

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

The home is operated by a large national private provider of children's services. It provides care and accommodation for up to four young people of either gender with emotional or behavioural difficulties.

It is a detached bungalow set in its own grounds and situated in a residential area near to the town. The location enables young people to access local amenities including; health care centres, schools, places of worship, buses, shops and recreational activities.

Overall effectiveness

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

Young people live in a safe and nurturing environment that supports them in making excellent progress in all aspects of their lives. They achieve better outcomes in their emotional and physical health, their education and they have a wide range of opportunities to enjoy their childhood. Young people like living at the home and exercise choice and responsibility through excellent consultation. Regular consultation with young people's families requires development to further inform the quality of care.

Young people are central to care planning and detailed placement plans ensure that they are cared for consistently according to their personal needs. Staff have high aspirations for young people and are passionate and committed to ensuring they succeed. The staff value the importance of building relationships with young people; consequently they are settled, enjoy time with staff and are confident in voicing their opinions. Staff work constructively with families to support contact. Furthermore, they advocate for young people with professionals to ensure that they gain the help and support they need.

The home is effectively and efficiently run by an enthusiastic and dedicated Registered Manager who emphasises high standards of care. Robust monitoring scrutinises the quality of care and plans are in place for improvement in the home's pursuit for excellence. Anti-discriminatory practice runs through all aspects of the day-to-day care and young people continue to make sense of their background and identity. Although care is outstanding, analysis of trends needs developing further to continually improve the service to young people. Also a clear recording of accidents is required to show a full account of the event and maintenance work to furniture to ensure the homes' comfort.

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 views of child's family are sought regularly on the child's care, (unless in individual cases this is not appropriate). (NMS 1.4)
- ensure the manager's monitoring identifies any patterns and trends. This relates specifically to incidents of missing from home and physical intervention (NMS 21.2)
- ensure that the home is well maintained and decorated (NMS 10.3)
- ensure that entries in records are legible and clear. This relates specifically to recordings of accidents (NMS 22.4)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make excellent progress across all aspects of their development, notably their emotional and psychological health. Exceptional care planning and therapeutic services work seamlessly to ensure young people gain resilience and trust to move forward in their lives. Young people are fully involved in the development and evaluation of their placement plan and are helped to understand this further through regular key worker sessions. Creative consultation ensures that young people's views are listened to and acted upon in all aspects of their daily lives, enhancing the planning process.

Young people take part in a range of activities including horse riding, swimming, football and holidays which helps to promote their physical health and wellbeing. They are registered with medical practitioners and have detailed plans to meet their particular health needs. Young people are educated in a variety of health and wellbeing matters, including sexual health, drug and alcohol misuse and effects of bullying. Furthermore, individual key worker sessions compliment young people's learning to ensure they have the knowledge to make informed decisions. These practices ensure young people enjoy excellent health.

Staff promote and value young people's educational achievement. Staff have constructive relationships with school and advocate on behalf of young people to ensure they get the support they need. They have an excellent record of school attendance and achieve their potential. Young people are encouraged to learn at home, staff assist them with their home work and spend quality time reading and writing with them. Individual school reports highlight exceptional progress including behaviour and attainment.

Staff have high expectations for young people and are committed to ensuring they

have the best opportunities to help them achieve in life. Young people are involved in local events including volunteering, and are representatives of looked after children forums. These are fine examples of young people making a positive contribution to their community and they demonstrate their growing confidence and self belief.

Staff work closely with placing authorities to ensure contact is positive, safe and enjoyable. They facilitate contact and encourage family to maintain relationships with young people. Staff value the importance of contact for young people in understanding their background and heritage. They are very well aware of the emotional impact of contact upon young people and ensure that they are sensitively supported.

Quality of care

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

Young people thrive in a stable, nurturing and supportive environment. Young people comment, 'I like it here, I feel safe and cared about, I would give it next to best score, the best is with my parents.' Recently improved placement plans are exceptional in capturing young people's specific needs, including their heritage, and clearly detail the actions necessary for success. This, combined with excellent preparation and review, contributes to the excellent standards of care received by young people.

Young people enjoy positive relationships with staff and all identify a person to whom they feel a particular connection. These relationships provide the foundation for encouraging openness and trust for young people to express their thoughts and ideas. There is a culture of promoting young people's rights and their views are sought regularly in day-to-day life through young people's meetings, quizzes and key worker sessions. Young people know how to make a complaint and have used this to settle their dissatisfaction. These practices empower young people to have control in their lives.

Young people live in a healthy environment in which their physical, emotional and social wellbeing is promoted. They engage in activities including swimming, music lessons, horse riding and Cubs. They have contact with family and friends and have private time with staff to discuss personal and individual issues. Young people have appropriate access to medical practitioners and specialist attachment care to meet their needs. Staff educate young people in healthy living and involve them in menu planning and researching meals from other cultures to encourage their appreciation of different traditions.

Staff promote young people's achievement in education and have made excellent relationships with schools and social workers. Young people's attendance and progress is excellent, which enables them to experience success and pride in themselves. Staff value education and provide learning experiences within the home to compliment their education. These include group discussion and art work to promote young people's tolerance and understanding of difference.

Young people live in a relaxed and homely environment with ample space for private time alone. The home is appropriately furnished, however maintenance work is required to replace damaged furniture. Young people have their own bedrooms that are personalised to them. Additionally, their photographs and art work are displayed around the home providing them with a sense of ownership and belonging.

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 from harm. Staff receive regular safeguarding training and have an excellent 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. All investigations are handled fairly and speedily to ensure protection of young people and support of staff.

Constructive and warm relationships between staff and young people and absolutely consistent boundaries provide the basis for managing behaviour. Methods such as rewards and consequences encourage young people's participation. Young people's engagement in the process ensures that sanctions are clearly understood and assists them to accept responsibility for their actions. Young people are encouraged to behave appropriately and there are no incidents of bullying, and incidents of young people missing from home have considerably reduced.

Staff receive appropriate training in order to safely manage physical intervention within the home, including guidance from specialist therapists in understanding complex behaviours. 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. This is further complimented by a key worker session to ensure young people have the opportunity to talk through their experience. Interventions are also monitored for their appropriateness and proportionality. However, further analysis of emerging patterns and trends is required to inform and develop practice further.

Young people live in a physically safe environment in which health and safety matters are fully considered. Written records clearly show that staff carry out routine health and safety checks around the home. Safety 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 the safety of young people.

Young people benefit from an experienced and suitably qualified staff team. A thorough recruitment process, Criminal Records Bureau and reference checks are all undertaken before any appointment of staff is made. Staff are subject to an induction, probationary 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 and effective in meeting its Statement of Purpose. The Registered Manager works closely with young people and staff to rigorously monitor their welfare, which ensures the high standards of care and safety of young people. The Registered Manager provides vision, leadership and accountability; therefore, staff fully understand the roles and responsibilities delegated to them.

There are systems in place to monitor the quality of care which include monthly visits by a designated person in accordance with regulation. Although monitoring is very good, not all the data is fully analysed to identify trends to continually improve the service, for instance, in reducing missing from home incidents. The Registered 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 provide the platform for continued improvement.

Staff 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.

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. However, recordings of accidents are not always clear and lack full detail of the circumstances. Young people's information is securely stored and shared confidentiality to protect their safety and privacy.

Equality and diversity practice is **outstanding**.