

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 private children's home for three young people who are aged from 10 years and under 18 years old. Three young people live in the home, but were not present on this occasion.

Overall effectiveness

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

This is an outstanding service in most respects with some good features. The young people in this home thrive due to many elements of excellent practice. Young people's rights and needs are very much at the centre of all practice in this home and it is clear that their welfare is paramount.

Staff are well managed and motivated by an acting manager that is clear in his vision for the home and the needs of the young people. Training is in place for all staff and the home strives to develop a strong, committed and well trained staff team.

Young people have progressed well in this home and this is clear in a number of key areas, which included education and health. This home provides a stable and supportive environment for young people.

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 young people receive personalised care that promotes all aspects of their individual identity and are each treated as an individual rather than a member of a group (National Minimum Standards 2.1)
- ensure that young people are supported to develop the skills knowledge and understanding in support of their later transition into adult life (National Minimum Standards 12.1 a-g)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people are motivated, confident and demonstrate a clear understanding of their rights and the services that they can expect for the home. Staff engage with the young people effectively and promote this confidence and self-esteem. Young people are therefore able to embrace challenges of living together in the home and areas where conflict can arise.

Young people are aware that discussion and negotiation are essential factors in their relationships and this is evident from the general harmony in the home. It was noted that whilst the home promotes understanding of difference and diversity, this was not as well evidenced as it could be in relation to an issue of ethnicity.

Young people are supported to understand their health needs and the healthy choices and options available to them. Education in healthy lifestyles, rather than instruction, has allowed the young people to gain insights and develop an awareness of their own responsibilities in making lifestyle choices.

The same philosophy is evident in educational development and while support and guidance is provided, young people are encouraged to consider the benefits of education for current and later life. Liaison with schools is regular, consistent and effective and it is clear that the support that the staff in the home provided has led to greater progress than may have been the case.

Preparation for adulthood planning is in place, but this has not been as effectively managed as it could have been. It is clear that while young people are achieving and crossing thresholds of achievement, this is not being effectively captured in the current planning. In addition progress appears somewhat slow in records and appears to suggest, incorrectly, that progress has been rather limited from the initial assessment process.

Quality of care

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

Young people are well looked after by staff that understand their needs and are motivated to provide quality care. Young people benefit from well established relationships with staff based on respect and co-operation. Staff members therefore engage very effectively with the young people and this is demonstrated by the progress young people make in this home.

Young people say that the most important thing in the home is the staff and their relationships with one another. Communication is very effective and young people's views and wishes are respected. House meetings provide a formal opportunity for young people to individually or collectively influence the manner in which the home is managed and operated. Subsequently, complaints are uncommon and most disagreements or representations are addressed immediately and without the need for more formal redress. When formal complaint is made all details are recorded and the process of complaint investigation is well managed.

All young people have detailed care plans and placement plans and it is evident that young people are fully engaged in the planning processes. Their views are canvassed and young people effectively influence the care planning process.

Plans demonstrate an awareness of diversity and individuality and staff understand the importance of reflecting these important aspects within planning. Prior to all statutory reviews all young people are provided with an extremely detailed, comprehensive and well written review report. Reports demonstrate clear insight into the young people's views and needs and key aspects of individuality are insightfully presented.

All aspects of routine healthcare are provided and all young people attend core health services in accordance with their needs. Specific or more specialist treatments are well managed and young people are provided with additional services. These include the commissioning of psychological assessments and support from the homes qualified nurse. All young people have detailed healthcare records, which are well maintained and regularly reviewed.

All staff undertake healthily living training to raise their awareness in areas such as diet, healthily lifestyles and life choices. Healthcare support is robust in this home and young people benefit from effective support in this area.

All young people attend school and the home has established clear links with education providers. All young people have educational assessments and the staff are aware of their role in supporting plans. There is clear evidence in this home that young people have progressed educationally since placement and progress is monitored effectively. This home provides specialist schooling as well as supporting mainstream schooling and liaison is effective and beneficial.

Homework is supported by staff and young people are motivated by the encouragement that staff provide.

Young people are encouraged to find personal hobbies and interests and staff support the young people in any reasonable request. All young people are engaged

in personal activities and the home also offers structured and group activities.

This home is pleasantly decorated and very well presented with effective maintenance programmes. Furniture and fixtures are of high quality and all areas are well presented. The home is kept and managed in a manner that clearly demonstrates an understanding of young people's needs and areas of the home reflect awareness of young people's more diverse and individual expectations.

Bedrooms are clearly individual and decorated and furnished in accordance with the young people's choices. All young people have lockable space in addition to locks on their doors and staff are respectful of privacy and sensitive when entering rooms.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people feel safe and supported with the knowledge that the staff are trained to a high standard and receive regularly refresher training in matters of safeguarding. Young people are aware of their rights and expectations to feel safe and protected from risks and danger.

Rigorous safeguarding procedures are operated by this home and the child protection co-ordinator is well trained and very experienced. Any allegation is strictly processed to ensure appropriate consideration for the person subject to the allegation and any other party is in place.

All visitors must identify themselves and sign in and out of the building. No visitor is allowed unsupervised access to the home or young people. All staff working with children in the home are carefully selected and vetted through well established recruitment and employment panels. No staff members begin work with the young people until all statutory checks and references are in place.

Risk assessments are carried out in respect of each young person and these assessments reflect an awareness of the diversity and difference that may impact on individual risk assessment. The home is also risk assessed to ensure that environmental risks are reduced or removed from the home. Young people therefore benefit from robust risk assessments and the staff awareness of the importance of safeguarding.

Fire risk assessment and health and safety assessments are well maintained, rigorously managed with regular fire evacuation drills.

Behaviour management is effective and well managed and formal anti-bullying procedures are in place should bullying emerge. All staff receive training in recognising signs and symptoms of bullying. Physical intervention is extremely uncommon in this home and more punitive sanctions are rare. Challenges and disputes in the home are more generally discussed, and resolved through negotiation and compromise.

When more formal sanctions or physical interventions are used, detailed and robust recording is in place to ensure situations are addressed and managed effectively. Young people say that staff always talk to them and usually understand them, they talk things through and matters are dealt with.

Young people are rarely absent without permission or go missing from this home. Both young people and staff say this is because on most occasions when running away is considered; young people and staff discuss and resolve difficulties. Missing person's procedures are nonetheless in place and reflect well thought through and effective procedures.

Specific risk assessment is carried out in relation to absence and both on call and out of hours staff are available to support any such occasion. Missing persons procedures have been agreed with the local police to ensure young people are safely returned.

Leadership and management

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

Young people's individual and diverse needs are considered in all assessments and development of their care. This home is well managed with strong leadership and an acting manager that is approachable and insightful.

To ensure that the acting manager is aware of all aspects in the home he works at least two shifts during the week along with care staff. The acting manager says that this allows him to see, first hand, the way staff work with the young people and the young people the understanding of the value he places in their care. Staff meetings provide opportunities to consider the most effective practices for promoting young people's rights and raising awareness of supporting difference and individuality.

Young people benefit from robust and effective systems underpin the smooth running of this home and formal supervision and staff evaluation maintains focus on care practices and professional development of staff members.

Outcomes for children are continually improved because a development plan is maintained by the home and areas of practice are considered along with more materialistic improvements to the building. Independent regulation 33 monitoring visits to the home consider and report performance.

Regulation 34 monitoring by the acting manager provides significant assessment and evaluation of the home to support planning and development. Improvement in this home has been evident from the previous inspections and steady and sustained progress has resulted.

The statement of purpose is regularly updated to reflect any changes and updated annually in accordance with the Children's Homes Regulations. Regulation 33 monitoring is extremely detailed and comprehensive and this process ensures that monitoring is far reaching and effective. Prompt action is taken by the acting manager to address any shortfall in services or meet any identified need. This means young people know what they can expect from the service.

The home employs a sufficient number of skilled and experienced staff to ensure high standards of care. All staff have both mandatory training and training more specific to their development and needs of the young people. Staff value training and say that this keeps their practice focused and supports their professional development.

All young people are supported in their care planning with detailed and comprehensive files of their historic and current needs. Files are kept up to date and secure. Staff are aware of the need to keep their personal and more sensitive details private.

All significant events and incidents in the home are promptly reported to the appropriate authorities and appropriate action is taken following the incident which ensures that young people's safety and well-being is maintained.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.