

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Caroline Jones
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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 private children's home that provides care and accommodation for up to nine young people with physical disabilities and emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. There are two homes covered by a single registration.

Overall effectiveness

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

Young people's feedback is the hallmark of the quality of the service they receive. They comment: 'It's mint living here, the best home I have lived in, they care, I feel safe, they spoil you, I would give it top marks.' Young people continue to thrive in a homely and nurturing environment that supports them in making excellent progress in all aspects of their lives. Staff continue to assist young people to develop their independence and skills for adulthood, however, pathway plans are not in place with partner agencies to inform this further.

Young people are central to care planning and tailored placement plans ensure that they are cared for consistently according to their personal needs. Staff have high aspirations for young people and are enthusiastic and committed to ensuring they succeed. Staff have excellent relationships with young people, consequently young people are settled, happy and feel confident to raise any dissatisfaction.

The home is effectively and efficiently run by a passionate and dedicated acting deputy manager who emphasises high standards of care. Anti-discriminatory practice runs through all aspects of day-to-day care and young people have a good understanding of their background and identity. While good monitoring scrutinises the quality of care there are some gaps relating to how data is utilised to continually improve the service to young people. Additionally, the rota does not specify time planned for staff to spend with individual young people to promote their activities or one to one work. Visits under Regulation 33 are undertaken however, the records do not indicate that young people are interviewed or contain their comments on the quality of care provided.

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
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33 (2001)	ensure that visits to the home under Regulation 33 include details of young people present for interview and their comments. (Regulation 33 (4) (a))	29/11/2011
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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 that monitoring utilises the information on emerging patterns or trends to continually improve practice in particular to reducing incidents of missing from home (NMS 21.2)
- ensure that the home contributes to the pathway plan and works collaboratively with young people's social workers in implementing the plan (NMS 12.2)
- ensure that staff rotas have time scheduled in to include the planning of spending time with individual children. (NMS 17.6)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people continue to make excellent progress across all aspects of their development. Staff promote young people's independence and they are encouraged to take appropriate risks and responsibility for their age and understanding. Young people have plans to target their independence needs and they are involved in the daily running of the home including, cooking, shopping and cleaning. Although planning in the home is very good, pathway plans for young people have not been completed with partner agencies to further promote young people's skills and competence for adulthood.

Young people take part in regular activities including, football, horse riding and day trips to promote healthy living and independence. Young people are registered with a general practitioner, dentist and optician and have individual plans to target their health needs. Medication is stored safely and records are maintained on its administration. All staff receive suitable training to support health and wellbeing and have a first aid qualification to ensure safer caring of young people.

Staff have high aspirations for young people and promote their educational achievement. They have excellent relationships with education and advocate in the best interests of young people. Despite challenges, young people attend school provision regularly and young people are achieving in line with their peers. Young people are involved in their local community and take part in national consultation and participation events for looked after children. These are fine examples of young people making a positive contribution to their community and demonstrates their growing confidence.

Young people benefit from regular contact with their friends and family including over night stays. This ensures that young people maintain relationships with those significant to them and provides them with a good understanding of their background and heritage. Staff are mindful about the emotional impact contact can have upon young people; therefore staff make sure that they are sensitively supported.

Quality of care

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

Young people flourish in a calm, nurturing and supportive environment. Staff have a thorough understanding of young people's individual needs and placement plans are clear, detailed and subject to frequent review. Equality and diversity is well established within the home's culture and is underpinned by fairness and child centred practice. Young people comment: 'I feel cared about, they know me.'

Staff are committed to young people which is evident in the warm and positive relationships they have forged with young people. Firm boundaries and routines are established within the home which helps young people to understand their situation and what to expect from staff. Mutual respect between young people and staff was observed throughout the inspection and young people were relaxed in their home. Staff advocate for young people and their rights and views are promoted regularly in daily living and through young people's meetings, independent visitors and children's rights forums. These practices empower young people to have more control in their lives.

Young people live in a healthy environment where their physical, emotional and social wellbeing is promoted. They engage in physical and social activities and have easy access to health care services to meet their individual needs. Young people are encouraged to pursue their individual interests and staff are active in ensuring these are fulfilled, for example, young people have chosen gymnasium membership. The home provides a varied and balanced diet and young people assist to prepare the home's menu to encourage their understanding of nutrition and independence.

Staff have excellent working relationships with teachers and social workers and work with them to promote young people's education. Staff emphasise the importance of education with young people and provide learning experiences to complement their education. Consequently young people have made significant progress within education and achieve their potential. Moreover, young people exceed their targets in some subject areas.

Young people live in a relaxed, homely accommodation that blends into the residential neighbourhood. The home is clean, well decorated and furnished. Young people have their own bedrooms that are personalised and reflect their particular tastes. They have indoor and outdoor areas to play and for quiet time alone. This affords respect and dignity to young people.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are effectively safeguarded and feel safe and protected. Staff receive safeguarding training and have a good understanding of their duties in promoting young people's welfare. Staff policies and procedures are in place to ensure a robust response to any allegation or disclosure of abuse. Staff are very aware of young people's vulnerabilities and work with them individually to address any risks. Risk assessments and behaviour management plans provide a sound mechanism for responding to young people's changing needs for safety.

Constructive and warm relationships between staff and young people and consistent boundaries provide the basis for managing behaviour. Rewards, consequences and adult role modelling encourage young people's positive behaviour and assists them in accepting responsibility for their actions. The recordings of sanctions and physical interventions are reviewed and include the opportunity for young people to record their views. Staff are clear that physical intervention is only used within a context of positive care and as a last resort. Where physical intervention has been used, clear records detail the action taken, the duration, and the debrief offered to young people. Although behaviour management strategies are monitored for their appropriateness and proportionality, some sanctions imposed are disproportionate.

There are sound arrangements in place to respond and record missing from home incidents. Young people missing from home are responded to positively on their return and have the support they need. Excellent partnership working with professionals is ongoing, however, further development work is required to ensure young people's safety. There is a zero tolerance culture in terms of bullying and this is reinforced within the home and young people do not identify bullying as an issue. All room searches are recorded and understood by young people.

Young people live in a physically safe environment in which health and safety issues are well managed. Staff carry out routine health and safety checks around the home and are knowledgeable about their responsibilities. Safety and insurance certificates are up to date and regular fire drills take place to ensure young people and staff are aware of an emergency evacuation route in the event of a fire. Staff are vigilant and take appropriate steps to verify visitors identity to ensure young people are protected appropriately.

Young people benefit from a stable, experienced and suitably qualified core staff team. A thorough recruitment process and Criminal Records Bureau and reference checks are all undertaken before any appointment of staff is made. Staff are subject to an induction, probation period of work and appraisals to further ensure their competence in caring for young people.

Leadership and management

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

The home is efficiently managed by an enthusiastic and reflective acting deputy manager who receives excellent support from senior management. Together they provide vision, leadership and accountability, therefore staff fully understand the roles and responsibilities delegated to them. Throughout the inspection the acting deputy manager was extremely receptive and enthusiastic for development of the service to young people. The acting deputy manager works closely with young people and staff to rigorously monitor their welfare which ensures the high standards of care and the safety of young people.

There are systems in place to monitor the quality of care which include monthly visits by a designated person in accordance with regulation. However, these visits do not detail the presence or interviews of young people at the time of the visit. Despite very good monitoring, not all the data is fully analysed to identify trends to continually improve the service, for instance, in reducing missing from home incidents. The acting deputy manager is clear and transparent about the strengths and weaknesses of the home and all recommendations from the previous inspection have been addressed. Effective supervision of staff, monitoring, action planning and excellent relationships with young people provides the platform for continued improvement.

Staff confirm that they are fully supported and the organisation demonstrates a commitment to professional development. All staff are suitably qualified and new staff are to commence a recognised qualification on confirmation of their probation period. Regular quality supervision, team meetings and training opportunities all contribute to the competence of the staff in providing outstanding care to young people. The home is sufficiently staffed, however rotas do not specify planned time for staff to spend individually with young people.

Staff fully understand young people's diverse needs and have high aspirations for young people in achieving their individual potential. Recordings are generally very good and provide a picture of young people's daily lives and developmental work is ongoing to perfect this. Young people's information is securely stored and shared confidentiality to protect their safety and privacy.

Equality and diversity practice is **outstanding**.