

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Diana Waters
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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

The children's home is privately owned and registered to accommodate up to four young people aged 10 to 18 years. The detached home is situated in a residential area near the city centre. It is close to local community facilities and the city centre is accessible by bus.

Three young people and one young adult were living in the home at the time of this inspection. The inspector met with three young people and received questionnaires from three young people therefore obtaining the views of all four residents. One parent and two social workers commented on the care at this home.

Overall effectiveness

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

Young people make excellent progress. The small staff team form positive relationships with young people, they provide a structured supportive environment with consistent boundaries. They are dedicated in their support of young people to develop in all areas, providing encouragement and opportunities to grow in confidence and expand their horizons, as individuals. The strength of the service to provide clear child-friendly records is a benefit both now and for future reference. The commitment of the service to keep young people safe is effective, and young people comment 'They always feel safe', however, the appropriate extension of young people's placements post 18 must include written risk assessments on file.

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
23 (2001)	ensure that any activities in which children participate are so far as reasonably practicable free from avoidable risks, specifically the registered person must identify and minimise the risk and impact to children when young adults continue to live in the home. (Regulation 23 (b))	30/06/2011

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Outcomes for young people are outstanding. The stability of these long term placements, in contrast to multiple previous placements, means the progress the young people make are very significant and credit is due to the young people and their carers for such successful progress. A social worker reported 'they have been both dedicated and determined to get the very best for this young person without it I don't know what the prognosis would have been'.

Healthy lifestyles are promoted and young people are encouraged to eat a wide range of healthy foods. They are fully involved in planning, shopping, preparing and clearing away meals, which are communal sociable occasions. Staff undertake food hygiene courses and young people quickly develop an awareness and interest in cooking and relevant independence skills.

Young people benefit from excellent individual support. Activities on offer are diverse and requests are carefully considered. Community resources are well used and opportunities to socialise with peers are encouraged, with support when needed. Progress in developing and keeping friendships enable some young people to enjoy frequent social interaction in the community.

Education is highly valued and young people are provided with tailored support to undertake school or college and at the time of the inspection home based study. The home provides many educational experiences and consistently creates and facilitates opportunities for extended learning, for example a local venue was used effectively as a scene for a film project. The service effectively support young people when difficulties arise and helps them to access appropriate help to resolve these problems.

Young people are fully involved regarding their daily living needs, wishes and feelings. The service work hard to enable young people to express their views and build their confidence to participate in formal meetings with support. A social worker comments 'It is impressive that young people drive the agenda with support from the service'. A young person comments 'I love my house, I have an advocate and people always stick up for me, people are always honest'. All of the young people report there is nothing they want to change in the children's home as 'everything is good and they support me in everything'.

Quality of care

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

Young people benefit from the care provided by a stable, consistent and committed staff team who are supported in their work. Strong relationships underpin the support from staff to the young people. Young people are enabled to develop socially and emotionally they confirm they are listened to both individually and as a group and good relationships ensure the young people continue to have confidence in the staff team. A placing social worker reports 'there is nothing I can fault. It is one of the best homes I have visited and is providing what my young person needs'.

Young people are very well supported to develop a positive self-image, this is achieved in a variety of ways. Young people have access to all the health services and include opticians and orthodontists, some therapeutic support is available to young people and annual health checks are completed in the home, affording the young people access to information and advice from another health professional.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people say they feel safe and are kept safe and there are always staff around to interact with and assist them. Young people and staff appear to enjoy each others company. Staff assist young people in managing their behaviour and most young people have a good understanding of useful strategies. Restraint recording includes gentle holds and therapeutic touch and all are recorded in detail. Young people are encouraged to express their feelings appropriately and examples range from the use of imaginative play to representing the views of looked after children in discussion forums. The commitment of the service to keep young people safe is effective, and young people comment 'I always feel safe', however, the appropriate extension of young people's placements post 18 must include written risk assessments on file.

Young people have detailed personalised care plans and risk assessments. There have been no incidents of young people missing from the home and the older young people remain in touch via mobile phones and readily advise staff if they are delayed. Written policies and procedures are in place.

Young people are assisted to develop socially acceptable behaviour. Staff build warm relationships with young people and young people develop good relationships within the home. The most recently admitted young people benefit from the good role modelling from staff members and longer term residents. Positive behaviour is encouraged and incentives offered. Reflection time is the usual sanction for minor misdemeanours and discussion is encouraged to understand any difficulties that arise.

Risk assessments are on file and are regularly reviewed. There are regular checks of the fire safety and other domestic installations. The health and safety risk assessment was reviewed in February 2011. The home is well maintained and young people live in a safe and homely environment. It is a comfortable environment, mementos and photos of young people and staff contribute to the welcoming family atmosphere. Young people clearly feel at home and are unable to suggest any improvements. The shower room has been refurbished, the final touches to the decoration was being undertaken at the time of the inspection. Young people report its absence has not caused inconvenience as they use the alternative downstairs shower room or upstairs bathroom.

Young people benefit from a stable, consistent and committed staff team who are supported in their work. Staff receive mandatory training updates. There have been no new appointments since the last inspection. Staff appropriately monitor visitors to the home and maintain a visitors book.

Leadership and management

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

The home work to their Statement of Purpose and succeed in providing a stable and structured environment where young people flourish. Staff are positive about their work and clearly encourage young people to achieve their potential. Young people benefit from a small group of consistent and caring staff. Young people confirm they are clear how to access external support. The service has in place detailed procedures that promote understanding and encourage anti-discriminatory practice. Discussion topics are readily introduced into daily living and young people have a particular sensitivity and interest in the needs of young people with disabilities.

Records are clear, up to date and stored securely, they contribute to an understanding of the young person and are frequently shared with the young people. Young people benefit from effective management and continue to thrive. The management of the home remains under the direct management of the proprietor who is in fulltime day-to-day charge and continues to work in the home regularly. The senior care worker, currently training for the role of manager, reports an application for registered manager will be submitted during the summer 2011. The service is proactive in engaging with other professionals and young people's families. Parent comment 'my child is well cared for, gets a good education and has good relationships with staff, I have good communication with staff and I'm happy with the home'. Regulation 33 visits are conducted regularly by another member of the company's management team.

Equality and diversity practice is **outstanding**.