

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Jennie Christopher
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is privately owned and provides care and accommodation for up to 9 males with emotional and 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**.

All staff have extremely high aspirations for the young people in their care, which is reflected in outstanding outcomes for young people. Staff's highly effective relationships with parents, carers, and a range of professionals ensure a cohesive approach to placement, behaviour and therapeutic planning. Young people say they enjoy living in the home and family and social workers feel that they progress as a result of their placement. Young people positive relationships with staff, where they feel supported and able to succeed. They say staff listen to them and that they are invested in their progress. Young people benefit from consistent boundaries and an extremely supportive environment where they can explore appropriate relationships and prepare for future independence. Parents describe the home as 'the perfect place' and feel staff could not 'do anything better' than they already do to support their child.

Encouragement to participate in young people's meetings ensures individuals are actively involved in service development have their thoughts seriously considered and where appropriate, implemented in order to improve the experiences of young people who live in the home.

The management team is extremely new and the deputy is yet to start within the home. However, strident steps to guide and support the enthusiastic staff team have appeared effective in the few weeks the manager has been in post. Staff training is effective and updated, helping to ensure young people benefit from highly specialised care. The newly appointed manager is rapidly becoming aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the home and is striving for change and improvement where necessary. Two requirements and two recommendations have been made

regarding: restraint recording, notification of significant events, risk assessing locked windows and recording supervision timings.

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 the written record of restraint contains all matters as listed in 17B, specifically the effectiveness and consequences of the measure (f) and confirmation that the young person has their views recorded about the use of the measure. Regulation 17B(3)(f)(h))	31/10/2012
30 (2001)	ensure that all events listed in schedule 5 are notified to HMCI this particularly refers to investigation and outcome of any child protection enquiry. (Regulation 30(1))	30/11/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure the time and length of supervision is recorded (NMS 19.5)
- implement a risk assessment, as stated in Volume 5 2.108, regarding the locking of some windows and ensure that restrictions for one child do not impose similar restrictions on other children. (NMS 10.4)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make exceptional progress in all aspects of their lives, in relation to their extremely challenging starting points. They benefit greatly from thoughtful and individualised support leading to improved confidence, self-esteem and understanding of their personal story. Each young person is unreservedly valued as an individual and staff's positive regard enables strong attachments and the foundation to develop and sustain appropriate relationships. A social worker suggested that a young person's outcomes 'have improved significantly' as a result of living in the home. Promotion of health means young people have a strong understanding of healthy lifestyles and what this means individually. Smoking is not

permitted, and those who do smoke on arrival are able to quit through cessation support teams. The embedded therapeutic approach ensures young people are able to understand their risk-taking behaviours and work positively towards identifying triggers. As a result there are very few incidents of any type of risk-taking behaviour.

Attendance at school is excellent and joint and cross-working between the home and school staff enables young people to progress and achieve in line with their peers. Where appropriate, young people access work and college placements in the community, to promote independence and improved educational outcomes. Young people have positive relationships in the community, accessing sports and leisure activities as assessed in line with their needs. They have raised money for various charities through their 'Tuck Shop', and have certificates of thanks displayed within the home.

Whilst living in the home young people follow staged independent living booklets. This enables them to develop a wide range of practical skills, such as household cleaning tasks and cooking meals. In conjunction with this, they learn essential self-care and life skills in preparation for moving onto the independence home within the organisation or in the community.

Quality of care

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

Young people thrive as a result of positive and constructive relationships with staff who actively promote all aspects of their welfare. Young people are consistently positive about staff and observed interactions are therapeutic, nurturing and challenging. Enabling young people express themselves and feel heard is entrenched in the ethos of the service. Routine consultation with young people on areas for improvement ensures their views are sought and when possible acted upon. Examples include young people choosing activities and requested staff and managers look at the possibility of independent time. Alongside this consultation, young people are encouraged to be involved in their reviews and in house care planning. Incorporated in the plans are their ideas on what areas they currently need support with and what their immediate and longer term goals are. When their wishes cannot be acted upon, they are supported to understand this through group and individual work.

Staff consistently have very high aspirations for young people and their individual well-being is central to all planning, both daily and for the future. Parents comments include they had not seen their son 'this happy in a long time' and they are pleased to see their son 'doing so well'. Staff support educational placements with robust communication and joint working within the home and school. Quiet time on return from school ensures homework can be completed, with assistance when required. Those moving onto post-16 education have support packages in place to ensure smooth transitions in line with individual assessed needs. The changing needs of young people are continually monitored and plans updated by staff and therapists in consultation, where appropriate, with parents, social workers and other

professionals.

Young people mostly enjoy good health with limited use of prescribed medication. Medication is stored appropriately and there is a thorough system to ensure safety when administering. In case of emergency, there are several first aiders on site at all times. Mental and emotional health specialists work closely with staff and managers to ensure consistency of approach to support young people's emotional well-being and responses to unwanted behaviours.

The well maintained building has homely living and safety in mind, with many areas for independent or group interaction. Young people have access to independent advocates and know how to make complaints and who to complain to. Further information on how to access a range of advocacy and support services is clearly displayed. Young people challenge bullying and there are excellent anti-bullying procedures in place. Young people feel staff will stop bullying and support them to resolve concerns with individuals.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people say they feel safe in the home and that staff protect them from harm. Staff ensure young people's welfare is actively promoted and they protect them from abuse or harm. They are confident in processes to follow should they be concerned for a young person's safety or welfare and know the homes and local child protection procedures. Policies within the home are proactive and updated in response to lessons learned locally and nationally, including identifying signs of exploitation. Due to the specialised nature of the service, additional policies and staff training aims to highlight specific risk from and to young people. Staff are aware of individual vulnerabilities and work closely to ensure continued safety of all young people.

Young people very rarely go missing from care and there are robust measures in place should this happen. Triggers are identified and explored with young people, and risk assessments updated to reflect this. Consideration is given to the appropriateness of the placement should the behaviour continue. Individual files contain up-to-date photographs of young people in case of emergency. The company's recruitment policy is thorough and ensures young people are protected from harm by robust personnel checks.

Highly individualised positive behaviour plans reward young people through small rewards and certificates. Sanctions are proportionate and young people are encouraged to reflect on their behaviour and consider how future responses could be different. The creative plans ensure that young people rarely require restraint, although recording is not presently in line with regulations. Currently this has limited impact on young people, due to the low number of physical interventions.

Young people are safe from fire and other hazards as a result of thorough checks and procedures. The use of locks on windows, whilst currently essential for safety

and protection, have not been subject to a risk assessment and review on a regular basis to ensure the safety of one young person is not impacting on others. Young people's risk assessments however, are robust and thoughtful to ensure young people are able to enjoy age-appropriate activities and take controlled risk.

Leadership and management

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

The home has been without a manager for several months, although a new manager has been appointed in recent weeks and has already started the application process. Despite the break in a permanent manager, there has been adequate cover in the interim period.

The new manager has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home and will continue to monitor the home through effective and evaluative monthly monitoring of the building and records that is already in place. There have however been failures to identify non-compliance with the requirements of regulation; firstly to record fully restraints in the home and secondly to notify HMCI of the instigation and outcome of any child protection enquiry. Excellent quality manager's monthly checks demonstrate the impact living in the home has for young people, for example, and Regulation 33 reports are sound. The management team actively seek the views of young people, their families and other stakeholders via questionnaires when they visit the home and these help ensure young people continue to benefit from an evolving and improving service.

The provider meets the aims and objectives as set out in the Statement of Purpose and staff fully understand the functions, purpose and ethos of the home. The young people's guide is in a simple format and can be adapted to individual needs. Work is under way to provide this in other formats, such as DVD for both parents and young people.

The home demonstrates strong multi-agency working to improve outcomes for young people. Specialist mental health support is available in house and other health services are actively involved to ensure the best possible care and outcomes for young people. Services who are not performing are challenged, for example, emails and calls to a social worker and team manager to ensure essential documents are forwarded to the home. Young people are also supported to complain when necessary about late or no statutory visits from their social worker. There have been no complaints from the community and relationships are positive.

A consistent and enthusiastic staff team who receive high quality and specialised training cares for young people. Training needs are identified in yearly appraisals and through quality and evaluative supervision. Newly appointed staff complete a thorough induction programme specific to the service, based on the Children's Workforce Development Council's induction standards. Practice concerns are immediately challenged rigorously during supervision although the time and length of sessions are not recorded.

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.