

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Ann-Marie Born
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This is a privately owned children's home that is registered for up to three children or young people.

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**.

Young people make good progress in a number of key areas. Notably they develop their self-esteem and feelings of self-worth; make improvements in their educational attendance; reduce their periods of absence from the home and keep safe. As a result of the exceptional care they receive young people's welfare significantly improves. Young people feel cared for and valued which enables them to make progress in other areas. One young person said, 'It is absolutely excellent here. Much better than all the other homes I have been in.'

Young people feel safe and good attention to safeguarding ensures they are safe. Young people particularly benefit from the strong, proactive approach to regaining and maintaining contact with important family members. A family member commented, 'They let him know his other family. They make sure he is building a relationship with his family. He wouldn't have any of that without them.'

Strong communication between staff and young people allow for excellent individual care planning. This significantly improves young people's understanding of their heritage and sense of belonging and worth. A social worker commented, 'The relationships with staff especially have provided him with the security, affirmation and safety he needed.'

This is a good home overall. The manager understands its strengths and areas where further improvement needed and is working hard to address those. However, there are some areas of development. This is particularly with regard to consulting parents as part of the independent monitoring process. In addition, young people are not always involved in the development of their behaviour management plans.

Areas for improvement

Statutory 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
33 (2001)	ensure that the person carrying out the visit shall interview such of the children living there, their parents or relatives as appears necessary in order to form an opinion of the standard of care provided in the home. (Regulation 33 (4)(a))	25/10/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure that all children communicate their views on all aspects of their care and support. (NMS 1.3)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people make good progress in developing sustainable attachments with staff and each other. An ethnically diverse staff team assist young people to recognise and celebrate their cultural heritage. This supports them to have an understanding of their backgrounds and builds their self-respect and pride. Consequently young people gain confidence in their abilities to forge and maintain important relationships.

Young people new to the home feel that they have settled in really well and this is reflected in the small but significant progress they have made since their admission. Young people who have been at the home for a longer period of time have benefitted from improved health and education outcomes and successful rehabilitation with their families. A family member said, 'They are very good there.'

Young people make good progress from their starting points in attending and achieving within an education provision. Young people benefit from the extra support staff provide by attending the company school with them if necessary. A social worker commented, 'The support at school has been valuable to his educational progress, as well as having people who understand his triggers and are available to reason with him when he becomes angry.' As a result young people take pride in

their achievements and have aspirations for their futures.

Young people's holistic health needs are well met and they enjoy a healthy well-balanced diet. Young people have access to the services they need to ensure they experience a good quality of life, including generic health services, psychological services and specialist practitioners. For example, the sexual health nurse and substance misuse services. As a result, young people learn the importance of living healthy lifestyles.

Young people fully benefit from the consistent, persistent approach staff take in supporting them to build positive relationships with extended family members. Young people value the security, stability and sense of belonging this provides, both now, and for their longer-term relationships and support in adulthood. A social worker commented, 'The support he has been given for him to have contact with his family member has been important to the on-going attachment he has with her, as she is an important factor in his life.'

Good pathway planning for a successful transition to independence starts at point of entry with young people. At times young people do not want to fully engage with the process and staff work hard to increase their motivation and enable young people to fully understand the importance of learning social and life skills. As a result, young people do understand the importance of personal hygiene, can plan and cook meals, are responsible for their own laundry and are making progress in managing personal budgets.

Quality of care

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

Irrespective of the challenges they present the committed and caring staff team place young people at the centre of the practice in the home. Consequently, for the majority of the time, young people enjoy excellent relationships with each other and staff and behave appropriately. Young people who are behaving negatively in other arenas do not exhibit those behaviours in the home with staff they trust. A young person stated, 'I think all of the staff are great and if I had my way they would all get outstanding for what they are doing. They listen to me, they like me, they make me laugh and they give me lots of things to do.'

Needs relating to young people's cultural, religious and personal identities are comprehensively identified in care planning and actively addressed in day-to-day living. The ethnically diverse staff team provide young people with the opportunity to engage positively with members of their community. For example, shopping for and cooking desired food. Young people take pride in their backgrounds and cultural heritage and have an improved sense of self-worth and self-esteem. This successfully enhances young people's sense of belonging and their trust in the staff who care for them.

Excellent care planning ensures that all young people's day-to-day and long-term needs are comprehensively identified and addressed. Strong partnership working with health, education and social work professionals ensure that young people's holistic needs are continually reviewed with all parties; This provides young people with the best opportunities for achieving successful outcomes. Young people are actively involved in their care planning thereby enabling them to fully understand and take ownership of future plans. Staff identify areas of specific developmental needs with young people which allows them to make progress in all aspects of their lives. For example, regaining contact with important family members. A social worker stated, 'Staff have provided an excellent level of care for him that has provided an important base for stability.'

As a result of the strength of communication between young people and staff, young people assertively express their views and any complaints confident that they will be heard. Not all young people's wishes are in their best interests, for example, having cash every day when working to a budget or involvement in some social circles. Staff work consistently to calmly and sensitively explain to young people why this is not appropriate, as a good parent would. A family member stated, 'When he was getting in to trouble they sat him down and talked to him about the importance of good friends and making good choices in what he does. I think that was very nice.'

Staff actively support young people in their attendance and engagement in education provision. Daily reporting between the home and company's school ensure that young people's achievements are widely recognised; this promotes the development of their self-esteem and they increase their aspirations. Any concerns are shared and collectively addressed enhancing the education experience for young people and reducing negative behaviours. Proactive staff build relationships with training providers and work closely with them to provide opportunities for young people to attend chosen professional courses, for example football coaching.

Young people are provided with a range of inclusive enjoyable activities within the home and the community. Staff work hard to encourage young people to participate in activities that they will enjoy and provide them with opportunities to build positive relationships and friendships. Young people learn the importance of engaging in fun and taking part in healthy activities, for example, playing football, going for bike rides or to the gymnasium.

Young people enjoy living in a comfortable well maintained home which is decorated to their taste. Young people evidently value and take pride in having family photographs, including school photographs, of themselves around the house as they would in a family home.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people, their family members and professionals all report that they are, and feel, safe within the home. No young people reported any concerns to do with

bullying and any allegations made are managed appropriately and in the best interests of all concerned. Young people's safety is kept at the centre of all practice within the home. A social worker commented, 'He has been consistently supported to develop and grow within a safe and secure environment.'

Young people do not go missing from this home but are late home on occasion or stay at a friend's house overnight. Staff are aware of where young people are and actively work with them to stay in contact with the home. Young people are safeguarded by these measures.

The calm and consistent manager and staff team are good role models for young people to help them develop positive behaviours within the home. They work hard to build strong, trusting relationships with young people in order to promote positive behaviours and prevent negative actions. A very good reward system allows young people to understand the benefits of respecting their home and the staff, and to behave appropriately. Good behaviour management plans ensure that all staff know what to do to promote positive behaviours. However, these documents are not developed with or signed by young people therefore their efficacy may be reduced.

There are occasions where young people express their anger and frustration through causing damage within the home. Any damage sustained is speedily repaired maintaining the safety of the home. Staff remain calm and supportive to young people in these situations. Young people understand that they will be sanctioned for such behaviour. Sanctions are fair and proportionate and enable young people to learn from the consequences of their actions.

There have also been instances when young people behave in an aggressive manner within the community or education setting. Staff support young people to address these behaviours and identify a positive solution which is beneficial for them and others involved. However, the strength of the relationships and the staff's proactive, calm approach means that no physical interventions have been necessary within the home. A young person said, 'At my last home I was restrained on the first day and then nearly every day until I left but I haven't been restrained here because they listen to me and they understand me.'

Excellent recruitment procedures ensure that no staff members are appointed until all of the necessary checks have been made and completed. Young people are protected from being cared for by staff who may pose a risk to them.

Good health and safety procedures and regular evacuation drills ensure that young people are cared for in a home that is physically safe for them and they would know what to do in case of an emergency.

Leadership and management

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

The proactive, experienced Registered Manager maintains excellent arrangements for

monitoring the quality of care and knows the young people in her care well. Any shortfalls are promptly identified and addressed. As a result young people's progress is identified and the demonstrable differences the home has made to young people's outcomes are recognised. This promotes and maintains high standards while contributing to young people's sense of belonging and being valued.

For the most part the home and the young people resident are an accepted part of the community. On occasion there have been complaints from neighbours about young people's behaviour. These are addressed immediately prompting positive and welcome responses. For example, neighbours brought gifts for young people across last Christmas.

The Statement of Purpose and Children's Guide clearly outline the aims and objectives of the home. These documents inform young people, their family members and social workers about the home and the care provided. As a result young people are appropriately placed thereby enhancing their life experiences and opportunities for success.

Young people benefit from appropriate staffing levels and the care and attention they receive from the well supported and committed staff team. All staff members either hold or are enrolled on appropriate national qualifications. In addition, staff attend specific training in specialist subjects to enhance their skills. Consequently young people are cared for by staff who are appropriately trained to meet their needs.

Staff members report that they receive strong peer and management support and benefit from a good, formal supervision process which enables them to fully support young people. A staff member said, 'We offer a safe and caring environment, their needs always come first. In sometimes difficult circumstances we do the best that's possible. I feel I can really make a difference.'

Independent monitoring visits routinely contribute to improvements, including ascertaining young people's views on their care and experiences. However, as parents or family members are not consulted their opinions are not being obtained. The manager communicates with and notifies agencies, including Ofsted, of any significant incidents ensuring young people are protected by multi-agency decision making.

There were no recommendations or requirements made at the previous inspection. Nevertheless, the committed manager has used strong monitoring processes and an individual development plan to ensure progress fully benefits young people and improves their care continues.

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* and the evaluation schedule for the inspection of children's homes.