

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Paul Scott
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This is a private children's home registered to provide care and accommodation for up to eight young people who may be experiencing emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

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 is a good service that provides an excellent quality of care for young people. Young people say they are well cared for and enjoy living at the home and parents and professionals report very positively about the quality of care and the progress young people make.

Care planning and practice is highly responsive to individual need. The home works closely with stakeholders and external agencies to ensure they are fully involved and that young people have access to the services and support they need. Consequently, young people make steady and sometimes significant progress across all areas of their development.

Young people are safe and feel safe. Staff have a sound appreciation of safe working practice and implement robust safeguarding procedures to protect and promote young people's safety and welfare. Relationships are a strength. Staff are adept at forming strong, trusting attachments with young people. They use these relationships to good effect by providing young people with a sense of self-worth and stability.

Young people live in a home that is well managed. Staff are skilled and well trained. Monitoring systems have been improved, particularly from the registered provider visits. This ensures young people continue to receive good quality of care identifies areas for improvement.

Requirements and recommendations are raised. These include improving sanction

and restraint records, updating the homes Statement of Purpose, further improving the environment and providing staff with training in moving and handling.

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
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, restraint or discipline in a children's home, a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose and fully meets regulations (Regulation 17B (3) and (4))	29/05/2013
4 (2001)	ensure the Statement of Purpose consists of a statement of all matters listed in schedule 1. (Regulation 4 (1))	29/05/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure all young people's bedrooms and bathrooms are well maintained and decorated (NMS 10.3)
- ensure staff are equipped with the skills required to meet the needs of children living in the home, specifically that they receive training in moving and handling. (NMS 18.1)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Outcomes for young people are good. Staff are skilled at making and sustaining positive attachments that enhance young people's trust, self-worth and confidence. Staff use these attachments to help young people feel valued and respected as individuals. As a result, young people become more resilient and able to come to terms with their past. The effectiveness of this approach is evident in the progress young people make in achieving many of their personal goals.

Young people's health needs are well managed. They enjoy well balanced diets and are actively encouraged to take regular exercise through play. Young people are offered consistently good guidance and information from both staff and healthcare professionals. This enables young people to make positive and safe choices about

their health, relative to their age and level of understanding.

Young people have excellent attendance at school and make good progress from their starting point when moving into the home. They are motivated to learn because the importance of education is consistently promoted by staff. Barriers to young people's full participation in education are quickly identified and strategies put into place to provide appropriate levels of support. This enables young people to make good academic progress in preparation for their return to mainstream education. One parent said, 'There is a very individualised approach to education. Learning is tailored around my child's needs. She has made very good progress in a reasonably short space of time.'

Well organised and safe arrangements are in place for young people to maintain contact with their families and other important people in their lives. Clear risk assessments for staff to follow ensure contact is appropriately planned, well-managed and young people are kept safe. Parents report that staff are always welcoming when they visit the home and do their best to make these visits a positive experience.

Young people are encouraged to develop basic independence skills including tidying their bedrooms, helping staff cook, managing their pocket money and maintaining good personal hygiene. They are encouraged to make decisions about everyday life and keeping themselves safe. This helps young people to develop basic practical competencies and negotiate everyday life.

Quality of care

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

Young people benefit from living in a highly supportive environment where their individual needs are given the highest priority. Staff work hard to provide clear boundaries, structure and routine. This helps young people find stability in their sometimes chaotic lives. Relationships between young people and staff are genuinely warm and friendly. Young people talk affectionately about specific staff members who they view as very important people in their lives.

A great deal of effort has gone into matching young people's needs, personalities and traits when planning for placements. A particular emphasis on age has resulted in a well matched group of younger children who appear happy and content in each other's company. Comprehensive care plans detailing young people's needs are used as working documents. Staff regularly discuss and review young people's progress to ensure individual targets are current, realistic and achievable. They work collaboratively with social workers and other agencies. This ensures young people receive the right services and support they need to overcome their difficulties and plan positively for their futures.

Young people confirm that their views are actively sought and acted upon. Staff provide opportunities for daily group and one-to-one discussions, keyworker sessions

and young people's meetings. This ensures young people are actively involved in making decisions about their lives and contribute to the daily running of the home. Young people know how to complain. They say that complaints are taken seriously and dealt with effectively.

Young people live in a healthy environment that actively promotes their physical and emotional well-being. They have good access to community health services and are registered with a local doctor, dentist and opticians. Staff assess and closely monitor young people's health to ensure they are aware of, and able to respond to any issues or concerns. There is a coordinated approach taken to meeting young people's individual health needs and staff effectively utilise strong links with healthcare professionals. These professionals provide direct support to young people as well as providing staff with advice and guidance on a number of health related issues. The looked after children's nurse, who regularly sees young people, said, 'Staff are on the ball when it comes to meeting young people's health needs. I am provided with good information about young people and staff will always ring me for advice and guidance.' This collaborative approach ensures young people's physical, emotional and psychological needs are well met.

Staff promote young people's education by ensuring the daily routine supports their participation in school. The majority of young people attend the organisations school that is situated on the same site as the children's home. There is a clear expectation that young people must attend school. From the point of admission staff work closely with young people and education staff to ensure this is possible. As a result, young people routinely attend school and are making good progress relative to their age, ability and time in placement.

Staff encourage young people to plan their recreation time positively. Young people are offered a wide range of risk assessed and age appropriate activities to occupy their recreation time. Staff encourage and support young people to develop their confidence, talents and skills by pursuing personal interests. Young people talk enthusiastically about their experiences and say activities are one of the good things about the home. For example, one young person spoke confidently about the football club that he attends and was keen to show off his football skills and talents to the inspectors.

The location of the home ensures young people have access to local places of interest. The home is suitable to meet the needs of young people and is decorated and furnished to a reasonable standard. A number of communal areas have been redecorated and improved as part of the homes on-going development plan. Young people have their own bedrooms which they are encouraged to personalise to their own individual tastes. However a number of bedrooms and one bathroom require repairs and redecoration to be brought to the same standard as the rest of the home.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people confirm that they feel safe and are well protected from harm. The home maintains good anti-bullying practices and staff are vigilant to any signs of this. Young people say they are not bullied but if they were they could talk to staff about their concerns. Good staffing ratios ensure young people receive the supervision and support they need to stay safe and feel protected. All staff are trained in safeguarding and know what they need to do to protect young people. Detailed risk assessments are used to inform staff practice, ensuring staff know how to safely manage young people's known risks and vulnerabilities. There have been a small number of allegations made about staff. These allegations were effectively managed in the best interest of the young people's welfare. Concerns were thoroughly investigated, including the involvement of safeguarding professionals and internal investigation.

There are robust procedures in place for when young people go missing from home. These have been strengthened significantly following the review of the management of one incident. Strong links have been established with the police force. The force missing person safeguarding officer said, 'The home has always worked with us, followed protocols and responded appropriately when young people have gone missing. They are always keen to have the right meetings at the right time. They have listened to our concerns about some of the young people that were living at the home and reverted back to caring for younger children. As a result, there has been a notable decrease in the number of young people going missing from home and I can't praise them enough.'

There is a calm, effective and gentle approach towards behaviour management. Staff make good use of individually tailored incentives and rewards to encourage and reinforce positive behaviour. Young people confirm that when sanctions are used they are proportionate and fair. The use of physical restraint is infrequent. All staff receive training in behaviour management, including de-escalation and physical restraint. However, records do not fully meet the regulations because the effectiveness of sanctions and restraints are not routinely evaluated and young people's comments are not fully recorded.

The procedures for the recruitment and selection of people working at the home are good. Processes for gathering information about potential staff have been improved to ensure a full and comprehensive employment history is attained. Any arising issues of concerns are risk assessed to ensure staff are suitable to work with vulnerable young people. This protects young people from persons who may pose a risk to them.

Young people live in a physically safe environment. They are protected by a good range of health and safety procedures, risk assessments and checks. Staff carry out regular fire drills to ensure young people and staff know how to safely evacuate the building in the event of a fire.

Leadership and management

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

The home is effectively managed by a competent, suitably experienced and qualified manager who is registered with Ofsted. The manager and staff demonstrate a strong commitment to delivering good quality care that is in the best interest of young people. The home has strong, positive links within the community. Staff work closely with the police, health services and local authorities to ensure young people are kept safe and their needs are met.

The service meets the aims and objectives of its Statement of Purpose. However, not all information listed in schedule 1 is included in this document. For example, there is no information about the qualifications and experience of the manager or staff; the arrangements for supervision and training; or the arrangements for consultation with young people. Despite this, young people, their families and placing authorities are clear and complimentary about the services and support the home provides.

The requirement and the recommendation from the previous inspection have been addressed. Procedures have been improved to ensure Ofsted is notified of all significant events. This practice has been further improved to ensure Ofsted receive regular updates and outcomes about on-going issues. Medication management is more robust because systems are now in place for the safe storage of medication when young people are away from the home.

There is a clear commitment to developing the service and securing future improvement. Concerns or complaints about the home have been suitably addressed. The organisation has used these experiences as a means to review and where necessary amend practice. Systems for external and internal monitoring have also been improved. For example, regulation 33 visits and reports have been amended to ensure they accurately reflect the conduct of the home, including areas for improvement. This information is used to identify action plans and ensure shortfalls are quickly addressed.

Young people are cared for by an adequate number of staff, the majority of whom are qualified and experienced. New staff are thoroughly inducted to the home and expected to complete the Children's Workforce Development Council's induction standards within six months of their employment. Staff confirm that they are well supported by the manager. They receive regular clinical and professional supervision. This helps staff understand their roles and responsibilities as well as enabling them to develop their practice and reflect on young people's care, progress and development.

All staff have completed mandatory training, including safeguarding and behaviour management. Staff are able to continue to develop their knowledge and skills through a variety of additional training opportunities. For example, all staff are at various points of learning about the home's therapeutic model of care and some staff are working towards a foundation degree in research. This ensures young people's known and emerging needs can be met as well as demonstrating a sound investment in the staff team's development. The home is currently providing care for a young

person who requires some assistance with their mobility. These needs have been risk assessed and information sought regarding safe practice. However, staff have not been formally trained in moving and handling. This has not had an impact on the welfare of the young person but does have the potential to put staff and the young person at risk.

Young people's records are generally of a good standard. They clearly document young people's needs, how these needs are to be met and the progress young people are making. Information is stored securely and shared confidentially to protect young people's privacy.

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.