

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Jacqueline Malcolm
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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

The children's home is owned and operated by a private organisation. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for two young people with behavioural and emotional difficulties.

Overall effectiveness

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

Young people live in a caring and nurturing environment where they feel supported, protected and enabled to improve their life chances. Young people benefit from clear, consistent boundaries, which have led to strong and stable relationships and their overall good progress.

Young people receive excellent quality care from suitably trained and experienced staff who prioritise their best interests. Young people say that they like living in the home. One said they really like the staff, praising them with the comment 'whoop whoop and then some'. Parents consider that their children are well looked after and kept safe. One commented 'It is very good at the children's home as the staff are working very hard with my child and they know how to deal with their challenging behaviour.'

Staff promote young people's access to education, training and independence and work collaboratively with other services. This ensures young people can make the most of opportunities available.

Young people feel safe within the home and know that staff are concerned about their safety and welfare. Staff know what action to take to protect young people from significant harm and will go the extra mile to secure their welfare. While young people do go missing from home, the number of incidents has reduced. Young people's risky behaviours are assessed and implemented; however, their safety is unwittingly compromised when risk management practices carried out are not agreed. Internal and external monitoring systems lack a robust and evaluative approach, which does not always give a clear measure of the service or identify key areas for improvement.

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 robust and evaluative quality monitoring of all care practices in the home (Regulation 33)	30/12/2011
34 (2001)	ensure robust and evaluative quality monitoring of all care practices in the home. (Regulation 34)	30/12/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure agreed risk assessments are implemented. (NMS 4.5)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people benefit from regular individual work, praise and encouragement. This enables them to develop a good understanding of their background and why they are looked after. Staff promote life story work, which secures memories of their recent histories.

Young people's good health is actively promoted. Good links with health services ensure that young people's physical, emotional and psychological health needs are identified, met and reviewed. Staff support young people to attend appointments and seek health advice to ensure their health concerns are promptly attended to. Young people confirm that they are 'always helped' when they feel unwell. Young people are supported to take responsibility for their health, which enhances their independence skills. This includes issues in relation to their sexual health; smoking, drug and alcohol misuse. Not all young people choose to engage with these services. However, staff continue to use their positive relationships with young people to convince them about the benefits of these services.

Young people are supported to develop healthy lifestyles and participate in activities that help them feel good. Young people contribute to the weekly menus where healthy, balanced choices are offered. Young people are encouraged to take an active interest in food and cooking and develop a healthy attitude to food. Young people have opportunities to shop, prepare and cook food, especially young people who are developing independent living skills.

Young people have made good educational progress from their starting points in the home. Young people who have completed their formal education are actively supported to seek employment. This is a challenge for some young people who are

yet to secure a position in education or employment. This is an area that staff and social care professionals oversee and actively support.

Young people are supported by staff to maintain contact with their families and significant others. Staff are sensitive to the needs of young people during contact and make themselves available to young people when they need it.

Quality of care

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

Young people live in a caring and nurturing environment and enjoy excellent relationships and communication with staff. Staff know the young people they care for very well and they place their best interests at the heart of their practice. Young people presenting with behaviour challenges are well managed through positive and well monitored behaviour management strategies and role modelling. Young people say they enjoy life at the home and the manner in which staff treat them. Young people understand the consequences of poor behaviour and are encouraged to take responsibility.

Young people know how to complain and have used the complaints procedure on a couple of occasions with outcomes to their satisfaction. Young people say they can talk to staff and feel listened to, which makes them feel valued and respected. Young people are regularly consulted about their wishes and feelings and the running of the home. They respond to this exceptionally well. Recent consultation with young people has resulted in changes to the décor of the home.

Young people contribute to the planning and review of their care. Placement plans are updated and demonstrate young people's progress. Key work sessions and informal time with staff contributes to young people's plans in agreement with young people and their social workers. Staff demonstrate exceptional knowledge of each young person's individual needs and ensure young people contribute to their reviews. This ensures that agreed plans continue to be appropriate for young people.

Young people are actively supported and encouraged to participate fully in all aspects of their lives, such as health, leisure holidays, activities and securing long term employment opportunities. This has been challenging at times due to young people's lack of motivation or issues in relation to their safety and welfare. However, staff have high aspirations for young people and challenge barriers in proactive and imaginative ways.

Young people enjoy homely accommodation which is suitably and comfortably furnished to a high standard. Young people personalise their own bedrooms to suit their tastes. There is a large garden to the rear of the house with space for outdoor leisure activities. The home's location within a residential area provides positive relationship with neighbours and good links to local facilities and public transport.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people say that they feel safe in the home and that staff keep them safe. Young people confidently talk to staff about any concerns and staff respond proactively. Staff regularly talk to young people about keeping themselves safe in relation to their age and understanding. Staff take measures to ensure young people are safe in the community. Staff have developed excellent practices to ensure that young people are protected from abuse. This includes positive and strong links with social care, police and safeguarding agencies, who work together to safeguard young people. These measures have reduced the level of significant harm and continue to be monitored.

Young people have gone missing from the home. However, this has reduced recently. Staff make contact with young people when they go missing and provide a supportive response on their return. Young people are not physically prevented from leaving the home. Approved restraint is used as a last resort and the reasons for its use are recorded by trained and experienced staff. Young people understand why restraint may be used and staff monitor the patterns which may lead to extreme behaviours. Parents comment positively about the way the home manages challenging behaviour.

Clear and comprehensive risk assessments identify how risky behaviours will be minimised and reduced. Staff respond in a child-centred, protective manner. However, on one occasion a young person was left home alone for five minutes following an informal, unauthorised risk assessment. Although a record was made of this activity, it was not an agreed measure. It was not approved by the placing authority and the manager was not aware. Some young people are identified to be involved in high risk activities which currently would not promote this practice. There was no impact on outcomes for young people and this issue has been addressed by the manager.

Bullying is a rare occurrence in the home. Young people confirm that staff would address bullying behaviour. This makes them feel safe and protected.

Young people benefit from robust staff recruitment practices when new staff are recruited to care for them. This protects them from unsuitable people who may present a risk to them.

Young people live in a physically safe and secure environment. Regular testing of gas, electrical and fire safety systems and the implementation of health and safety risk assessments ensure minimal risks are presented to young people, staff and visitors.

Leadership and management

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

Young people live in a well resourced and managed home. They are cared for by staff that are sufficient in numbers, experienced, qualified, well motivated and retained. Staff sickness and absence is met by existing staff or staff known to the young people. This ensures continuity of care. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities. They are child-focused and committed to improving outcomes for young people.

There is a strong commitment to staff through the provision of regular training, support and appraisal. Staff supervision takes place within regular intervals and staff feel well supported and motivated. Staff development is highly featured and staff thoroughly enjoy the training they receive. The majority of staff are qualified in a recognised childcare qualification. Young people benefit from a well trained and qualified staff team who are well prepared to meet their individual needs.

The manager ensures that the home complies with the Statement of Purpose. They clearly understand the home's strengths and areas for development and work hard to ensure continued improvement. A written development plan outlines the activities in the home. However, aspects of internal and external quality monitoring systems are not consistently robust or evaluative. This is noted with respect to staff supervision, medication management and staff practice. There is no direct impact on outcomes for young people. However, improved scrutiny in this area will enhance the quality of service delivered to them.

Young people's files are clear, up to date and give a good impression about young people's progress and development.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.