

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Roy Bega
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Service information

Brief description of the service

A private organisation owns and manages this home. The home offers residential placements for up to six children of either sex, who are between the ages of eight and 16 years. It specialises in providing therapeutic care for children who have experienced trauma in their lives and display a variety of behavioural problems.

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 **outstanding**.

The home provides excellent, well planned and personalised care tailored to meet the needs of young people. Positive outcomes are achieved through a dedicated and skilled team of staff who maximise the potential of young people to achieve excellence.

Young people experience an excellent and well-organised service that continuously adapts to improve and develop what the home can offer. Young people are treated with respect and dignity and are central to the decisions that affect their lives.

Young people are encouraged to take an active role in their own care and enjoy living at the home. The home is outstanding in ensuring that young people are not only kept safe, but also develop the knowledge and confidence to keep themselves safe. Very good liaison with external agencies ensures that young people receive high levels of support in all aspects of their lives.

A safe environment is provided for young people, with good health and safety control measures. Behaviour management strategies are based on positive interactions and this clearly shows through the young people's comments.

The young people commented very positively about the quality of care and said they receive a service of high quality. Young people have exceptional relationships with staff, demonstrated through the trust, respect and care that they have for each other. The high standard of care delivered means young people are safe and

protected.

Records and documentation are well maintained and contribute well to the on-going care and support young people receive. The home has an experienced and well-qualified manager who leads by example. She is ably supported by motivated and hardworking staff who are dedicated to achieving the best possible outcomes for the young people in their care.

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **outstanding**.

The setting is welcoming and provides young people with a stable, secure and fun loving environment which they are proud to call their home.

Young people make substantial progress in all aspects of their lives. They have improved confidence, self-esteem and a positive understanding of their own abilities. They are growing in self-confidence and are more able to sustain relationships both within the home and community.

Young people enjoy good health and are motivated in taking responsibility for their own medical and health needs. The development of self-esteem and understanding about their emotional and mental well-being aids their ability to have fun. They are aware how lifestyle choices can impact on their health. Young people also understand how to access a variety of health agencies that will support their medical needs and give advice about lifestyle choices.

Young peoples' educational achievement and school/college attendance is exceptional taking into account their attainment level at the commencement of their placement and subsequent progress. They appreciate the support and guidance given by staff who are proud of them and care about their futures. They commented to the inspector that key workers talk to them about the importance of school, going to college and being able to get a job. They feel good about themselves as they are consistently congratulated and rewarded for their efforts and achievements.

Young people make decisions about their placement plans, reviews and running of the home. They feel confident to say what they think, can read what is said about them and sign records. A lot of discussion also takes place during social occasions such as meal time. They enjoy discussing a wide range of things including food, personal activities in the local community, holidays, sanctions/house rules and the decoration of the home.

Young people are actively encouraged by staff to participate in suitable leisure activities within the home and the wider community. They benefit from the promotion of new experiences aimed at providing the opportunity for them to learn new skills, develop new interests and gain confidence. Comments made by young people include, 'staff are always trying to get me to do different things'.

Where appropriate young people feel they make contact with family members and friends. They are also aware of the reasoning when it is necessary to agree planned and supervised contact with their families. These include visits to the home, telephone contact, and planned overnight stays with parents. Exceptional staff commitment in providing emotional and practical support enables young people to maintain, and in some instances, re-establish relationships with their families.

Young people view preparation to move into adulthood and be independent as an important part of their individual placement plans. Transitional arrangements which cover all areas for moving on into independent living, adult life or alternative accommodation are meticulously discussed and planned with young people. Building work of two independent apartments attached to the home is due to be completed by the end of the summer when two of the young people are looking forward to moving in. Staff are dedicated to keep in touch with young people once they have moved on. This often results in some young people returning for social visits. Others prefer to stay in touch by means of phone calls or other forms of correspondence.

Quality of care

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

Young people fully understand the rules and boundaries that are set. While these are not always adhered to, young people are aware of, and accept, the consequences of negative behaviour and rule breaking and learn and grow from the experiences. The home is exceptionally good at ensuring that young people understand why they may have behaved in a less than acceptable way, why they should not repeat this behaviour and how they can better deal with a situation in the future.

Young people's views, about all aspects of their individual care needs, the needs of the group and the needs of the staff, are viewed as very important. Views are sought through various means, including the after-school discussions. These are very positive moments during which achievements for the day are celebrated. The less positive aspects of a young person's day are also considered in a sensitive way and encouragement is given for the next day. The weekly young people's meetings provide a positive forum for them to put forward their wishes and feelings about the day-to-day care in the home, such as the menu planning. Young people are supported to attend their statutory reviews and have their views heard. All of the young people know how to make a complaint. In reality, the formal complaints procedure is little used as issues are managed on a daily basis before they become a big issue. This is achieved because young people are confident they will be listened to and heard.

Each young person feels valued and respected. There is a clear ethos, within professional boundaries, of this being a 'family group' living arrangement in which the needs of all people matter. This provides the young people with a real sense of responsibility for themselves and their behaviour and the needs of others living and working in the home.

Young people have exceptional support to attend and achieve in learning opportunities; they all take up these opportunities. The expectations for attendance and achievement are high and young people show a keen interest in achieving well in their formal education and in the many less formal learning opportunities provided. Staff are interested in their school work and celebrate achievements such as any caring parent would be. Staff have realistic expectations of young people and encourage all of them to achieve and reach their full potential.

Less formal but just as important learning opportunities are provided to each young person in line with their interests and skills. Integration into the local community is seen as key to helping young people become useful members of society. While there are many group activities for all of the young people, these are carefully managed to ensure that activities are in line with ages and abilities. Young people are seen as individuals and are supported to join various clubs and teams that interest them, such as local youth clubs, performing arts and music.

The home is exceptionally well presented and maintained. It provides a very comfortable, homely and child-friendly environment. Young people are involved in choosing the décor and soft furnishings. Communal areas are covered with photographs of current and past residents that reinforce positive views of diversity and difference. Young people enjoy passing time in the exceptionally well-equipped games and education rooms that house a range of interesting and stimulating equipment to support the development of new skills and interests.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people have a strong sense of safety and well-being and staff are highly efficient and proactive in their safeguarding practice. There are clear risk assessments in place to manage and protect young people while enabling them to take reasonable risks as part of their growth and development. This means young people are still able to enjoy the facilities of the home while being supervised and protected.

The relationships between young people and staff are exceptional and this significantly impacts on behaviour. Positive behaviour is promoted and restraint is rarely used. Staff are excellent role models and provide clear and proportionate strategies to develop acceptable behaviour. Bullying is not tolerated; young people are not subject to any form of bullying in the home. The excellent relationships with staff promote healthy relationships generally. Staff give positive praise and reward, and where a sanction has been necessary, young people have the opportunity to reclaim items that may have been removed. For example, a positive reward was given by providing more unsupervised free time, and boundaries crossed meant a loss of television with the option to gain this back with positive behaviour. This means young people constantly strive to recognise and be responsible for consequences to their actions. As part of protecting young people, staff undertake,

where necessary, room searches to ensure and maintain young people's safety. Records are clear and detailed in reporting the search and young people know why they are undertaken and sign to say they agree with the action. As a result, young people are involved in keeping themselves safe.

Staff have a clear understanding of the safeguarding procedures and what to do should they have any concerns about a young person's safety or well-being. Staff's knowledge and understanding are continually being developed through the close working relationships with external partners, such as the Local Authority Designated Officer. The home benefits from a skilled and knowledgeable staff team who are trained in safeguarding and put the safety of young people at the heart of their work. Staff are vetted through a thorough process before beginning employment. This keeps young people protected from potential harm or abuse.

The home is physically safe and appropriately secure. The health and safety obligations are carried out on a regular basis to ensure safe practices. Young people know the fire procedures and act appropriately when hearing or raising the alarm. There are detailed and comprehensive risk assessments in place to safeguard both young people and staff while working or residing in the home.

Leadership and management

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

This is a home that shows a consistently high level of commitment to providing excellent, individualised care to young people. The enthusiasm for the task permeates from the strategic level to the ground level. The Registered Manager leads her staff with a high level of professionalism and passion and values the input of staff at all levels. She provides very effective leadership to the staff teams and has a strong sense about how she can further develop the already excellent care. She is open to new ideas and implements these in line with young people's diverse and often competing needs.

The home is effectively monitored externally and by the manager and this ensures that success is celebrated and areas for development are identified. Young people's views are gathered on a monthly basis, which are then fed into the business planning. A clear Statement of Purpose underpins the work in the home and the home operates in line with this. A professional visiting commented of the manager and staff: 'Nothing is too much trouble for them.' Other comments received include, 'It is a good home and all the children are seen as individuals and they meet all the care needs' 'members of staff are devoted to their jobs', and, 'they have a great professional relationship with the children.'

The home is exceptionally well resourced in all areas. For example, the environment, the equipment, the staffing arrangements and the services commissioned are resourced to ensure that the highest quality of care is provided to each young person at all times. The way in which the staff teams work, provides young people a high level of continuity. These arrangements are well managed and ensure that staff are

adequately rested for their caring task. For example, following an especially difficult night the needs of staff to debrief and relax are accommodated with no impact on the care provided to young people. There is a stable long-serving group of staff which demonstrates that they are professionally motivated in working in the home and are well supported.

Staff are of an exceptionally high calibre and all are totally focused on meeting each young person's specific needs. Staff are extremely well supported in their sometimes difficult task through regular and good quality supervision. This is enhanced by effective and relevant training for personal development, team meetings and group supervision for the therapeutic work. Less formally the manager is extremely supportive of the staff and they all speak very highly of her support and of her compassion for her role.

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.