

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Mark Blesky
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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 is a children's home registered to care for up to three children. The home is situated near a seaside town and is close to shops, local amenities and the beach. The home is in a residential area with little to distinguish the home from any other nearby property.

Overall effectiveness

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

This is a good service in most respects with some outstanding features. Young people's welfare is enhanced by the good relationships that exist between staff and young people. Young people are encouraged to eat healthily and take regular exercise.

Independency planning and support is promoted so that the young people leave the home with good skills to support their independence. The home works closely with a wide range of outside agencies in order to meet the full range of young people's needs. Placement planning is extremely detailed and comprehensive with the needs of the young people clearly understood.

Staff are very well supported by the manager who has a strong commitment and focus on improvement. Staff are well organised and clearly understand their roles and the expectations placed upon them.

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 staff receive guidance and training to provide appropriate care if looking after children with complex health needs (national minimum standards 6.8)
- ensure that sanctions and rewards for behaviour are clear, reasonable and fair and are understood by all staff and children (national minimum standards 3.8)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people are supported to gain a positive understanding of their lives and futures. Staff support young people through day-to-day contact and more formally through key working to promote their development. Opportunities are provided for all young people to reach their full potential based on their individual and diverse needs. All young people have both placement plans and comprehensive 24-hour management plans. These plans ensure that needs are met and continually assessed to maintain progress towards the individual goals.

Young people are supported and encouraged to gain an education and formal qualifications. The home therefore provides schools and comprehensive assessment of young people's abilities. This ensures that appropriate and achievable education and goals are put into place. Young people benefit and achieve stability in education with good attendance records. Vocational training is also provided bringing opportunities for young people to learn, horticulture, plumbing, bricklaying and other skills.

Pathway planning and training for independence is promoted by staff to ensure that all young people are able to gain sufficient skills for both adulthood and independent living. Programmes for developing life skills and self care skills are in place and these are designed individually to each young person's diverse and individual needs.

Young people's healthcare is very well managed with each young person receiving both routine and planned healthcare support. Each young person benefits from having detailed and comprehensive healthcare files that detail historic, current and future healthcare interventions.

The home employs a dedicated nurse who visits the young people periodically and oversees healthcare planning. In addition the young people are encouraged to eat and maintain healthy lifestyles. All staff receive mandatory training to ensure that they have sufficient knowledge and skill to administer first aid and also support young people's day-to-day health needs. Well managed medication and administration systems are in place with suitable storage facilities. There was limited evidence to demonstrate staff's support and understanding of young people when they have emerging complex health conditions.

Contact with family and friends is well promoted and the staff in the home support young people both emotionally and practically with travel arrangements. All contact is overseen by staff and this is a regular topic in key working and day-to-day discussions.

Young people are encouraged to discuss their views and opinions regarding contact and staff liaise with the placing social worker promptly if matters need further discussion. Contact is valued by both the young people and actively encouraged by the staff.

Quality of care

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

Young people are well supported by staff that understand their needs and establish positive relationships with them. All young people are encouraged to express their views and take responsibility for their behaviour. Formal consultation systems are in place to ensure young people's views and wishes are actively sought and action is taken to support any reasonable request.

Staff encourage young people to express their individual and diverse needs and support them in appropriately articulating themselves. When young people do not behave in a positive manner the staff use their knowledge of the young person and their skills in care and control to promote improvement.

Formal sanctions are uncommon and the most effective behaviour management is achieved within discussion, negotiation and through the strength in relationships. Young people that need greater support are assisted through focused and planned key working sessions where alternative behaviours can be discussed and agreed. Restriction of liberty is sometimes applied outside of an agreed review which leaves the young person somewhat unclear of the current restrictions.

If young people are dissatisfied they are encouraged to make representation or make a complaint. All complaints are treated seriously and young people believe that staff will address matters effectively. Young people are kept informed of all complaints and the records of complaints are appropriately monitored and quality assured. Young people are confident that their views and opinions are valued. Young people believe that their individuality and personal choices are promoted and encouraged by the staff.

All young people are supported in their education by well managed school attendance and training programmes. All young people are expected to attend education and the home provides private schooling. Young people are encouraged to succeed and all certificates and awards are proudly displayed within the young people's rooms. Common areas are also decorated with artwork and displays made by the young people. The home celebrates the young people's work and effort and young people take pride in the value placed in their work.

Activities are arranged for the young people and the home encourages young people to identify a personal activity or special interest. All reasonable requests are granted and the staff ensure that both the financial and practical support is provided to enable any chosen activities.

The home is very well maintained and appropriately decorated and furnished to meet the needs and choices of the young people. Young people are encouraged to take ownership of the home and treat the home with respect and care. All young people are consulted formally about any improvements or ideas they may have regarding the home and this has resulted in young people taking a pride in the home's appearance.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people feel safe in the home and the home has developed robust safeguarding procedures and guidance for all staff. Staff members benefit from mandatory training on signs and symptoms of abuse. Training has promoted an understanding of safeguarding along with their more general roles in keeping young people safe.

A dedicated safeguarding co-coordinator is employed by the home and this individual has many years of experience and extensive knowledge in matters of safeguarding. The home maintains robust anti-bullying practices and all staff are vigilant to any signs of this. The home maintains dedicated anti-bullying procedures to ensure bullying is not overlooked or confused with more minor day to day disagreements. If bullying is suspected both the person bullying and the victim are individually assessed to counter any re-occurrence.

Young people rarely go missing from the home, but in the event of this, the home deploys effective measures to search, report and then return the young person to the home. All young people are risk assessed as to their individual needs and areas where they may be more vulnerable when absent from the home. The home has consulted formally with the local police and established agreed protocols for missing children. If a young person is absent without agreement the staff will discuss this with the young person upon their return and seek to develop measures to counter or reduce further episodes.

Health and safety and fire safety are very well maintained and the home carries out regular fire evacuation drills and health and safety risk assessments. All young people benefit from comprehensive risk assessment and plans in place detail both environmental risks and risks based on likely and known behaviours. The health and safety of the young people and the safety of the building is robustly managed with regular review and oversight by the acting manager.

All visitors to the building are strictly monitored and they must identify themselves and sign in and out of the home. No general visitor is permitted to have unsupervised access to the young person or the home.

All staff are employed through well managed and formal interview and recruitment panels. All statutory and reference checks are carried out to ensure that staff do not work with the young people until all appropriate references are gathered.

Leadership and management

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

Young people's needs are met within a well managed and maintained home. The house is decorated and furnished to provide a homely environment and has the appearance of a large family dwelling.

The staff members all undertake mandatory training in key areas of practice and additional, more specific training is also provided to meet the emerging needs of the young people. All staff are well managed and understand their duties, roles and the expectations upon them. Staff are motivated and enthusiastic in their role and this is evident in their relationships with the young people. The promotion of equality is good. Staff members understand the importance of supporting individual and diverse needs and encourage young people to express themselves and understand their rights.

All staff receive appropriate supervision to ensure that they have the opportunity to develop their skills and their practice. Supervision is highly regarded by both the acting manager and the staff and both understand the benefit of this support and guidance.

All supervision sessions are planned and well managed and staff take the opportunity to reflect on their performance and further develop their individual performance. Staff meetings are well managed and provide a good opportunity for staff to look at practice and share views and important topics. The needs of the young people are clearly understood along with their more individual and diverse needs.

Staffing levels are appropriate and the home can deploy extra staff should more support be needed through out-of-hours and on-call services. The care and support of the young people is effectively managed. The staff as a team, promote well organised shifts, with consistent and appropriate expectations of the young people.

The acting manager carries out effective quality assurance of the home and this is largely articulated through regulation 34 monitoring. If undesirable patterns of behaviour or shortfalls become apparent the acting manager takes prompt action to address matters.

In addition the home is visited monthly by an independent person who undertakes regulation 33 visits to look at the functions of the home. An extremely comprehensive and detailed report is published following each visit and the acting manager and staff take the necessary action to address any areas needing review. Quality assurance is formal, detailed and effective in ensuring that the practice is beneficial to the young people accommodated. Management is strong, consistent and effective.

There were no requirements or recommendations made at the last inspection.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.