; young people feel motivated and empowered to make choices.

Young people are supported by staff members who provide them with individual time and the opportunity to have effective one-to-one relationships. Young people say that their relationships with the staff are good and feel that the staff listen to them and respect them.

Young people say staff look after them well, give them the opportunity to progress and that they understand when they are not behaving appropriately. Consequently, young people feel respected and cared for and this has led to improvements in behaviour which is well managed and sustained. Education is a priority and young people now attend school on-site where they had previously refused to attend. Staff provide one-to-one support with education and liaise effectively with the teachers. Healthcare is well managed and young people are encouraged and supported to attend appointments.

Social workers responsible for two of the young people commend the work that this home has undertaken and make clear that the outcomes for young people are good. This is particularly evident in levels of increased confidence, improved behaviour and participation in education.

Safeguarding is well managed in most areas and systems are effective and provide safe care. Young people are kept safe and say that they feel safe. Young people believe that staff care about their welfare and that they feel supported and valued as a result. Leadership and management are strong in the day-to-day management arrangements and staff are motivated.

All the requirements and recommendations from the previous inspection are now met. The Registered Manager has returned to work after an extended period of leave and monthly supervision has resumed. The recording of restraints is done in line with regulations and significant events are notified to Ofsted in a timely manner.

The organisation has introduced a system to ensure that the home has a good standard of support in the absence of the manager to prevent standards slipping. Although, some weaknesses are evident in safeguarding, they have not impacted on the progress that has been made by the young people. Outcomes for young people are good and have been sustained. The manager is aware of the strengths and weakness of the home. Action is being taken to improve the appearance of the home as well as make the systems more robust.

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 the home provides a comfortable and homely environment and is well maintained and decorated (NMS 10.3)
- ensure that sanctions and restraints are evaluated for effectiveness when used (NMS 3.8)
- ensure that young people are encouraged to take responsibility for their behaviour, in a way that is appropriate to their age and abilities (NMS 3.6)
- ensure that there is a central record of complaints that includes details of the action taken and the outcome of the complaint. (NMS1.6)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people are making good progress in all key areas of their lives. This is underpinned by their feelings of security in this placement. Young people say, 'this is a good place to live because it feels like home.' Key professionals say that young people are doing 'extremely well'. Young people appear to be confident and they are developing good social skills and sufficient emotional resilience to cope much better with very complex relationships.

Young people's physical health, as well as their emotional health, has improved. The use of harmful substances and participating in risk-taking or offending behaviour has significantly decreased. This enables young people to make good progress. Young people enjoy regular activities going out to events such as bowling or to the cinema with the staff. They are healthy eaters, who are very aware of the importance of maintaining a balance between fast foods and nutritious food. Young people know the importance of healthy lifestyles and are proactive in taking responsibility for their own health.

Young people's education is provided on site. All young people have good attendance. This is a particularly notable achievement as young people previously found the whole issue of education very challenging and missed out on their education for long periods of time. Young people are looking forward to doing some very important exams in the next year and are working towards these. This is a major achievement, as some young people chose not to attend school and missed out on developing some very important core skills.

Young people are now in regular contact with their families, and have developed strong relationships with people outside their families who are important to them. This helps them develop a more positive self-view and greater self-knowledge and understanding. Young people have clear, achievable plans for their education and skill-based stages in their lives.

Quality of care

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

Young people and staff demonstrate that they have warm, trusting and respectful relationships. Young people benefit from consistent behaviour management. This encourages young people to develop positive behaviour and to control the behaviours that are less positive. Young people say that staff understands them and they feel that it is these relationships that have helped and supported their progress. However, their behaviour management plans do not include how the young person is looked after throughout the day.

Young people have an active voice and can express their views through young people's meetings and in their day-to-day contact with staff members. This results in staff and the manager adapting and modifying services within the home to follow young people's wishes. Young people are engaged by this process and feel that their views are valued. They also benefit from regular key work sessions which offer them a good opportunity to express more personal or individual views or opinions they may have. They are offered regular key working sessions, however, young people do not always make good use of this time to raise issues or to discuss matters with staff that will help them develop and progress.

Young people are aware of how to make a complaint within the home and they say that the staff assist them with any concerns or complaints. Complaints are recorded

in separate books as formal or informal complaints. This method of recording puts the onus on staff to decide about the seriousness of a complaint which could result in some complaints not being investigated appropriately.

The young people's guide details all the information regarding the Children's Rights officer and Ofsted should they wish to raise a concern. The guide is written in five languages as well as in audio format. The manager says that the guide will be translated in any language as the need arises. Young people know how to make a complaint to someone outside of the home.

There was a recent complaint about the conduct of the young people in the home. This was dealt with by the manager who apologised to the complainant. However, the young people have not apologised. This means that young people have not learnt from this and have not taken responsibility for their behaviour.

To ensure young people have good opportunities to develop and progress, each young person is supported by a placement plan. Plans are up-to-date and generally very detailed. Plans are reviewed every six weeks. In addition, a weekly report is produced for each young person; these detail the events of each day. The key worker collates the information from log books, daily reports and observations and then uses this information to populate the weekly report.

Health planning is managed well and is regularly reviewed. All young people are supported to attend routine visits to doctors and dentists. The manager of the home is creative in ensuring that young people have medicals and is seen by the looked after children's (LAC) nurse for their placing authority. If a young person cannot be persuaded to go out and meet with the LAC nurse then the nurse is invited to see the child at the home. This strategy has worked recently for young people placed in the home. Current health planning is detailed and the home tries very hard to acquire past medical information. This supports young people to develop an understanding about their medical history so they can make informed decisions in relation to their health. The home is very motivated towards sports and promoting a healthy lifestyle. Consequently, a variety of healthy activities are enjoyed by the young people.

This is a children's home with education. All young people attend education in the home. Practical support is provided to encourage young people to attend daily classes and develop skills in order to improve their life chances. As a result, young people have made significant progress in both their attendance and attainment. For example, one young person, who had not attended school for some months, now states he wishes to stay at the home so that he can complete his exams.

Young people benefit from personalised care which is very responsive to young people's specific cultural and spiritual needs. This makes a strong contribution to young people's clear sense of belonging in the home. The home itself is well located, with easy access to local amenities and offers ample accommodation. The home is clean and comfortable; however, some parts of the home are in need of refurbishment; this is currently being done. Professionals confirm this saying the

home provides, 'a good quality of care, with great attention to detail and they are proactive in anticipating the needs of young people.'

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are very clear that they feel safe in the home. They present as being very comfortable and relaxed in this home. Young people are clearly very confident about approaching staff and having their needs safely met.

Young people are further protected by living in a safe and secure environment, which is generally very well supported by routine health and safety checks. Young people have individualised risk assessments, and social workers confirm that they have no concerns about the home's safety standards. Young people have considerable periods of unsupervised free time. All young people have mobile phones so that they can contact the home at any time. This helps ensure young people's safety outside the home. Bullying is not currently an issue in this home. Young people say that this would not happen as they, 'know that staff will deal with issues before it becomes a problem.'

Young people no longer go missing from this home. This is a positive contribution to their safety and well-being. The home has an up-to-date missing policy in line with current local police and local authority protocol. Behaviour management in this home is proactive, with the emphasis on building a trusting relationship with the young person and pre-empting any challenging behaviour. This considered approach is clearly very effective because there has been a reduction in the number of incidents of restraint and the number of children missing from the home. Sanctions used are fair and relate mainly to reparation. Young people confirm this; they agreed that when sanctions are imposed by the home they thought that they were 'really fair'. Young people's views and their written response are recorded in the restraints and sanctions book; however, an evaluation of the effectiveness of a sanctions or a restraint is not carried out.

Recruitment is carefully planned to ensure young people's safety and well-being. All staff are appropriately checked and complete an induction programme at the beginning of their employment at the home. There have been no suspicions or allegations of harm against staff.

Leadership and management

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

Young people and staff benefit from a manager that is sufficiently experienced and qualified. The manager has addressed the requirements and recommendations from the previous inspection visit in January 2013.

The organisation has introduced procedures and practices to support the home and to ensure that staff receives appropriate supervision at all times. In particular if the

registered manager is absent from the home.

The home has shown capacity for continuing improvement. This is evident in young people's files, the reduction in the number and frequency of children missing. A development plan is in place that supports the continuing performance of the home. Appropriate performance targets have been identified and are being pursued. Internal refurbishment and the development of vocational activities have been identified providing increased opportunities for young people.

A comprehensive Statement of Purpose is in place which informs stake holders, staff and other parties of the aims and objectives of the home along with services and facilities provided. The Statement of Purpose and young people's guide are regularly reviewed to ensure they are up to date and consistent with practice. The young peoples' guide is produced in five languages as well as an audio version. The home is currently working on the picture format of the Children's guide.

Staffing levels are high. There is a minimum of two staff as well as the manager on duty and this is increased according to the needs of the children and the home. As a result, young people are well supported individually and there is greater harmony in the home with a reduction of negative behaviour. One social worker commented that the work undertaken has been exceptional in managing and sustaining improved behaviour.

To ensure that the home provides a high standard of care, regular checks and monitoring is undertaken by the registered manager. In addition, checks are carried out by a person independent of the home to ensure that standards of care provided in the home are maintained with an action plan to address any shortfalls or areas identified for development.

All young people have detailed personal files and records which help them understand their episodes of being looked after. Young people's records are clear and legible and provide each with a picture of their life, the decisions that have been made and the plans agreed for their future. All young people have a memory box with mementos of their stay at this home.

All significant events relating to the protection of children accommodated in the home are notified by the registered person to the appropriate authorities, and appropriate action is taken following the incident. Statutory reviews are up-to-date and there have been very good professional relationships developed with relevant partners. Consequently when an issue arises quick action is taken to provide effective support from all parties. Staff engage young people in a very meaningful manner in compiling their progress reports in preparation for reviews. This promotes young people's control of their lives.

The home has responded to the requirement made at the last inspection. There is also now a system in place to ensure any measures of control, restraint or sanctions are recorded appropriately and in line with regulations. Complaints are also now recorded with the actions and outcomes. Staff supervision has improved and staff

are receiving monthly supervision.

The management of the home has a robust understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. Input is also gained from placing authorities and young people in the evaluation of the service. However, this input is not detailed within the quality assurance reports.

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.