

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Stella Henderson
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The children's home is run by a charity and provides accommodation for up to two young people with emotional and behaviour difficulties and/or learning disabilities on a medium or long-term basis.

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 achieve outstanding outcomes at this home. This is because they are the focus of attention from a staff group that is well-established and experienced. A placing social worker described the home as being 'very child focused'. The quality of care offered to young people is excellent and there are strong safeguarding arrangements. Young people are safe at the home and they and their parents confirm this.

Young people's behaviour is managed well and there is mutual regard and respect between young people and staff. Regular consultation enables young people and their parents to have a real say in decision-making processes. Effective management and monitoring ensures any barriers to young people's development are quickly identified. This enables young people to maintain their momentum of good progress and for standards to remain high.

One requirement and one recommendation are raised in order to improve recording practice, neither of which has a direct impact on young people.

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
22 (2001)	ensure that electronic or mechanical monitoring devices for the surveillance of children are not used in a children's home except for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned. This is specifically in relation to ensuring that the child's placing authority consents to the measure of the use in question. (Regulation 22 (a))	09/11/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the manager regularly monitors, in line with regulations, all records kept by the home. This is specifically in relation to the evaluation of consultation with young people, parents and stakeholders. (NMS 21.2)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make exceptional progress at the home. Their levels of anxiety are reduced and staff support them to acquire skills and strategies to manage their own behaviour more effectively. This empowers young people and enables them to gain self-control and an increased sense of maturity. As a result they do not feel the need to engage in risk-taking or offending behaviours.

The strong focus on education benefits young people immensely. For example, one young person has achieved 100 per cent full time attendance at school when previously they received only six hours tuition. This has consequently impacted positively on their levels of attainment. A placing social worker commented that the home 'has been fantastic' in supporting the young person to make this progress.

Young people are also provided with a range of learning opportunities which plays to their strengths, equips them with practical skills and prepares them for future employment. For example, one young person has re-designed the garden, applied the physical labour to bring this to fruition, learned how to use different tools and won a prize for their efforts. These achievements have additional positive effects on young people in terms of boosting their self-esteem, managing delayed gratification and working effectively with others.

Young people are in good health and receive all the interventions and services they need to maintain this. They do not drink, smoke or take drugs and understand the dangers of doing so. Young people engage successfully in a range of positive

activities which help them feel part of the wider community, such as sponsored bike rides, working a stall at a local festival and celebrating the Olympics and the Queen's Jubilee.

Young people also take full advantage of the range of activities on offer at the home, such as cycling and walking. This not only maintains their good health but helps them to understand that they can entertain and enjoy themselves without having to spend money. This is good preparation for adult life.

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy high quality care in a home that closely replicates a nurturing family environment. The approach taken by the home is to focus on young people's ability rather than disability and the manager and staff have high aspirations for young people. One parent noted, 'My (child) is now getting all the help he needs and support that we struggled to get for him at home.'

The manager and staff consistently look for ways to extend and improve young people's experience and outcomes. They actively challenge barriers to young people's progress and inclusion. For example, the manager ensures that no medical appointments are made during school time as this impacts on young people's attendance and learning experience.

Young people benefit from the creative approach taken to achieve positive outcomes and help them feel good about themselves. For instance, preparation for independence is, initially, based on tasks that young people have already had some success in.

Strong partnership working with health, education and social services means that young people receive the support and intervention to which they are entitled. The manager advocates effectively on behalf of young people which has had a positive impact in terms of, for example, a more detailed education curriculum. A placing social worker stated that the home was 'great in working with other agencies'.

Consultation and participation is a strength of the home and the views of young people and their parents make a difference. Excellent working relationships and an inclusive approach means that parents can continue to exercise their parental responsibilities and feel valued. This engenders improved relationships between young people and their parents.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are safe at the home. They indicate they feel safe and staff clearly

demonstrate respect and regard for young people. Young people are not at risk of harm and their parents and stakeholders agree that this is the case. One placing social worker said that there are 'absolutely no concerns' about young people's safety at the home. Behaviour is managed well so there are no restraints or sanctions, and young people do not feel the need to abscond.

Safeguarding measures are strengthened in a number of ways. Staff are clear about their whistle-blowing responsibilities as well as child protection procedures. The manager maintains a visible presence in the home and regularly spends time alone with young people. Comprehensive risk assessments are in place and updated when required. Young people are treated with respect and regarded positively; as a result they feel trusted and safe.

Agreed low-level surveillance measures are also used to strengthen safety. Although not opposed by the placing authority this arrangement has not yet been formally agreed. However, this delay has no direct impact on young people.

Leadership and management

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

Young people thrive in a home that is nurturing, friendly and well maintained. The home has cordial relationships with neighbours who have been welcome to attend events at the home. Parents have attended training alongside staff.

Staff receive effective supervision and support from an experienced manager. Stakeholders and parents comment positively on the work of the home. One parent noted that their child, 'Gets on well with all the staff and I do which is a big help when your child has to be looked after. It makes the process so much easier for me and my child.'

The manager is registered with Ofsted and provides clear leadership. She ensures that staff attend training and maintain their competency in looking after young people. There is effective monitoring of the home's operations and young people's development and progress. This is made easier for the manager to undertake as there is a very high standard of recording.

Although parents, stakeholders and young people are consulted as part of the monitoring process, consultation is not fully evaluated. This means that opportunities to improve performance and standards for young people are not entirely identified.

At the last inspection the manager was asked to ensure that supervision notes were signed by the supervisor and supervisee. This recommendation has been met.

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.