

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 which provides accommodation and care for up to three young people aged between 11 and 17 years. It is situated in a residential area close to a seaside town. There is a shopping parade close by and there is easy access to other local amenities. There are good rail and bus links with towns, schools and colleges.

Overall effectiveness

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

This is a good home where management and motivation of staff are effective in supporting young people. Relationships are a key part of the success of this home and the staff establish and sustain these relationships by understanding the needs and the rights of the young people.

Young people are treated as individuals, and the support and management of their care reflect this philosophy. Young people's progress in the home is apparent in a number of areas and noted in both the academic achievement and day-to-day care. Young people are expected to take increasing responsibility for their actions and behaviour and this is established by supporting young people to feel confident and empowered.

Young people's individual and more diverse needs are well met and systems and practices reflect the importance of understanding equality and diversity. Plans and care regimes are highly individualised demonstrating the home's commitment to this important area of care.

Some areas demonstrated shortfalls, but these were, in the main, anomalies in otherwise sound systems. Preparation for adulthood and planning for independence are areas where a need for improvement is most obvious and the manager has agreed to address this.

Areas for improvementStatutory 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
18	promote the educational attainment of children accommodated	30/09/2011

(2001)	in a children's home, in particular by ensuring the routine of the home is organised so as to further children's participation in education, including private study. (Regulation 18(1)(b))	
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Recommendations

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

- ensure children's views, wishes and feelings are acted upon, in the day-to-day running of the home (NMS 1.1)
- ensure risk assessments of the whole children's home environment are carried out to identify any potential sources of harm to the children, are recorded in writing and regularly reviewed (NMS 10.8)
- ensure that the use of restraint is set out in the home's behaviour management policy and recorded in line with any relevant government guidance on restraint and approved approaches to the application of physical intervention and restraint (NMS 3.14)
- ensure that young people are supported to prepare for the world of work and/or further or higher education and develop skills, in accordance with national minimum standards. (NMS 12.1 a-g)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people benefit from well planned healthcare support. All young people have personalised healthcare plans that detail their routine and more diverse needs. Historic and future health intervention records ensure that young people are provided with appropriate support and guidance.

All staff members receive training and guidance in health care and promoting good health. Staff are supported by the home's healthcare advisor and qualified nurse. This enables staff to understand the needs of the young people and helps them promote consistent healthy living strategies.

Young people are able to understand the importance of healthy diets and foods because healthy living is promoted. Young people have gained understanding about healthy development. Young people are encouraged to choose healthy meals and help to plan, shop and prepare fresh foods and meals. Staff also discuss with young people lifestyle choices that may impact negatively on good health, and this encourages young people to make appropriate, informed lifestyle choices.

Young people are encouraged to take some responsibility for their own actions and

encouraged to express their views and feelings. In this way staff promote individuality within appropriate boundaries of acceptable behaviour. Young people express understanding of their own rights, but also the rights of others.

Disagreements in the home are well managed. Young people say that that staff are there to help them and this typically results in appropriate conflict resolution.

Although planning for adulthood has been introduced, current plans are still in the early stages of development, because of the age of the young people accommodated.

Contact is promoted between young people and their friends and family, and staff discuss these episodes both prior and subsequent to contact. Staff encourage contact and record the progress and benefit that this provides for the young people.

Young people are supported with their education and the home maintains in-house schooling to accommodate a range of mixed ability. In this way schooling and education can be specifically targeted to meet the young person's assessed and emerging needs.

Liaison between the home and the schools is typically effective. It is clear from the progress reports from schools that young people benefit from the home's educational support. It was, however, noted that in one case support was not evident and planning was somewhat unclear.

Quality of care

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

This home provides well planned and insightful individual care for young people. Good and effective relationships are a key feature of the success of this home. The manager and staff are well motivated to support the young people.

Management is strong and the staff knowledgeable about the young people's day-to-day needs. Young people feel safe and trust the staff and enjoy a harmonious relationship with them. Staff are respectful of the young people and understand their individual and more diverse needs.

Complaints are uncommon and young people say that staff are prompt to act when disagreements or difficulties arise which negate more formal complaints.

Staff promote young people's rights and young people feel valued as result. It is clear that young people have gained confidence since coming to the home. Young people say that the staff are the most important element of their care.

Young people also say that as well as day-to-day discussions, they address the staff collectively at children's meetings. Young people feel supported by this engagement and feel that their views are valued. Although minutes of these meetings are

recorded, the current records are somewhat scant and it is not always possible to understand decisions that have been made or the results of some discussions

Care planning and health planning are well managed and support young people's individual and diverse needs effectively. This home provides good care to young people that empowers and supports them effectively. Care plans and placement plans are provided for all young people detailing their individual needs. Placement plans are extremely detailed and comprehensive documents. These documents are highly individual, capturing the more subtle and diverse needs of all the young people. Plans demonstrate high levels of insight into the behaviours and the individual needs of the young people and it is clear that great care and attention is given to this process.

All young people are also supported by review reports that use information about the young person's development and progress in the home. These documents are again extremely comprehensive, detailing key information that is essential to planning and review.

A range of activities are planned and organised by the young people and staff. All young people are encouraged to identify an individual activity or hobby. Staff provide both the transport and financing for any reasonable choice. Staff consider activities and interests to encourage inclusion and promote membership into the wider community.

The home is well maintained with regular and effective maintenance schedules. Furnishings and decoration are of good quality and the home is kept clean and tidy throughout.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Risk and behaviour management are included in the planning process and all young people are aware of their plans. The home maintains additional 24-hour management plans and these identify how specific day-to-day planning is managed. These plans include comprehensive details of behaviour and the more individual and diverse management of each young person. Staff therefore understand young people's needs and areas where they need the greatest support. Young people benefit from this comprehensive and insightful management of plans.

Careful risk assessment is well managed with dedicated plans which address known and emerging behaviours. This planning supports staff to protect young people by seeking to minimise risk and understand areas where young people are more vulnerable. Risk assessments are detailed and concise, supporting young people in their day-to-day living. It was noted, however, that one risk assessment was less clear and did not evidence the exact risk as clearly as intended.

Young people are protected by staff who understand and implement formal

safeguarding and child protection procedures. These are robust and all staff benefit from regular training and guidance in this area. All staff are aware of both their responsibilities and the wider issues of safeguarding.

A dedicated safeguarding coordinator ensures that the home manages safeguarding effectively, and safeguarding is a regular topic in staff meetings. The young people and staff benefit from on-call support and an out-of-hours service, and extra staff can be deployed to the home at any time. Training for staff includes understanding the signs and symptoms of abuse and enables them to be vigilant in this area.

Anti-bullying procedures are maintained by the home to address any incidents of suspected bullying. Bullying is uncommon in this home and the young people say that this is because staff are prompt to respond to any incident. Anti-bullying strategies seek to act proactively and specific risk assessments for all young people are conducted upon admission into the home. To ensure staff are knowledgeable in this area, training is provided and bullying is discussed with young people in children's meetings. Staff strive to create a 'no tolerance' approach to bullying and young people say that this is effective.

Young people missing from home and unauthorised absences are uncommon and young people say that staff will talk to you if you feel like leaving the home in this way. Young people feel able to discuss their issues and difficulties with staff who they trust and this reduces the need to become absent from the home. If young people do go missing, formal procedures are instigated to ensure the safe return of the young person. Searching, reporting and recovery of the young person are well managed. Strategies and protocols have been agreed with the police. Risk assessment is also carried out in this area of care and young people are all assessed regarding their vulnerability while absent from the home.

Behaviour is well managed in this home and young people benefit from an environment that promotes discussions and negotiation rather than more punitive measures of control. Physical intervention is not used often, but any use of this type of control is minimal and appropriate to safeguard young people and staff.

Records are kept of all physical incidents and these are generally well maintained. In one case a record was not as clear as others and although this was a minor matter, it had left some unnecessary confusion.

All new staff employed by the home are rigorously vetted and all statutory checks and other employment references are obtained prior to working with the young people. An established and effective recruitment panel manages all new appointments and the manager of the home is party to all new appointments. This ensures the home is staffed by individuals who the manager considers are best able to meet the needs of the young people.

All visitors to the home must identify themselves and no visitor to the home is permitted to have unsupervised access to the young people or home. This ensures that all visitors are controlled and young people are safeguarded by robust

monitoring.

Fire safety and health and safety checks are effective and regularly reviewed. Environmental risks in the home are minimised for both staff and young people by insightful and well-managed practices.

Leadership and management

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

The home maintains an effective Statement of Purpose that defines and describes the services and care that are provided. This document is used by staff to define expectations of their role and how the needs of the young people will be met. This document is regularly reviewed and updated to accommodate any significant change in the home.

The home has designed a young people's guide that describes the care and support that the staff will provide. This document helps the young people understand the support they will receive and details their rights.

The leadership in the home is strong. The manager is effective and all staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities. Supervision is effective and maintained at the frequencies and expectations in accordance with the national minimum standards.

Staff feel supported by the manager and the management structure within the home. Training is provided to all staff and this begins with mandatory training in the core elements of care. In order that staff can perform competently, training and evaluation are continued and maintained. More individual or specialist training is undertaken to meet identified developing needs. This ensures that staff are able to gain insight into young people's needs and provide well planned and individualised care.

Staff training is well managed and all new staff members begin formal training upon the commencement of their employment. Existing staff undertake training in accordance with the national minimum standards. Although training is in place, new staff members have not yet completed their formal training to hold the level 3 Children and Young People's Workforce Diploma.

Regulation 33 visits and Regulation 34 monitoring are well managed in the home. Regulation 33 inspections are extremely comprehensive, exceeding the expectations of the national minimum standards. This process acts as a useful quality assurance tool and subsequent improvements from this activity are clear. The manager conducts regular Regulation 34 monitoring and takes prompt action to address any undesirable trend or pattern in the home or any area of shortfall. A development plan is also maintained and this process looks at more universal improvements and evaluation of the operation of the home. Monitoring processes and improvement strategies are clear, effective and regularly undertaken. This ensures services and

support are appropriate to young people's needs and monitored to ensure quality care is maintained. Reports from Regulation 33 and Regulation 34 inspections and monitoring provide a critical analysis of the home and action planning that is fully addressed by the manager and staff.

The manager undertakes regular training in order that they are aware of changes and developments both in practice and legislation. This ensures that they are competent in their role in both managing and supporting the staff members.

The manager and staff are aware of the importance of maintaining community relationships and any complaint or comment received by the home is taken seriously and rigorously investigated. All recommendations from inspections by statutory bodies are responded to effectively and promptly.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.