

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Caroline Jones
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This is a children's home run by a charitable organisation. It provides care and accommodation for up to three young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties, physical disabilities and learning disabilities.

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**.

Staff provide high quality and personalised care which promotes positive outcomes for young people.

A particular strength of the home is ensuring young people's independence is maximised and promoted. As a consequence, young people are confident about their readiness for adult life. Staff have excellent relationships with young people, who feel safe and secure in their care.

Staff have high aspirations for young people and are committed to ensuring they succeed. They work constructively with families to support contact, and work together with partner agencies to effectively safeguard young people. As a result, young people have not engaged in risk-taking behaviours since the last inspection. Young people new to the home are settling well and report positively on the quality of care they receive. Young people comment: 'I would give the home 10 out of 10.'

The home is effectively managed, and a strong emphasis is placed on developing and improving the home further. Internal and external monitoring systems are in place to scrutinise the care provided; however, the latest monthly monitoring report has not been completed, in line with the home's policy. An effective system is in place to include the provision for six monthly quality assurance reports to be forwarded to HMCI. The Statement of Purpose is in place and sets out the ethos of the home; however, the age range of the young people it provides for is absent. This has not impacted negatively upon the welfare of young people.

Staff have regular training, supervision and appraisals to develop their competence and skills in providing a quality service to young people. However, training in areas of bullying and self-harm have not been undertaken by all staff to promote the specific needs of young people. Additionally Criminal Records Bureau checks are completed regularly, although the level and outcome of the check is not specified in the recording to ensure clarity of the process.

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
4 (2001)	ensure that the Statement of Purpose includes the age range of young people it provides for. (Regulation 4 (1))	30/08/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure that staff have training in bullying and self-harm to meet the needs of young people (NMS 18.1 and NMS 3.12)
- ensure that the Registered Manager regularly monitors, in line with regulations, all records kept by the home to secure compliance with the home's policies (NMS 21.2)
- ensure that records include the level of Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure and the outcome of the check. (NMS 16.3b)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make very good progress in developing their independence and skills for adulthood. This is captured in the comprehensive documents that detail the achievements young people have made, for example, within their understanding of road safety, independent travel and with their ability to manage self-care. Young people are growing in confidence and have made successful transition to independent living. They continue to remain in touch with the home once they have left, which demonstrates the importance of the relationships and attachments made.

Young people continue to attend educational provision regularly and do well in relation to their starting points. They benefit from effective and consistent healthcare and are registered with medical practitioners to address their needs. All staff are trained in first aid and administration of medication to ensure safe care of young people. Young people are educated in a variety of health and well-being matters through individual key worker sessions. These include sexual health, relationships and the impact of smoking. This encourages young people's understanding of the issues to ensure they are equipped to make informed decisions about their lives.

Staff provide effective support to enable young people to take part in community activities including the church youth club, local events and gymnasium membership. Young people also take part in national events including Question Time which helps promote their confidence and skills further. Young people have regular contact with family and friends who also visit the home. This reinforces young people's support networks and provides a personal understanding of their background and identity.

Quality of care

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

Young people thrive in a stable and caring environment which has supported them over time in successfully achieving independence to adult life. Young people moving on from the home comment: 'Thank you for looking after me for a long time; when I first came into care I didn't know there is nice people in the world like you....I will never forget you.' Young people enjoy positive relationships with staff, who have an excellent understanding of their individual needs. Detailed care planning, including planned introductions and overnight stays at the home, preparation and review contribute to the good standards of care received by young people.

Staff work directly with young people to ensure they have a good understanding of their backgrounds and identity. This inspires pride and value in their heritage. Young people's rights are promoted because their views are sought and responded to regularly in the daily running of the home. Young people know how to raise a complaint and have used this to resolve any dissatisfaction. The children's guide is available and provides information on how to access advice and support from independent sources including the Children's Rights Director.

Young people live in a healthy environment where their physical, emotional and social well-being is promoted. They engage in physical and social activities with friends and have easy access to healthcare services to meet their individual needs. Young people are encouraged to pursue their individual beliefs, and a range of activities are available to promote young people's understanding of diversity. The home provides a balanced diet and young people assist in preparing meals to encourage their understanding of healthy eating.

Staff promote young people's educational needs through proactive partnerships with educational professionals and social workers. They attend education provision specific to their needs and make progress. Staff emphasise the value of education

and provide learning experiences to complement their education. Additionally, staff recognise young people's achievements in the home and celebrate these through praise and choices of treat. The Registered Manager has plans to develop this area of practice further to ensure young people experience success and self-belief.

Young people live in a relaxed, homely environment which blends seamlessly into the residential area. They have their own bedrooms that are personalised and reflect their interests. Young people are involved in plans for redecoration and furnishing of their bedrooms, which provides a sense of ownership and responsibility. They have space and privacy to see their friends and family and to do their homework. This affords respect and dignity to young people.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Staff are proactive and work individually with young people to ensure they are aware of risks and vulnerabilities. Young people have not engaged in any risk-taking behaviours since the last inspection. The police missing from home coordinator confirms that there has been one incident of young people missing from home in a year. Furthermore, they report that the manager is excellent at following protocols and exchanging information within the protective network of professionals to safeguard young people. Young people comment: 'I feel safe, best night's sleep I have had.'

Caring and warm relationships between staff and young people, that have developed over time, are the foundation for effective behaviour management. There are no incidents of restraints, and staff are clear that this is only used as a very last resort to prevent harm to young people. Young people are encouraged to behave appropriately and there are no incidents of bullying. Young people report good relationships with staff.

Young people live in a physically safe environment in which health and safety matters are fully considered. Staff carry out routine health and safety checks around the home and young people get involved in securing the home at night. Safety certificates are up to date and regular fire drills take place to ensure young people and staff are aware of an emergency evacuation route in the event of a fire. Staff are vigilant and take appropriate steps to verify visitors' identity to ensure the safety of young people.

Young people benefit from staff who have been recruited through robust procedures.. Criminal Records Bureau checks and references are all undertaken before any appointment of staff is made. The checks are also completed three yearly, and the unique reference number is available. However, the file records do not always identify the level of disclosure or the outcome of the check, to ensure clarity of process.

Leadership and management

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

The home is efficiently managed and effective in meeting its Statement of Purpose. However, the age range of young people is not specifically highlighted. This has not impacted negatively upon young people to date as the manager and staff fully understand the age range of young people the home looks after. The Registered Manager and two seniors work closely with young people and staff to rigorously monitor their welfare, which ensures the good standards of care and the safety of young people. They provide leadership and accountability; therefore staff fully understand the roles and responsibilities delegated to them.

Quality assurance systems are in place to monitor the care received by young people. These include monthly visits by a designated person in accordance with regulation. The Registered Manager also undertakes internal monthly monitoring in line with the home's policies; however the latest report has not been completed due to demands on the home. Six monthly quality audits have been completed which highlight areas for continual improvement. The Registered Manager is clear and transparent about the strengths and weaknesses of the home and has plans for the future development of the service to young people, such as improved consultation processes to gain feedback for improvement. The recommendation from the previous inspection has been addressed, and effective working with partner agencies has secured young people's transition into independent living. The child-focused ethos of the home and good performance to date provides the platform for continued development.

Staff are suitably qualified and have a wealth of experience in working with young people. They have regular supervision, appraisals, team meetings and training opportunities that contribute to their competence in providing care to young people. Although training opportunities are good, the programme has not included training about bullying. Also training in relation to self-harm has not been recently completed to fully complement staff skills in meeting young people's specific needs. Staff comment: 'The manager is excellent and listens to your views; the staff team is stable and we support each other.' Anti-discriminatory practice is a focus of the home and is discussed in every team meeting to ensure young people's needs are addressed individually.

Staff fully understand young people's individual needs and have high aspirations for young people in achieving their full potential. Recordings are generally good and provide a picture of young people's daily lives. Young people's information is securely stored and shared confidentially to protect their safety and privacy.

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.