

Inspection report for children's home

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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 run by a company accommodates four children with attachment disorders.

Overall effectiveness

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

This is a outstanding service that positively impacts on young people's lives. Young people make excellent progress in relation to their starting points and thrive in a supportive environment. Social workers and parents comment on the exceptional progress that young people have made either since their placement or for young people who have successfully moved on. Robust care planning systems are in place and young people receive individual care and guidance from staff. Young people's individual care needs are comprehensively met and there is a strong commitment to helping young people access education provision as soon as their placement begins. The committed, well-qualified and trained staff team work hard to enable young people to reach their full potential. As a result, young people say they are proud of their progress and achievements, enjoy living here and that staff care for them well. Robust safeguarding practice promotes the safety of young people who feel safe within the home. The manager monitors the home well and uses the monitoring systems to inform the development of the home.

An area for the home's development is to evidence that young people are offered opportunities to engage in a wide range of activities.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure that children pursue individual interests and hobbies. This includes taking part in a range of activities, including leisure activities and trips. Specifically, in relation to evidencing that a wide range of activities are offered to young people. (NMS 7.2)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people receive individualised support with robust assessments and plans in place. This results in young people making outstanding progress educationally, socially and emotionally. For example, staff work unwaveringly to support young people to attend their education provisions. Young people are fully supported to attend education both within the company's school and within mainstream school. Their progress and achievements are celebrated by the staff, giving young people a sense of accomplishment and pride. Young people say they are proud of their progress within education.

Young people achieve positive outcomes and are provided with high quality care within a warm, caring, nurturing environment with firm and consistent boundaries. When physical interventions take place, they are for the young person's safety and the recording of these incidents is comprehensive. Young people are encouraged to openly talk about the event and young people feel that staff are well trained in this area.

Young people's health, including physical, emotional, and psychological health, is actively supported. Healthy eating is actively encouraged and young people know and understand the benefits of eating vegetables and fruit. Young people say that they chose the menu and can help with cooking and shopping. Young people have asked to have a 'come dine with me' evening and say they are encouraged to be active. Young people are encouraged to develop self awareness about the benefits of good personal hygiene. This helps to increase young people's self-esteem and self-image. Young people receive individual therapy sessions from trained therapists. Young people say that this has helped them to understand their past and their behaviours. Social workers and parents comment on these sessions as having made a great impact on the positive outcomes for young people at this home.

Staff have in-depth knowledge and understanding of the complex individual needs of young people in their care. They support young people to make outstanding progress based on their assessed abilities and needs. Each young person is supported by a key worker who supports them from initial assessment throughout their stay. Young people say they can talk to staff about anything and find key working sessions beneficial. One young person says, 'I am working through my life history and collecting photographs from my early years and it has been fun'. The home promotes a positive ethos that fully embraces diversity and difference. As a result, young people begin to truly appreciate the significance of differing values and are actively learning to have respect for each other.

The home has a range of in-house activities, such as books, board games, DVD's and art equipment. Young people feel that their hobbies are well supported by staff and that they have opportunities for activities outside of the home. One young person says 'I do not like activities and would rather just stay in'. However, the opportunities afforded to young people are not well documented, therefore, it is difficult to see if a wide range of activities is offered and who has declined or taken part.

Young people are able to maintain constructive contact with families, friends and

other people who are significant within their lives, in line with their placement plans. One young person says, 'staff give me time after school to meet with friends or arrange to take me to meet them and sometimes I go to the cinema with my friends. I really like this as I attend mainstream school and it is a distance from my home'. Staff also take a proactive role in supporting young people whose parents have come from a long way away by making contact an enjoyable experience and often enabling contact to take place on an activity. Any issues which may arise from this emotive area are handled sensitively and supportively by staff enabling young people to develop emotional resilience, knowledge and understanding of their background.

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy sound relationships and interact positively with staff and managers who are warm and supportive to them. Young people know how to complain, both formally and informally, and the home takes all formal or informal complaints seriously. One young person said, 'I have made a complaint here but I withdrew it but the manager still looked into it and talked to me about it'. Young people say that staff talk to them and that they are easy to talk to and easy to approach.

Staff ensure that systems for young people's meetings and key working include each young person in the running of the home. For example, menus, contact arrangements and routines are individually planned in regular consultation with young people. The home also consults on a regular basis with social workers, parents and other professionals in helping to improve and develop the home and on individualised care. This ensures that all parties views, wishes and feelings are taken on board and implemented in the development of the home, their practice and that young people receive care in line with their individual needs. This is supported from the excellent feedback received from social workers, parents and young people. One social worker says, 'I have the highest regard for this children's home. They were excellent at keeping me informed, seeking my views and involving me in all aspects of the young person's care. The care this young person received has allowed them to grow and mature and to successfully move back to their community'. One parent says, 'my child has only been here for a short period of time but the improvement in their behaviour is fantastic. The home consults with me all the time and asks about my view on things'.

Young people generally have a very positive care experience within the home and are making significant progress. Young people present as confident in expressing their opinions and clearly feel valued as individuals. There is sound staff awareness of young people's individual care and support needs. Staff demonstrated pride in young people's individual achievements and progress.

Detailed impact risk assessments, behaviour management plans and health plans reflect that young people are treated as individuals. Their individual needs are

recognised and understood by the staff. Young people have also contributed to these plans. This shows that young people are aware of all documentation recorded by staff and have meaningful input into them.

Young people's needs and development are reviewed regularly in line with statutory requirements. Young people, their parents and staff contribute effectively to a young person's review and this ensures that any decisions are implemented into the daily care plan. Young people confirm they are able to contribute to their review and planned care.

Young people are able to maintain constructive contact as deemed appropriate by the placing authority to families, friends and other people who play a significant role in their lives. Individual plans contain any restrictions in regards to contact and staff record all contact a young person has from their social worker, parent or significant other, whether by telephone or face to face.

Young people in placement are well-presented and have appropriate clothing and belongings to meet their needs. Young people say that they receive pocket money and put some money into their savings account weekly. This shows that young people's clothing and personal requisites are fully met. Young people feel that their privacy is respected by staff and that in turn they respect others privacy.

Young people receive prescribed medication in line with their prescription and medication is stored correctly. The administration of medications is recorded clearly and an outstanding feature is that the records show any contra-indications and side effects. The staff are very proficient in administering medication and giving first aid because they are well trained in medication procedures and all staff have a first aid certificate. There is a strong focus on promoting young people's physical and emotional well-being. Staff proactively encourage young people to recognise the importance of visiting the dentist regularly and/or having annual health checks. The home operates on establishing good routines for young people, giving young people increasing responsibility in their self care and preparing for the next day. Sometimes young people's behaviours have made it difficult to achieve a balance between encouraging increasing freedom and prioritising safety. In such instances the home prompts regular professional discussion of how this can best be achieved in order to fully meet young people's future support needs.

Young people live in a pleasant family home. Maintenance arrangements promptly address damage and breakages to maintain a safe environment. Young people say they like the house, garden and location.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people all say that they feel very safe at the home and they demonstrate a good awareness of the fact that the staff focus strongly on promoting their safety.

Staff receive regular and wide-ranging training in safeguarding. This means that the staff's knowledge and understanding of child protection is continually being developed. As a result, they demonstrate a sound understanding of the action to take should they have any concerns about a young person's safety or well-being.

Young people are rarely missing from care. The home follows the 'missing from home' protocol and young people are reported in line with this protocol. Staff are knowledgeable on these procedures and demonstrated that they would respond positively to any young person on their return.

There is an open approach to complaints from all sources, and staff successfully support young people to access processes to make their views known. As part of this process staff skilfully enable young people to understand the views of others. Staff work hard to protect young people from the impact of bullying, anti-social or intimidating behaviour and young people are clear about their right to feel safe from this.

The quality of relationships between staff and young people is outstanding and reinforces the very caring atmosphere that can be witnessed throughout the home. Young people are assisted to develop appropriate behaviour through the home's behaviour management policy and strategies. Staff are very comfortable with their role of setting clear understood boundaries whilst maintaining a high quality of relationship between themselves and young people. One young person said, 'staff have restrained me in the past but it was to keep me safe'.

The home is safe and well maintained. There are established systems and structures to maintain safe practices and fulfil health and safety obligations. Young people express confidence in the safety and security of the home. There are safe recruitment procedures within the home. New staff are suitably vetted and are unable to commence working with young people until all of their checks are back.

Leadership and management

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

The home is managed well. The provider meets all of the home's aims and objectives as outlined within their Statement of Purpose which is clear and accessible. Young people benefit from good management which is demonstrated in the commitment to meeting the needs of all young people, including those in relation to disability, ethnicity, gender, language, religious belief and sexual orientation. As a result, young people feel that they are valued as individuals. One young person is proud of his bedroom because it is decorated in colours associated with his country. Another young person proudly showed off their memory box which included items from home and the staff had obtained a recipe from a parent to be able to cook a local dish which a young person enjoys.

There are various systems in place to monitor the quality of care. The manager and deputy have a commitment to improving standards of care and recording practice.

Staff have good support and guidance through a clear management structure. Young people's records are well structured and are held securely and confidentially; they cover all required within the regulations. Notifications have been appropriately received by all parties. Young people make outstanding progress because of the good management systems that are in place.

There is a clear staffing structure with clear lines of accountability in the home and in providing a stable and structured environment for young people. Staff are well supported and have regular staff meetings. These are well recorded and cover a good range of information, including the development of the young people and general staff notices. Staff duty rotas and the manner in which staff are deployed confirm that the home keeps sufficient staff on the duty rota at all times. The manager has been proactive in assessing a new young person's needs, in relation, to needing more supervision. Although some staff are being used from external agencies, the manager has been able to secure the same staff to give consistency whilst newly appointed staff are awaiting for there checks to be completed.

The home offers care and accommodation for young people in line with its Statement of Purpose and stated objectives which are understood by interested parties. There is an appropriate young person's guide. The manager and responsible individual regularly consider the running of the home and young people's individual needs to maintain care levels. Young people's needs, development and progress are well recorded to reflect their individuality. There is genuine interest and affection for young people.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.