

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC010699
Inspection date	22/05/2012
Inspector	Seka Graovac
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	20/02/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is owned by a private provider and is a family-run business. The Registered Manager is also the registered provider. The home provides care, support and accommodation for five young people between the ages of 12 and 16 years old, with emotional or behavioural difficulties. Emergency/ crises placements are accepted and short-term respite care can be arranged.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service 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**.

The highly dedicated provider monitors the service closely and ensures that it continues to maximise good outcomes for young people. A culture of genuine care and provision of highly personalised support is at core of the day to day staff practice. Strong leadership is effective at creating a nurturing atmosphere in which young people's welfare plays a central part. The home provides a welcoming, safe and beautiful environment. Motivated and competent staff are effective at establishing positive and trusting relationships with young people. Within strong partnership framework, staff ensure that young people have their diverse needs fully met and that the purpose of their placement is achieved. Consistent delivery of young people's well-defined care plans leads to good welfare and developmental outcomes for young people. The home is effective at finding a right balance between providing firm boundaries and empowering young people to express themselves. The management successfully advocates for young people and their rights. Young people value the relationships with staff and the support they receive, very highly.

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people enjoy being in this home. They are relaxed and often walk around the home, quietly singing. They love the staff and describe the physical environment as a palace. Although the vast majority of young people stay only for a short period of time, they develop positive relationships and attachments with staff. They often stay

in touch, visit and write warm, emotional letters, after moving out of the home. One young person wrote: 'Thank you so much for everything you've done and helped me with. I will never forget you all. Lots of love.' Another young person wrote: 'I miss all of you, lots. Looking forward to seeing you. Love you all.'

Young people have good opportunities to learn about health risks and develop healthier lifestyles. They are made aware of the services that they can access to promote their health, including general and specialist health services. They know and respect the home's firm rules about smoking. They understand the reasons behind this rule and know that the help is available when they are ready to stop smoking. They are encouraged to eat a good variety of healthy food. For example, one young person has tried avocado and blueberries for the first time.

Young people have access to a wide range of activities in the home and in the community. They are encouraged to exercise and experience a sense of achievement. This has at times, brought fantastic results. For example, one young person who used to live in the home is now a successful professional boxer who appears on television and inspires other young people.

Another previous resident has recently got a place at the University. Young people are encouraged to attend their education and engage in learning. They benefit from being in an environment where learning is highly valued.

Staff focus sharply on helping young people to progress with a particular behaviour that has created a barrier to their overall development. For example, one young person was helped to stop harming themselves. After living in the home for several months, this person was enabled to successfully move to a foster-family environment.

When young people are remanded in care, they have good opportunities to reflect on their behaviour, understand their options and consequences and make right choices. There have been no incidents of anti-social behaviour and re-offending, while at this home.

Quality of care

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

Young people receive highly individualised support that addresses the full range of their diverse needs, very well. Staff work in effective partnership with the placing authorities and other agencies involved in young people's care. The management proactively advocates for young people and when necessary, challenges any shortfalls in the care planning process to ensure that it is effective. For example, ensuring that the travel arrangements to and from education are clear, from the start of the placement. A commissioner describes the excellent communication and professional, multi-disciplinary way of working, as one of the main strengths of the home. Young people are enabled and actively supported to access health and other services they need.

The home is registered as an Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network centre and helps young people to develop their personal attributes leading to qualifications. In addition, the management has developed a full programme of structured in-house learning activities for young people who are waiting for a place at a school/ college or are reluctant to engage in formal education. Staff provide young people with easy access to books and on-line facilities. Staff are skilled to, in a relaxed manner, engage young people in conversations about a wide range of topics, such as popular music, sports, offending, aggression, sharing concerns, health and safety, healthy eating and religion. Young people's natural curiosity, varied interests and openness to learning are effectively fostered. The home is effective at giving young people ambitions and confidence. For example, one young person wrote: 'this is a great place to live. It keeps you out of trouble. I am looking forward to working here in the future.'

Young people feel listened to and know that their views, wishes and feelings are valued. Staff regularly seek their contributions to decisions made in the home and about their lives. The home's documentation emphasises the centrality of young people's views. It successfully facilitates young people's involvement in the care planning process and builds on their confidence. Young people know that staff are consistently concerned with their welfare. Staff are skilled in explaining to young people why it may not be possible to act on their wishes in all cases. Young people are made aware of the home's complaints procedure and of the advocacy services available to them.

The home successfully facilitates young people's close and positive relationships with their families.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are looked after by staff who have been carefully selected and robustly vetted. Staff receive appropriate safeguarding training and have easy access to clear written guidance on how to protect and promote welfare of young people. The home's policies and procedures have been written in line with the local authority's safeguarding and missing persons procedures. Staff consistently implement good safeguarding practice in their work. Safeguarding and protection of young people in the home is effective.

Young people feel safe, emotionally secure and comfortable in their surroundings. Staff positive and respectful way of relating to each other and young people, provides a good example for young people to follow. Young people's constructive behaviour and good social skills are proactively promoted. There is no bullying in the home and there have hardly been any incidents. Staff are always available to talk with young people about anything that concerns them or they simply want to explore with somebody. Trusting relationships, staff genuine availability and care, and firm and consistent professional boundaries minimise the need for staff to use restrictive

behaviour control measures. Clear and comprehensive written individual risk assessments and highly individualised supportive strategies contribute to the effective behaviour management in the home.

Good health and safety practice with young people's involvement and regular checks ensure that premises are free from any hazards.

Leadership and management

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

Young people benefit from the Registered Manager's strong vision that places their welfare at the heart of what the home does. This vision is successfully embodied through work of highly dedicated and well-trained staff. Young people are looked after by enthusiastic staff who themselves receive good support, supervision and appraisal. The service is delivered effectively and in line with the clear written Statement of Purpose.

The home has built up a good reputation within the area. While talking about the home's flexibility and resourcefulness, a commissioner said: 'they will use every possible strategy they can think of, to make the placement work.' The commissioner also talked about the management's genuine commitment to care and singled out good matching decisions as a particular strength. The home is willing to take fully into account the needs of the young people who already live in the home, when deciding on a prospective placement.

The home follows sound business practice to ensure its viability. However, the pursuit of financial prosperity is not at the expense of the quality of care delivered to young people.

The management is committed to continue to improve the service. There is a business development manager on a staff team who has a clear lead role. At the last inspection, no requirements or recommendations were made. The homes own internal quality assurance processes are complemented by the monthly monitoring checks done by an independent person. The current development plan focuses on the improvement of the premises and on staff development. The whole house has just been fully refurbished. The accommodation is of an exceptionally high standard and all bedrooms have en-suite facilities.

Staff continue to work on obtaining qualifications above the national minimum standard. The team work is good and staff are keen to make their own contributions to the development of the home. For example, a staff member with particular interest in art has led on the refurbishment decisions. This person also redesigned the paperwork to include lovely graphic images that are in tune with the teenage culture. This aims to inspire young people to see record-keeping in a positive light and actively engage with it. Young people's records are appropriately maintained. They contribute effectively towards understanding of the young people's lives, their histories and the goals for the future.

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.