

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Wendy Anderson
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This is a children's home for three young people. It is operated by a private organisation. The home provides a service to children with a wide range of behavioural or educational needs, clearly explained in its Statement of Purpose.

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 **outstanding**.

Young people make outstanding progress in relation to their starting point on admission to the home in all aspects of their care, well-being and education. This is due to the nurturing environment the staff team have created. This is underpinned by a committed, effective, stable staff team who are well trained and proactive at meeting the needs of the young people. Care planning is highly individualised and frequently reviewed and updated. Staff in the home demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the needs of the young people placed as well as the organisation's policies and procedures. This knowledge ensures the young people develop and thrive in a safe environment where boundaries and practice are consistent.

Young people are very happy at the home and support the staff and external professionals' views that there is an open and honest culture in the home where individuals and their ideas are valued.

Leadership at the home is strong and the manager is aware of and understands the areas which require further development. These include ensuring all young people have personal education plans and that records of sanctions consistently include the length of the sanction. Recording at the home is of an excellent standard with records being securely stored. The quality of these records is assured by the robust monitoring systems.

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
28 (2001)	maintain in respect of each child who is accommodated in a children's home a record in permanent form which includes the information, documents and records specified in Schedule 3. In particular: All young people have a personal education plan (Regulation 28 (Schedule 3 (18)))	31/12/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure sanction and rewards are clear, reasonable and fair and are understood by all staff and children. In particular sanction records record the duration of any sanctions. (NMS 3.8)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people have made exceptional progress at the home from their starting point at admission in all areas of their development. This includes self-confidence and understanding why they are in care and their cultural background. They are confident and very positive about their placements.

All the young people have very good attendance at school or college and benefit from the staff's proactive approach to engaging them in education. Some young people came to the home with a record of non-attendance and now have 100% attendance. All of the achievements of the young people are celebrated at the home and this assists the young people to be proud of themselves and to continue to strive further.

A number of the young people were regularly engaging in risk-taking behaviours at the point of admission and shortly afterwards. This is no longer the case and such events are very rare.

Young people lead a healthy lifestyle which includes them taking part in a wide range of activities both in the home and within the local community. Clubs such as football clubs and youth clubs enable young people to engage more fully with the wider community to form relationships and make friends outside of the home. Work is

carried out on healthy living through house meetings, keyworker sessions as well as day-to-day life at the home. Staff work with young people on drug, smoking and alcohol issues as well as on good sexual and psychological health. All young people have a comprehensive health care plan which ensures all their health needs are catered for and met including attending all the required health care appointments.

All young people are supported by staff to plan and maintain contact with their friends and family. Young people benefit from well-planned contact, and the staff spend time with the young people planning and preparing them for their contact. Where contact has been supervised this is well supported.

Consultation with young people is very good. Young people are involved in all aspects of their care and their views are actively sought in the day-to-day life of the home. Through this open communication the young people are aware of the expectations the staff have of them, which are high. Young people feel valued and they are aware of their rights and also their responsibilities. Young people say that they feel well looked after and that the staff really care about them and help them.

Young people said they really enjoy the food at the home. They are involved in the completion of menus and help with the shopping and cooking with staff. One said they had never had the opportunity to do this before and they really enjoyed it. The menus are varied, nutritious and reflect the cultures of the young people placed and also introduce them to new culinary experiences.

Quality of care

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

Young people feel they are very well supported by staff who have a comprehensive knowledge of their individual needs, and feel safe at the home. The relationships between the staff and young people are based on mutual respect and trust. This is the foundation on which their work with the young people is based. The staff have very high expectations and aspirations for the young people and work with the young people to achieve these. It is clear that the young people's welfare and development are at the centre of all the work the staff undertake.

The home's individual plans for young people are excellent and frequently reviewed and updated to ensure they are current. This, coupled with the outstanding key worker records, provides comprehensive evidence of the robust work the home carries out and the progress made by the young people. This is particularly evident of the exceptional support the staff team are providing to a young person with complex medical needs who has to have extended stays in hospital. The staff commitment to this young person is outstanding. They have arranged the staff team so there is someone with that young person all the time. This ensures the young person receives excellent medical care that also meets and focuses on their social, emotional and developmental needs. To ensure this presence the home rents a house near the hospital so that there is a constant presence.

Young people have a pathway plan where needed but all young people take part in independence work from the point of admission. By learning how to carry out household chores themselves they gain a sense of achievement and this also helps them to invest in the home and thus respect it. The pathway plans are linked to comprehensive work books which build to a good reference work for the young people to take with them when they leave.

Staff ensure that the young people receive all the support they need, both from the team but also from external services. This ensures that all their physical, emotional and psychological needs are met. Health care at the home is well managed with robust systems for the administration and storage of medication. Comprehensive records are maintained in this area.

Consultation at the home is very good. This is carried out through regular house meetings, key worker sessions and general open discussion with the young people throughout the day. Young people were able to give a number of examples as to how their ideas had been put into practice by or with staff. They also said that where it was not possible to act on ideas or requests made then they are always given a clear explanation as to why. The organisation also holds meeting with representatives from all of its homes on a regular basis to gather feedback.

Staff are very proactive at ensuring that young people engage in education as this is key to their future. Young people have made excellent progress in their education since being placed at the home. Staff support young people in all aspect of their education including homework and attending any parental event. Of the three young people placed only two have a personal education plan on file. A lack of these plans could potentially mean that educational needs are not identified and met.

The home has excellent working relationships with fellow professionals. Feedback from them is very complimentary about the staff, stating they have excellent communication skills, provide an extremely high standard of care for the young people and have a 'high level of commitment to ensure that all young people's needs are met and are supporting them to reach their full potential'.

There is a robust complaints procedure in place which is adhered to in practice. Young people are made aware of this at admission and this is reiterated through keyworker sessions. Young people said they were confident that if they made a complaint the staff would act quickly to resolve it. This was supported by the clear records maintained of complaints.

The home is appropriately located, designed and maintained with high quality furnishings and equipment. Maintenance is well managed and any repairs or refurbishments are promptly undertaken. The home is kept clean and tidy and provides the accommodation and services detailed within the Statement of Purpose. Young people are encouraged to personalise their rooms and are involved in the choice of décor and furnishings throughout the home. Young people said that they are very proud of their bedrooms and the home in general.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people feel safe in the home and outside of it. They are protected by robust safeguarding policies and procedures which are adhered to in practice. The staff team are well trained in this area and this training is regularly updated to ensure the knowledge is in line with current practice. This is enhanced by an excellent risk assessment process. All young people have detailed and comprehensive risk assessments that detail both individual behaviours and environmental factors that may impact on risk. These assessments identify the individual's vulnerabilities and strategies to combat these. These are done with input from the young people. Young people rarely take part in risk-taking behaviours, thus showing a dramatic drop in this behaviour from the point of admission.

Behaviour at the home is outstanding. The home had very detailed behaviour plans for each young person which are frequently reviewed and updated with the young person's full involvement. This enables the young person as well as the staff to see their improvements and to also understand the consequences of their actions. This work also helps young people manage their own behaviours, conflict and develop positive relationships with others. At house meetings there is regular discussion on bullying, equality and diversity, and respect for others, all of which will assist them when they are living in the community. Behaviour management is outstanding. There have been no restraints for over a year due to the excellent behaviour strategies in place and the in-depth knowledge the staff have of the young people they work with. Any incidents at the home are clearly recorded and there is evidence of the discussion following incidents impacting on practice within the home. Records of sanctions are clear but there are a few occasions where the length of the sanction has not been recorded. This does not allow for consistent and robust monitoring of the appropriateness of sanctions.

The home has a clear procedure for when young people are missing or are absent from the home. Upon admission, the home send the police a risk assessment of the young person so they are fully aware of their individual vulnerabilities and the level of their risk-taking behaviours. Excellent records are maintained in this area, including young people being de-briefed upon their return. All of these measures have greatly reduced young people going missing from care.

The home has excellent recruitment and vetting procedures in place for staff which are adhered to in practice. The information the home requires is beyond what is required by the national minimum standards. This system ensures that young people are protected from adults who could potentially harm them. All visitors are required to sign the visitors' book and are not allowed unaccompanied access to the young people or the home.

Staff ensure that young people live in a safe environment where all the required health and safety and fire checks are carried out robustly on a regular basis. Staff

also receive training in these areas which are regularly updated.

Leadership and management

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

The home has had an experienced Registered Manager in place for a number of years. He is supported by a stable and very well-trained staff team who are highly child focused. The whole team has very high expectations for the young people in their care but also for themselves as a team and the standard of care they provide. The team provides a stimulating environment for the young people and themselves to live and work.

The home has an appropriate Statement of Purpose and young person's guide which reflects the current practice at the home. There are robust monitoring systems in place to ensure the standard of the work undertaken is high and consistent in meeting the needs of the young people.

Young people benefit from a well trained staff team that is able to implement a high standard of care. The home has an excellent training ethos. All staff undertake the Children's Workforce Development Council's induction programme. In addition, all staff undertake mandatory training which is regularly updated to ensure their practice is in line with current legislation and promotes staff development.

Managers are able to demonstrate an excellent commitment to the best possible outcomes for the young people by providing staff with outstanding levels of support. Staff receive regular high quality supervision. The system of annual appraisal includes a personal development plan for the coming year for each member of staff. Regular team meetings provide the team with an open forum to discuss the young people and their individual care needs. This ethos of review and development is prevalent throughout the home's work and is one of the core reasons for it being outstanding.

Clear administration and record keeping supports the aims and objectives of the home. Young people's records are comprehensive, well maintained and securely stored.

All significant events are reported to the appropriate authorities in a timely manner. All reports are detailed and comprehensive and demonstrate that the appropriate action is taken by the home.

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 children's homes.