

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Thomas Webber
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This private children's home is registered for up to five young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home provides individual support and preparation for independent living and offers an educational outreach service to support young people.

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**.

The home provides young people with a very good standard of care. Management provides effective leadership which benefits both young people and staff.

Young people continue to make significant progress in various aspects of their lives. The personal care and support they receive meets their physical, social, emotional and educational needs well. This is reflected in the strong and successful relationships established between the staff and young people which positively impact on the care and support young people receive. The staff team are highly motivated and committed to achieving the best possible outcomes for young people.

Young people feel safe and enjoy living at the home. They are very appreciative of the care and support they receive and thrive within a warm, caring, nurturing and supportive environment. Older young people also benefit from the support they receive which helps them to prepare for independent living.

Four recommendations were identified in this inspection relating to supervision, the reviewing of the staff learning and development programme, recruitment and recording of sanctions.

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 the recording of sanctions and rewards for behaviour are clear, reasonable and fair and are understood by staff and young people, in particular the duration of the sanction (NMS 3.7)
- ensure that the system for recruiting staff and others includes an effective system for reaching decisions as to who is to be appointed and the circumstances in which an application should be refused in the light of any criminal convictions or other concerns about suitability that are declared or discovered through the recruitment process (NMS 16.5)
- ensure that the learning and development programme is evaluated for effectiveness at least annually and if necessary is updated (NMS18.2)
- ensure that all staff are provided with regular supervision. (NMS 19.4)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people are fully supported to make significant progress in various aspects of their lives while living at the home. This is very much appreciated by them. They also benefit enormously from the individual care and support they receive from a dedicated and highly motivated staff team. This contributes to their overall development which, in turn, enhances their confidence and self-esteem.

The home provides a bespoke virtual tutoring educational service to the young people accommodated. This individualised tailored educational system supports and enables them to make successful progress. As a result, the system helps them to strive towards achieving their educational potential.

Young people engage in a wide range of activities both within the home and in the wider community to enhance their physical and social well-being. Individual talents and hobbies are encouraged to ensure that their particular interests are fully promoted.

Young people who are on a semi-independence programme learn and develop a range of practical life skills. This helps them prepare for the transition towards more independent living.

Staff actively support young people to maintain the level of agreed contact with their respective families. As a result, this has contributed to improved contact for some young people. Staff, where applicable, provide assistance with transport and assist with the supervised contact arrangements to ensure that they run smoothly. Staff also ensure that the families and the respective placing authorities are kept fully up to date with regard to the care, welfare and progress achieved by young people.

Quality of care

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

Young people benefit from living in a caring and supportive environment. They are well cared for by a highly motivated and stable staff team who are very committed to providing young people with a high standard of care. Excellent relationships are established between young people and staff. Young people feel extremely well supported and spoke very positively about the care and services provided and their overall experience of living at the home. One young person commented that she feels fortunate to have obtained a place at the home.

Various consultation processes are established to gain the views of young people. These processes contribute to the development and delivery of care and services provided by the home. Young people feel that their views are listened to. Young people are fully aware of the process of how to complain and are fully supported to raise any concerns or worries they may have. No complaints have been received by the home since 2011.

The health care needs of young people are met. They are registered with the local health care services and staff fully support them to attend all appointments. Suitable records are maintained of these which detail their outcomes. Young people are also fully supported to access a range of therapeutic services to meet their individual emotional and psychological needs.

Appropriate systems are well established for the safe storage and administration of medication. These practices ensure the well-being and safety of young people.

Young people are encouraged to eat a healthy diet. They are also encouraged to try and gain appreciation of new dishes. Young people commented that they enjoy the variety of meals provided. As part of developing their life and social skills young people are provided with the opportunity to participate in the shopping and cooking of meals, with the support of staff, as well as other household chores. Two young people are fully involved in a semi-independence programme.

Placement plans are well established for young people. These detail both the strengths of young people and the action required to meet their specific needs. These provide staff with clear guidance on how to meet the needs of young people on a daily basis.

Young people's review reports, produced by the home, supplement their placement plans and reflect the progress achieved. The statutory reviews of young people are held at the required frequency and offer them the opportunity to fully contribute to this process.

Young people live in a warm, welcoming and relaxed environment which is maintained to a good standard. It is clean, tidy and comfortable. It is also well furnished and in good decorative order. Young people are provided with their own

bedrooms which are decorated and personalised to their individual tastes. They are also actively involved in the selection of colours and soft furnishings for their bedrooms. The home also provides young people with sufficient communal space together with good bathing and toilet facilities to meet their individual and collective needs. Suitable locks are provided to the bathing and toilet facilities which promote the privacy and dignity of young people.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people feel safe living in the home. Staff take all appropriate measures to keep them safe. Staff have a clear understanding and respond appropriately to the various needs and vulnerabilities of the young people accommodated and this promotes and protects their welfare.

Staff receive regular safeguarding training; which contributes to their understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to responding appropriately to any safeguarding matters. Although all safeguarding concerns are promptly referred to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board none have been received for some time.

The current system for staff recruitment is not sufficiently robust to ensure that full details of prospective employees are fully and appropriately recorded. Staff also occasionally commence their induction programme while some checks remain outstanding. However, new staff do not start working with young people at the home until all the required checks are carried out and are deemed satisfactory. Visitors to the home are also checked prior to entry into the home. These practices contribute to the protection of young people and prevent the employment of unsuitable adults.

Since the last inspection there have been only a couple of incidents where young people have gone missing. Staff take effective action when young people go missing which contributes to their safe return at the earliest opportunity. Young people, on their return, are provided with every opportunity to discuss and reflect on their actions and consider the impact their behaviour potentially places on their own safety and well-being. This practice assists young people to develop an awareness of their own safety and in some cases this has contributed to the significant reduction in their risk-taking behaviours.

Young people and staff do not see bullying as a particular area of concern. They acknowledge that incidents occur where some young people fall out with each other. However, staff take appropriate action to deal with any matters of conflict and concern between young people. Staff are mindful of the dynamics of young people, particularly when they are out and respond appropriately to deflect potential conflicts.

Young people make good progress in developing and maintaining appropriate levels of behaviour, taking into account their starting point on admission to the home. This is achieved primarily through the strong and positive relationships formed between

staff and young people. The use of praise and positive behaviour incentives also contribute to these achievements. Staff are suitably trained in restraint and de-escalation techniques. Restraint is seldom used with only one incident recorded since 2002. The use of sanctions are also kept to a minimum. However, where sanctions are recorded as being under review, a clear date needs to be recorded to denote the end of their use. The regular monitoring of all measures of control ensures that the welfare of young people is fully promoted.

Young people live in an environment which ensures that they are kept safe. As a result, young people are fully and regularly involved in fire drills to ensure that they are fully aware of what action to take in the event of an emergency. Various checks, tests and servicing arrangements are well embedded in practice in relation to all fire and health and safety matters.

Leadership and management

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

Young people live in a home which is well managed. The Registered Manager is suitably qualified and experienced. The management structure within the home provides effective leadership. The staff team is also very committed to ensuring that young people receive a high level of care.

The home demonstrates the capacity to improve; having addressed the requirement and recommendation identified at the last inspection. An independent person has just been appointed to undertake the external monitoring visits but has yet to produce a report. The quality of care continues to be regularly monitored through the use of internal processes.

The aims and objectives of the home are well embedded in practice and are set out in its Statement of Purpose. This document is readily available to all interested individuals. A young person's guide is also produced which provides young people with useful information they need to know about the care and services they can expect to receive at the home.

Young people are cared for by a stable staff team where there has been little staff turnover. Management ensures that sufficient staff are on duty throughout the day and night to meet the individual and collective needs of young people. These arrangements ensure that young people receive stability, continuity and consistency of care.

A range of forums, such as daily handovers and regular team meetings are well established and support staff in providing a quality service. Individual formal staff supervision and annual appraisals are also support staff in performing their role. However, the records available show that not all staff receive formal individual supervision on a regular basis or demonstrate that this is of a good quality. The provider is aware of this shortfall and is instigating plans to take over this role. Staff feel well supported and spoke extremely positively about the arrangements in place.

Management are very committed to ensuring that staff obtain the required professional qualification once they have successfully completed a comprehensive induction programme. Most staff have achieved the desired qualification. The remaining staff are either completing this course or are still undertaking the induction programme. The home has not established an individual staff training profile; therefore it is not easy to evaluate the full range of training undertaken by staff. However, staff are supported, as part of their professional development, to undertake a range of additional training to enhance their skills, knowledge and competence. These opportunities enable staff to effectively work with and meet the challenging needs of young people. Staff are very appreciative of the training opportunities available to them.

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.