

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Dawn Bennett
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This home is registered to accommodate up to three young people of either gender with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The service is owned by a private company.

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**.

This service positively impacts on young people's lives. Its key strengths are the strategies in place for successfully reducing behaviours that put young people at risk, and good partnership work with other agencies. The staff team are professional and understand the complex needs of young people well. This is reflected in all aspects of consultation, practice and care planning and ensures the individual needs and wishes of young people are met. Young people and social workers have consistently positive views about the quality of care provided by the service.

As a result of this inspection three recommendations have been made. These are regarding the refurbishment and redecoration of the home, a programme of training available to staff and young people receiving a regular agreed budget for personal items.

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 provides a comfortable and homely environment and is well maintained and decorated (NMS 10.3)
- ensure there is a good quality learning and development programme which staff

are supported to undertake. This programme includes the timely completion of induction training and equips staff with the knowledge and skills required to meet the needs of the children and purpose of the setting (NMS 18.1)

- ensure young people receive a personal allowance appropriate to their age and understanding that is consistent with their placement plan. (NMS 2.7)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people who have not accessed health care or led healthy lifestyles are living in a healthy environment where their health needs are identified and services are now provided to meet them. As a result, good progress is achieved with young people having the knowledge and skills to make informed decisions about their own health and lifestyles. For example, young people who have historically not attended medical appointments now understand the importance of accessing services and are seeing the positive impacts of seeking guidance.

Young people at the home enjoy healthy nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs. All young people are involved in planning, shopping for and preparing meals. Some young people are successfully managing their own budget, shopping and cooking. One young person stated: 'I enjoy shopping and cooking for myself. Staff are there to help me if I need it but I pretty much manage on my own now.'

The majority of young people have good attendance and make good progress in education. When this good progress is interrupted, for example, because of inappropriate behaviour, young people are successfully supported to re-engage or access alternative services. One young person stated: 'I go to college now and I am enjoying it. Staff encouraged me to attend and keep learning new things, instead of just being at home.'

Young people develop appropriate independence skills and knowledge that this successfully prepares them for adult life. Young people are enabled to become active, independent and to live within their financial means in their local community. For example, they learn to manage money to save, pay bills and budget for the future.

Young people also become more emotionally resilient and re-establish and strengthen relationships with family and significant others. For example, contact with family members, previous foster carers and friends in the locally community is promoted, with the responsibility for arranging contact being taken on by the young people when appropriate.

It is unclear how much money is available to young people on a weekly basis to spend on clothing. The Registered Manager has to apply for this budget and sometimes receives it and sometimes does not. This is frustrating to staff and young people.

Quality of care

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

Young people receive good quality care in line with their individual placement plan and their views, wishes and feelings. They each have a key worker who meets with them on a regular basis to ensure they are happy and who supports them to achieve their aims and objectives. Young people are actively involved in choosing who they feel will be best for them in this role and their input is valued.

Young people are actively involved in their review meetings and are consulted regularly about their future plans. Reviews are held within timescales. All young people have detailed placement plans which are regularly reviewed. These ensure the staff team are well informed about the assessed needs of individuals and that their progress is monitored. They capture the social and emotional needs of young people as well as their health and welfare needs. These measures ensure that young people are able to develop emotional resilience and a range of new life skills. They also receive support to develop their lifestyles and achieve lifelong health and a better overall quality of life.

Staff have high expectations of the young people. They encourage young people to become involved in clubs, activities and holidays, which increases their self-esteem and participation. Staff value young people's diversity and support development of their identity. For example, they keep memory books so that each young person has an album recording their time at the home. They successfully promote education and celebrate achievements, ensuring young people understand that positive, educational outcomes will impact on their future employment possibilities. They encourage young people to pursue their personal interests in the wider community. This assists young people to develop confidence and increase their skills in establishing peer relationships.

Young people feel relaxed in the home and feel the environment is welcoming. One young person stated: 'This is like a family home.' The staff and young people have been proactive in making the home feel their own and have personalised the space. Rooms have been wallpapered and painted by staff and young people. This work is on-going, for example the Registered Manager is in the process of getting quotes to renew the porch and front door to the house. The impact of work undertaken to upgrade the décor inside the home is reduced by old, poorly repaired, panelled and varnished internal doors. The exterior of the home is also 'tired' in appearance and does not create a good first impression. Fascia boards have peeling paint and wires are trailing from bedroom windows and from under the guttering.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

The safety and rights of young people are promoted. The staff team use consistently

good parenting skills to safeguard young people while supporting them to become responsible young adults. Young people are safe and feel safe. They also feel they are treated with trust and respect and are gaining more independence.

The staff team protects young people from neglect and abuse through the home's child protection procedures. The Registered Manager is competent at applying the procedures and ensures staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities to protect young people. The organisation provides training, supervision and guidance to staff to develop their practice. This ensures that there is no delay in referring child protection matters appropriately to prevent young people suffering continued abuse or neglect.

Young people's high risk behaviours reduce and they successfully learn alternative coping strategies. One young person stated, 'The area where I have improved the most is in controlling my anger. My life is definitely less stressful as a result.'

Young people's safety is promoted at all times and is of paramount concern to the staff team. Young people are effectively supported to develop their individual skills in ensuring their own safety. Placement plans and risk assessments clearly identify areas to be addressed. Key work sessions, as well as day-to-day discussions, are used to educate and support young people to have the skills and resources to make safe, informed decisions. When young people need additional support to learn these skills, the staff team promote work with partnership agencies. When young people make mistakes or put themselves at risk, the staff team support them to learn from the experience.

Leadership and management

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

The home's Statement of Purpose accurately reflects the practice and ethos of this service. It provides a detailed account of how young people will be cared for in the home and the expectations of staff to meet young people's needs. A guide booklet on the home is also provided to young people.

All recommendations made at the previous inspection have been met.

There are good, consistent systems, policies and procedures in place to support, monitor and develop good practice. The Registered Manager and deputy provide effective, insightful leadership to a professional, caring staff team. Staff are very competent, experienced, well-organised and supported.

The organisation further supports staff through induction and mandatory training. However, while staff are provided with behaviour management training this does not currently include specific training in relation to caring for children with a diagnosis of Attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and autistic spectrum disorder, which raises the potential that staff may not fully understand the needs of individual young people placed at this home. It is also noted that although the Children's Workforce

Development Council's induction standard have been completed, that they are not being signed off in a timely manner. This means that records lack the evidence that this programme has been completed to a satisfactory level.

There are established quality assurance systems, which monitor the performance of the home against its Statement of Purpose and highlight areas of strengths and areas for development. Records are regularly signed by the Registered Manager and external checks from a senior officer of the organisation are regularly undertaken and provide further feedback on how the home is operating.

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.