

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Trevor Hall
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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 home is part of a range of children's services within a private care organisation. The home is registered to offer care and accommodation to four young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties; three are accommodated in the main house, one in a satellite unit some distance away.

Overall effectiveness

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

This is a good service that positively impacts on young people's lives. The key strengths of this service are the home's manager and the staff group. They are enthusiastic, trained appropriately and understand the needs of young people well. The home effectively provides personalised care, which takes full account of the individual needs of each young person, whilst promoting positive outcomes for all young people.

Staff help young people to develop through challenge and young people engage and become self-confident. The manager understands the strengths and areas of further development for the home. The staff focus on each young person as an individual and the home is clearly child-centred. Young people are safe and feel safe. The quality of the relationships between staff and young people in the home is good which encourages empowerment.

The accommodation provided is generally good and is well maintained, however, some redecoration and refurbishment is required. The home has yet to ensure that its current procedures for dealing with young people missing from care are compatible with and have regard to the local authority's Runaway and Missing from Home and Care protocols.

There are no statutory requirements set as a result of this inspection. However, two recommendations have been made to address the issues listed above.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure the home's missing from care procedures are compatible with and have regard to the local authority's Runaway and Missing from Home and Care protocols (NMS 5.6)

- ensure that the home provides a comfortable and homely environment and is well maintained and decorated (NMS 10.3).

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people benefit greatly from a diverse staff team who provide them with individual support to enable them to develop confidence and a positive view of themselves. Young people's individual needs are identified and these are reflected in the plans and strategies in place for them. These needs are addressed consistently and professionally and young people are assisted to understand the content of their care plans, which helps them take ownership and develop personal awareness.

Young people are supported to lead a healthy lifestyle and to take appropriate responsibility for their own health and well-being. Packages of health care ensure that children and young people receive specialist, as well as routine, health care as soon as it is needed. Every young person has a fully completed health care plan that includes all of the required information as part of their wider placement plan. Young people benefit from having a nutritional and healthy diet. They also develop skills and knowledge that will help them in adult life.

Staff ensure that young people see their family and friends in line with agreed arrangements, which enables them to maintain important relationships and to develop appropriate self-awareness. Staff guide and encourage young people to attend school in line with their personal education plan and to try to achieve as much as they can whilst there. Young people's attendance at school has improved considerably as has their educational attainment. They are encouraged by staff who demonstrate a pride in the attendance achieved by the young people, many of whom have had difficulty sustaining education placements prior to living here. Staff are committed to supporting the young people's education and liaise regularly with schools to ensure that positive outcomes are achieved.

There is also an extensive programme of activities in place, providing young people with lots of opportunities to learn new leisure skills, take regular exercise and enjoy a wide variety of educational trips, such as visits to local places of interest and the use of local sports facilities. These activities enable young people to reflect on their own strengths, needs and circumstances, gain in confidence and develop a new understanding of their previous experiences.

Quality of care

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

Young people are supported by staff who have high aspirations for all who live in the home. Staff place the well-being of individual young people at the centre of their practice. Placement planning is good. These plans clearly identify each individual

young person's needs, how these are to be met and include details of any agreed therapeutic supports being offered and details of any specific health care needs.

Staff are knowledgeable about young people's needs and ensure young people receive very good individual support and guidance. Staff actively contribute to the planning of young people's care. They work effectively with social workers to ensure that the placement is suitable to meet their young person's identified needs. Care planning and staff's day-to-day practice recognises young people as individuals with different needs, backgrounds, interests and views. They ensure that young people receive an individual service designed to meet their diverse personal needs.

Care planning documentation and risk assessments are good, which ensures that staff have good up-to-date information about the young people in their care. The individual needs of the young people including cultural, religious, language and racial needs are identified and addressed. In addition, all young people have regular meetings with their key worker to discuss their recent progress and any issues of concern. As a result, young people feel involved and consulted about all aspects of their lives and feel they are given every opportunity to contribute to their own care plans.

The home completes comprehensive monthly summaries of each young person's care and outcomes, and these are sent to all placing authorities. This ensures that the placing authorities are aware of each child's current care needs and progress. Young people are involved in the planning and review of their care as much as possible. The home produces very detailed reports prior to children's reviews. These incorporate reports from other services that provide therapeutic support and the views of children. This demonstrates close working relationships with all services. The home ensures that reviews, including statutory care reviews, are regularly undertaken and outcomes are held on file.

Children are involved in the development of their health care needs and comprehensive health care plans are developed that identify children's individual needs and how these are to be met. Good records are maintained of visits to health care professionals and other professionals that provide a therapeutic service. There are good arrangements for the management of medicines. All care staff receive training in the management of medicines.

The home ensures that children receive a balanced and healthy diet. Menus demonstrate that meals from different countries are provided and that the cultural needs of the children accommodated are met. Fresh fruit is readily available in the home and children are able to demonstrate their awareness of what constitutes a healthy diet.

Young people are successfully encouraged to express their feelings and emotions without infringing on the rights of others. Young people are helped to understand the consequences of their actions because of the home's ethos to promote positive behaviours. Young people confirm that they know about the complaints procedure and that they are confident and comfortable with the process.

Young people live in a suitably designed and comfortable family house in a quiet residential neighbourhood. The registration also includes a separate two-bedded property approximately half a mile distant. Both properties are handy for the shops, public transport, schools and community amenities. The main house is an old property; as such, the building requires a high level of maintenance to ensure that it meets required standards. Recent redecoration to the ground floor has done much to enhance the visual impact and improve the homely feel of the property. The upstairs, landing area, communal bathroom and individual bedrooms do not as yet match this standard. The satellite home, is a newer property, but is not a modern build and, whilst it is functional and adequately maintained and decorated, it is similarly in need of redecoration and some cosmetic refurbishment. The home's development plan, however, does indicate that such a refurbishment is planned.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people experience a safe, positive and encouraging care environment that is created by the good, open and honest relationship they enjoy with the staff group. Staff prioritise safety and are competent in their knowledge of how to keep young people safe. Staff understand their responsibilities and what they should do if a safeguarding situation arises. Strong links are in place with external agencies who report good levels of communication between themselves and the home. All staff have undertaken initial safeguarding training, with regular refresher courses completed by longer serving staff. This awareness and good practice contributes significantly in keeping young people safe. There are a range of detailed policies and procedures including safeguarding, anti-bullying, complaints and behaviour management. These policies are understood by staff and effectively implemented.

The home has a very comprehensive set of individualised assessments of risk for each young person in residence. These cover aspects of their potential behaviour, the environment and the activities they wish to undertake. Risk assessments are used positively, to identify potential risks and to provide effective strategies to help to minimise these. These assessments are designed to enable young people to enjoy new experiences and to expand their horizons safely, rather than as a means of rejecting new ideas or stifling initiative.

There are good systems of behaviour management in place. The use of sanctions is fair and consistent and the recording of these is of a good quality. Staff work hard, guided by other relevant professionals, to enable young people to moderate and improve their behaviour. There is an emphasis on recognising and rewarding positive behaviours, rather than purely punishing those behaviours identified as being unacceptable. This is appreciated by the young people and clearly promotes positive behaviour. Young people, including those who are new to the home, quickly learn that staff take responsibility for setting safe boundaries. This enables them to develop an appropriate sense of security and to feel safe. Young people are invited to sign all records relating to the use of sanctions, which helps them develop

understanding and responsibility.

Staff rarely use physical interventions and only as a last resort to ensure the safety of all. When incidents do take place, they are comprehensively recorded and each occasion is monitored by the home's manager, who ensures that the intervention was necessary and was applied correctly. The manager also ensures that young people are aware of their right to complain, receive any medical attention they may want. The manager also ensures that social workers and, where appropriate, parents are informed.

The home has appropriate systems in place to protect young people should they go missing from the home without staff approval; this includes individual protocols. The home's missing from care procedures, however, are not currently fully compatible with, or have regard to, the local authority's Runaway and Missing from Home and Care protocols. This disparity, however, has minimal impact on the home's ability to safeguard such young people. Staff are very open with young people about the procedures they need to follow if this occurs and young people benefit from having this awareness. Incidents of young people going missing from the main house are minimal, although there has been a recent increase in incidents at the home's satellite home. Commendable efforts, however, are made by staff to discourage such behaviour.

Young people live in a safe environment. Health and safety is well managed. Safety and servicing checks are carried out as required. Fire safety training, regular checks to the fire systems and fire drills ensure young people and staff know what to do in the event of a fire.

There is an effective and well-developed recruitment process that includes a comprehensive check on all staff applying to work at the setting. The careful selection, recruitment and retention of staff helps young people feel secure and to have a consistent team of staff that know them well. Visitors are checked, vetted and monitored.

Leadership and management

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

Young people, their families and placing authorities receive good information about the services offered by the home, through a clear Statement of Purpose and young person's guide. The home's Statement of Purpose includes all information required by regulation and accurately reflects the practice witnessed in the home and the home's conditions of registration.

This home is well managed. The Registered Manager encourages and motivates the care staff and channels their efforts effectively. Care staff speak highly of the support that is provided by the manager and of the organisation. The Registered Manager maintains good systems to monitor the performance of the home and conducts comprehensive audits of the quality of care provided by the home. Regular

monitoring visits are undertaken by the Regulation 33 visitor. Further audits are undertaken by the Registered Manager and the organisation to monitor the service. The home has a comprehensive development plan with clear aims and objectives for improvement. The service is up to date with new legislation and practice developments. The Registered Manager and care staff are fully committed in providing a high quality of care to the children accommodated at the home.

Staff feel well supported by the management team and are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Staff training and development is seen as important and staff receive a range of training which enables them to meet the diverse needs of young people. The home's manager provides strong, effective leadership which encourages the delivery of a good quality of care, which promotes positive outcomes for the young people. Staff interviewed made positive comments about the manager's commitment, child-centred approach, staff support and clear monitoring processes.

No regulatory actions were made following the home's last inspection, however, five recommendations were applied. These covered deficiencies in the recording of visitors leaving the premises, the need to keep the home's fire risk assessment up to date, the need to review emergency admissions to the home within 72 hours, the need to ensure young people had contact with families in line with the frequencies indicated in their care plans, and the need to increase the number of staff holding required child care qualifications. Since the last inspection, all of these deficiencies have been adequately addressed.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.