

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Liz Driver
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home can accommodate up to seven children and young people. The service aims to accommodate children and young people who have emotional and behavioural difficulties and provides a therapeutic care approach towards meeting their needs. The home is part of an organisation which has three residential homes and a school.

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**.

Children receive outstanding levels of care, support and guidance leading to them make significant progress in numerous areas taking their starting points into consideration. Children thrive in a nurturing, supportive environment with consistently applied strong boundaries and support. High aspirations for young people contribute to their positive progress, particularly in their educational progress, behaviour management, social skills, making constructive lifestyle choices and positive self-view. Practice is based in psycho-social theory and the therapeutic community approach, which results in the children living as part of a community and all that offers. The support and therapeutic approach is delivered by a highly experienced and stable senior staff team who are supported by efficient care staff. Children feel very safe and looked after and say that they have benefited significantly from living at the home. Children say the best thing about the home is the adults who work there.

A culture of safety ensures children are kept as safe as possible and to greatly reduce their risk-taking behaviours. Staff work hard to provide a consistent and committed level of care with an approach that allows children every opportunity to express how they feel in the right way with the correct support. Safeguarding is expertly handled and managed with very close communication on a very regular basis with all agencies involved. Contact with family members is highly supported. Extremely positive and meaningful relationships between staff and young people assist them to improve feelings of poor self-esteem and self-worth and to move them

forward in their lives.

Young people are very happy at the setting and professionals are highly complementary about the service. Young people are relaxed and comfortable around the staff and are positive in their views of how staff keep them safe. The home strives to embrace equality and diversity. This means that children and young people are supported to achieve a sense of personal identity. Staff work hard and achieve a consistent and committed level of care with an approach that allows young people every opportunity to freely express how they feel in an appropriate way.

Extremely robust monitoring procedures are in place which are reflective, evaluative and considered in detail. The home is managed excellently, with the needs of young people continually at the forefront of all practice and development.

The organisation continues to be both ambitious and energetic for continuous improvement as seen during this inspection. Leadership and management are outstanding.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- develop further the format for reviewing and recording the quality of care monitoring systems in place (NMS 21)
- ensure the effectiveness of fire evacuation drills is accurately recorded. (NMS 10)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **outstanding**.

Children's life chances are significantly increased at this setting due to the setting's therapeutic approach to care, the high level of specialist input, and excellent working relationships with other professionals and the strong management team. Children make exceptional progress in developing a positive self-view, emotional resilience and knowledge and understanding of their background. They are fully supported to make and sustain attachments and this can be seen through the stability of placements and the progress made over the years children have been at the setting.

Children benefit from high quality individualised therapeutic support which helps them to grow in confidence and understand their past. The key worker system enables children to focus on their goals and to make exceptional progress in many cases. Children are taught to appreciate their individual differences, to be respectful towards others and to be part of a community. They achieve this to a very high standard. Highly individualised support helps children to grow in confidence and

address challenging behaviours. As a result children make significant progress in all aspects of their lives, which they recognise. The support is adapted for younger children ensuring they receive age-appropriate care.

Children understand the importance of healthy lifestyles and staff fully support all children to access appropriate health professionals. Staff promote healthy eating and physical exercise. Children are very well informed of key health risks and risk taking behaviours such as smoking and are fully supported by staff to change these lifestyles. Children thrive in this environment.

Children receive consistent and highly effective support, in line with the organisation's therapeutic ethos, delivered by a highly skilled staff team. As a result they are supported to understand why they are in care so they can move forward.

Education attendance and achievement is outstanding in relation to individual starting points and ability. Children who have previously struggled to attend are now fully engaged in education. Staff continually work with professionals to improve achievements and to make education a positive experience. Education is promoted in the home with a newly created 'learning' room for children to access. Children have individualised education plans and can attend the company's own school or local schools and colleges.

Children are actively encouraged to participate in community activities which they thoroughly enjoy. Staff fully support all contact arrangements which enables children to have regular contact with family members.

Quality of care

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

Children experience very high quality care that is driven by the organisation's senior managers and directors. Children are at the centre of all staff practice and they enjoy extremely positive and healthy relationships with staff who are inspiring, sensitive and caring. They form particularly close and positive relationships with their key workers, a real strength of the setting, and as a result begin to trust adults and respond positively to support. Staff are highly reflective in their practice with daily de-briefs at the end of each shift.

Children feel safe and comfortable with staff and look to them for positive guidance and support, which they receive to a very high standard. The embedded therapeutic approach ensure children's feelings, views and wishes are considered to an extremely high standard. Staff have consistently high aspirations for all children in the home.

Children contribute to the running of the home with input such as food, activities, holiday destinations and clothes choices. Children enjoy a huge range of activities both in the house, at school and in the local community. Activities include drumming lessons, street dance classes, visits to the park and swimming. Holidays are

promoted with a recent camping holiday enjoyed by the children.

Staff very skilfully employ therapeutic approaches to support children address any issues in an open and honest atmosphere. Children feel listened to; for example after incidents they can reflect on their actions and record their views either in the group setting or individually with a member of staff. Daily therapeutic group meetings enable children to voice any issues directly to the person, be it another child or a member of staff. It also enables children and young people to discuss any issues arising from the school day so they do not impose negatively on time in the home. Children know how to complain and are confident to do so. Advocates are sought for children which gives them another avenue to voice any concerns they may have. Needs relating to gender, disability, faith, and religious beliefs are identified pre-arrival to the setting and form part of individual placement plans. Placement plans are of a high quality and involve children in their implementation. They are cared for in line with the placement plans.

Staff provide exceptional support to ensure children attend school and complete home work. A designated time is set aside daily before dinner when staff assist children with their homework. Liaison with schools is excellent with reflective discussions daily on return from school. Daily group meetings enable children to feedback reports about their school day and to discuss any areas that have caused them upset or difficulties whilst at school. This is actively shared with all the children and staff.

The home provides a very healthy environment and children and young people can access the services and support that they need to meet their physical, emotional and psychological needs. Feedback from health professionals is highly complimentary regarding the staff team's support for children in accessing specialist health provision.

Children live in a home that provides a very good standard of accommodation and facilities. There is an on-going programme of redecoration and refurbishment which is resulting in high quality accommodation. Children are enabled to personalise their rooms, with communal areas providing a relaxed atmosphere with all modern entertainment items in place.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Children report that they feel safe and protected in the home. Children can share any fears and anxieties with the staff and know that these will be treated seriously and acted upon. Safeguarding procedures are robust with all disclosures and allegations robustly managed. The Registered Manager is highly efficient in communicating with all professionals involved in child protection referral and management. Staff are suitably trained in both basic and advanced safeguarding.

Positive behaviour is highly promoted with excellent outcomes as a result; significantly decreasing number of physical interventions, no criminality and extremely low number of unauthorised absences. Clear protocols are in place if a child did go missing and staff are trained to carry out physical interventions when necessary. This effective management of the children's behaviour is a strong aspect of the home and supported by discussion and high levels of communication.

Recruitment procedures are robust and up to date with changes in legislation. This provides enhanced protection for young people.

Care plans clearly identify areas of risk and protective factors for individual children. Care plans allow for children to take reasonable risks as appropriate to their age while enabling them to grow and develop. All plans and risk assessments are of an extremely high standard and are regularly reviewed by key workers and closely monitored by the Registered Manager.

The environment is physically safe and appropriately secure with good standard health and safety checks in place. Fire safety procedures are robust with regular checks carried out of fire equipment and regular fire drills so children know what to do in the event of a fire. The fire risk assessment is reviewed monthly. Records show some inconsistencies in recording of the effectiveness of fire evacuation drills.

Leadership and management

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

Children benefit from a home which is led by a highly efficient and highly skilled Registered Manager supported by an efficient deputy manager. The strength of leadership flows from the Responsible Individual to the Registered Manager to the whole staff team. The strength of leadership and management enables children to make outstanding progress from their starting points and to gain excellent outcomes for their future lives in a home that provides consistency of care.

The setting has a clear Statement of Purpose and a wealth of information on its web site giving much information about the organisation and provision it provides. The setting is also accredited with The Community of Communities which is a quality improvement and accreditation programme for Therapeutic Communities in the UK and overseas.

A good number of staff are deployed during the day and night to meet the needs of children living at the home. Staff feel extremely well supported and report that regular supervision and daily de-briefing meetings provide opportunity to discuss their role and responsibilities and the shift just completed. Staff are trained in all core areas plus specialist therapeutic methods. Close relationships between staff and children form the basis of the therapeutic approach and the home achieves this aim at an exceptionally high standard. The results are such that children feel safe, cared for and develop trusting relationships.

The monitoring of the home is vigorous and highly effective. Comprehensive, robust and regular monitoring of the home's operations ensures that the quality of care continues to meet children's needs. The quality of regulation 33 reports is outstanding, highlighting clear progress made by children, questioning and offering staff guidance on reflective practices to individual incidents and evidencing how the home can continue to improve its high standard quality of care. Regulation 34 reports highlighting quality of care monitoring are good but need further developing to reach the high standards the organisation aims for.

Records are clear and are securely stored to protect children's confidentiality; sensitive information is afforded appropriate security measures.

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.