

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Angus Mackay
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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

This is a registered service to accommodate a maximum of eight young people. The young people accommodated are male only. The home is privately run and is one of three children's homes registered to the service providers. The home specialises in working with young people whose assessed needs are linked to sexually-inappropriate behaviour. Young people engage in regular therapy which forms a key component of the therapeutic ethos of the setting. They are given an insight to these types of support during the initial stay, which lasts for up to 10 days.

All young people attend a school which is operated by the same organisation or attend one of the local colleges.

Overall effectiveness

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

The home is exceptionally well maintained and managed providing outstanding care. A social worker commented that the upkeep of the home is excellent and another saying that it is always bright and clean. The temporary management arrangements in the absence of a Registered Manager have ensured that the home has continued to progress and provide the same high level of care to young people and support to staff. The managers recognise that, to ensure the service maintains and develops this service, a new manager must be appointed.

Young people make outstanding progress in education and health. One social worker saying that education is great and that he would have no hesitation in recommending the home to all of his colleagues. All young people attend school and a strong culture of attendance and achievement is ingrained in the organisation and the expectations of the young people.

Young people make significant progress in understanding their complex problems and learning how to identify early signs or triggers and act appropriately from there. Due to the complexity of their problems and the ongoing risks associated with them, movement and progression is very tightly monitored, implemented slowly and subject to stringent control. Young people receive support when they suffer relapses and risk management is constantly reviewed to ensure their safety and that of the broader community. Whilst staff do tremendous work with young people in developing their self-esteem and understanding of their background, they would benefit from an even wider understanding of the full range of all children's identity needs and how to respond to these in the most appropriate way.

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 children receive personalised care that promotes all aspects of their individual identity. In particular, that staff request external professional advice and support as detailed in Volume 5 (2.37) (NMS 2.1)
- ensure the appointment of a Registered Manager to exercise effective leadership of the home's staff and operation. (NMS 14.5)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make exceptional progress in education both in terms of their engagement in school and in their educational achievements. One social worker commented, ' Education is great, prior to coming here was completely off the rails educationally the fact that he engaged at all is fantastic but he is doing really well and is doing well in preparation for his GCSEs'. All young people attend school and a strong culture of engagement, commitment, progression and achievement has been developed by staff. Young people are proud of their educational achievements and showed off certificates and school work during the inspection.

Young people say that they make tremendous progress in developing a positive self-view and learning methods of staying safe. They benefit from assistance in maintaining positive relationships with families and developing an understanding of how their past life events have affected them. All families are made welcome by the home and most believe that the home is helping their child to develop appropriately. Where differences exist, these are managed professionally to ensure the young persons care and treatment does not suffer. One social worker commented, '....was very difficult with a diverse set of problems. His Mum is very impressed with he home and sees a level of maturity inwhich was not there before, he has matured significantly.'

All young people have very detailed health care plans and are aided by staff in receiving appropriate treatment for basic primary health care or to gain appropriate professional assistance with any mental health issues. They are encouraged to take an interest in exercise, healthy eating and self-care; regular monitoring shows improvements in all areas.

Young people often stay until they are at least 18 and often beyond and are well prepared for independence. They learn a range of skills through a very structured programme which includes very tightly-monitored risk managed periods of unsupervised time to test capabilities in the community and how successful are learnt controls. Young people are very enthusiastic about engaging in these programmes

and continuing in the home or progressing to a semi-independent sister home.

Quality of care

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

Young people with extremely complex problems experience exceptional care from a very dedicated staff team. They live in a home where staff and other young people have developed a culture which has high expectations in relation to interpersonal behaviour and where politeness courtesy and good manners are the norm. Staff intervene at a very early point if young people do not behave in line with expectations and their care plans. One social worker commented that he was initially surprised at how quickly staff intervened but he could see that they were putting in place appropriate boundaries with the young person.

Young people arrive in the home with a history of struggling to maintain appropriate boundaries. They benefit from the high level of supervision, clear boundaries and explicit guidance on acceptable behaviour which aid in keeping them and others safe. Young people say that they feel safe in the home and are helped by the support of staff and other young people. All young people confirmed that there is no bullying and that staff intervene very quickly if someone says something inappropriate or initiates any form of physical contact. They are consulted about sanctions but say there is little point as they would use the same sanctions that staff impose.

Young people's psychological well-being and development are at the core of care planning in the home to assist them in addressing their often dangerous behaviours. They are fully involved in developing their intervention programmes which seek to aid them in improving self-esteem and learning key triggers to their behaviours and teaching alternative responses to these. They fully engage in therapy, therapeutic and group meetings, key working sessions and regular discussions with staff to seek to reduce their risk of reoffending and improve their chances of achieving positive behavioural outcomes. One social worker commented, 'the staff are doing everything possible to move away from harmful sexual behaviours and although this is hard to measure as an outcome is remaining safe as are those around him and appropriate work is being done to reduce his risk, what more could you ask for?'

The home is bright spacious and well maintained with single occupancy bedrooms, large open lounges and all necessary domestic facilities. It is situated on the outskirts of a village with a range of facilities and amenities close by. Young people are encouraged to participate in activities which take them into the local community but in a way which protects them and those they come into contact with. They do most activities with staff but can achieve unsupervised time, following a very stringent risk process which allows them to build on small successes and gradually achieve time in a manner which ensures all parties safety. They work closely with care staff, therapists, social workers and where possible their families to develop a clear understanding of their background, culture and family links to aid in their developing sense of identity. The young people make good progress in many areas but staff would benefit from an even broader understanding of the full range of the young

people's identity needs to enable them to respond to these in the most appropriate way.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people stress that they feel very safe in the home often for the first time ever. They live in a home where staff have created a safe environment which encourages openness and frank discussion. This often relates to very difficult topics to aid young people in identifying and addressing triggers to their sexually-inappropriate behaviours. All young people are aware of the complaints procedure but say that they rarely use it because they can resolve their problems through talking to staff or in the group meetings which they can call.

Young people's immediate and long-term safety and that of the broader community is treated with extreme seriousness by staff. They are appropriately protected by a range of safeguarding measures. These include excellent systems to deal with child protection matters, identify potential inappropriate behaviour, comprehensive risk assessments, no touch policy, comprehensive ongoing training in safeguarding and child protection and staff recruitment. Staff are very knowledgeable about the home's procedures and actions to identify and address any signs of abuse or neglect and have experience in responding to allegations and disclosures from young people. Young people receive appropriate professional assistance to aid them in addressing current and historical issues, seeking a reduction in risk of harmful behaviours.

Young people respond well to the tight boundaries of the home with no one going missing in the past year and restraints and sanctions being rarely, but appropriately, used to maintain the safe environment. They benefit from the constant support from staff to aid them in engaging in their treatment programmes, gaining insight into their presenting problems and developing understanding and controls in relation to them.

Young people's safety within the home is ensured through the regular testing of electrical, gas and fire equipment. They benefit from very regular fire evacuation drills and adaptations to the alarm system designed to keep all young people safe. Staff ensure that all visitors are subject to appropriate checks and supervision as are workmen on site to ensure ongoing safety for all parties.

Leadership and management

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

Young people benefit from being looked after by an exceptionally stable staff team which is experienced, well qualified and subject to appropriate ongoing training. Staff deployment is well planned to ensure high numbers of staff are available to meet the young people's needs and maintain the risk management processes to safeguard

them and others. Staff supervision is regular, thorough and enhanced by group supervision and therapeutic supervision as required. The Registered Manager's post is vacant but the experience of the team and the strong temporary management arrangements have ensured there is no immediate negative impact of this and that young people currently remain well cared for. The managers recognise that current arrangements can only be temporary and that a new Registered Manager needs to be appointed.

Managers enjoy good relations with the staff and young people, conveying their high expectations personally to all. They ensure the safety of the home and progression of the service is maintained by excellent use of the very comprehensive monitoring and evaluation information gained through the Regulation 33 and 34 inspections. Planned changes to the use of management information in identifying patterns over longer periods of time will enhance the service delivery to young people.

Young people's safety and the quality of the service is enhanced by management's exceptionally prompt and enthusiastic response to recommendations in the past. Young people are encouraged to participate fully in gaining an understanding of their care plans and contributing to them and to the whole care planning process. They are involved in the recruitment process for new staff and managers are seeking ways to enlarge their contribution to this process. Their records are clear, well maintained and provide young people with a detailed insight into their own progress. All records are securely stored to protect young people's confidentiality.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.