

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Chris Passmore
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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 is a privately run children's home. It provides accommodation and support to four young people of either sex, aged between 11 and 18-years-old. The home is registered to care for young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties and young people with a mild mental disorder.

Overall effectiveness

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

Young people who live at this home benefit from individually planned care delivered by a committed and competent staff team. Young people settle well and form good relations with the staff and generally between themselves. Staff are enthusiastic, very skilled, and pursue areas of training that interests them but also benefit the whole team and are relevant to young people's needs. Staff strive to promote the highest outcomes for young people. They support young people through their education, through individual crisis and transition into adult life. Consistent care has enabled young people to achieve educational qualifications and work placements as part of their ongoing development. Young people themselves state they feel safe in the home and know staff have their best interests at heart. Their observations on the care they receive reflects the efforts of staff to provide a high quality of care in a supportive and safe environment. At the time of this inspection, two young people were living at the home, and both were seen briefly at some stage through the visit duration.

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make good progress towards becoming well prepared for adult life and independence. Many make outstanding progress and can take more control of their lives earlier than others. From their conversations, it is apparent that young people feel safe at the home and realise how to keep safe when away from it. Young people mature in their attitude to life and are prepared to share these insights with others through community events and special research days held by national bodies. They are supported to attain qualifications through education and vocational pursuits. Young people are successful at securing places at further education college or entering work placement apprenticeships. In questionnaire responses, young people state they feel the home is "the best place I have lived in" and they did not wish to change anything.

Quality of care

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

Young people develop very warm and positive relationships with members of staff and each other. Highly individualised care is planned and provided by an experienced and stable staff team. Within the team, individual staff skills are many and varied and all contribute to the ability of the group to deliver individual and effective care to young people. There is close and effective collaborative working with other agencies, such as the placing authority and with health professionals. Ethnicity and language diversity is reflected in the overall staff group and works positively to understand and support individual young people's needs.

Staff work tirelessly to provide opportunities for young people to succeed. They are not daunted by any initial setbacks or failures but they are relentless in their aim for young people to aspire to the highest possible goals. Staff are realistic in how they set these targets and how they approach the task. They work pro-actively with young people and their placing authority to ensure reviews of care are timely and include the views of the young person. Staff advocate for young people in order for their voice to be heard and for achievements to be realised. The home provides a safe environment for young people to live in and there is an emphasis on developing healthy lifestyles. Individual physical, emotional or psychological health care is planned and young people are appropriately supported by staff.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Safeguarding young people is a priority and central to practice. Young people say they feel safe and they are supported to keep safe. Young people know staff care about them and say they talk to them about risks and making safe choices. Staff are pro-active in safeguarding young people, understand their responsibilities and act within clear procedures where required. There are effective links with the Local Authority Designated Officer, and safeguarding procedures are agreed with the local authority. This ensures young people are protected in line with legislation.

Young people are well informed of their rights and the range of independent people and organisations available to them with whom to discuss their care and experiences, such as the Children's Rights Director.

Practice is underpinned by clear risk assessments which balance minimising risks without impeding young people's independence. As a result young people are not unnecessarily restricted. Positive behaviour is encouraged through incentives and key worker sessions. Staff are quick to praise positive behaviour and to celebrate achievement. Negative behaviour is not ignored but staff are extremely good at talking issues through with young people in a way that is calming and avoids escalating emotions. Consequently, there has been no need for any physical restraint of young people and very little use of any form of sanctions. Young people acknowledge this and say they are fairly treated.

Young people very rarely go missing. The home has a working protocol with the police, and young people may be reported absent from care. They may not always be where they should at any point in time, but their whereabouts are known and they keep in touch with staff through their mobile phones. As a result of this form of continued support, patterns of genuine absconding have stopped and young people remain safe. Systematic checks and staff vigilance to areas of risk in the home minimise any safety hazards for young people.

Leadership and management

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

An excellent Statement of Purpose outlines the aims and objectives of the service. The home is operating in line with this statement and the principles are understood by interested parties, including young people. Young people's information is relevant and appropriately focused. Young people benefit from a consistent, enthusiastic and committed staff team, who focus on their needs and welfare. As a result young people's progress is clearly evident and noted by placing authorities.

Staff feel very well supported, supervised and involved in making decisions. Staff report development and training opportunities are available and varied in order to progress their careers. Opportunities include equality and diversity and practice supervision training. The manager and staff team are very well qualified and sufficient in number to meet the needs of young people. Regular meetings, supervisions and appraisals ensure practice improves further, and the focus remains on young people's needs and development. Staff challenge young people to think about differences in more broader terms than just race or religion, for example differences in food, beliefs, and understanding of family backgrounds.

A comprehensive development plan outlines the aims and objectives for the year with clear reviews to chart progress. Exceptional levels of monitoring young people's care and experiences ensure that practice is safe and the quality of care remains consistently high. Independent visits and staff team days contribute further to reflective practice and driving improvement. Young people are consistently consulted about their care, and therefore settle well in the home and are clear about their care plans. There was one recommendation made at the last inspection relating to complaints recording. The home's response has been not only to rectify the identified shortfall but to apply the principle and review across all of the records. The quality of care at this visit remains consistently high, resulting in no requirements or recommendations.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.