

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Brian Mcquoid
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is registered to accommodate four young males. The home is privately owned and is one of three children's homes run by the service providers.

The home provides a service to young men who may display emotional and behavioural difficulties and whose assessed needs include sexually inappropriate behaviour. All young people see a therapist weekly and attend therapeutic groups as part of the home's assessment and treatment programme. Young people go to the organisation's school if they are not in college or work experience.

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**.

The overall effectiveness of the service is good. Young people feel safe and are being safely cared for in an environment where they enjoy excellent relationships with the staff who look after them. 'Brilliant', and 'the best home I've been in', were comments from young people who were all extremely positive about living in the home and the care and support being provided for them. The regular use of agency workers is something young people would like to see stop, however it is not impacting on their overwhelmingly positive view about the home.

Highly individualised care planning supports the delivery of personalised care that is successfully achieving outstanding outcomes for young people. There are high expectations of young people, they are treated as developing young adults and respond remarkably well. A calm and friendly atmosphere pervades the home with young people getting on remarkably well with one another, and significant behavioural incidents are extremely rare. Staff have a good understanding of safe working practice and work very closely with the other professionals involved with young people.

Seeking the views of young people and involving them in all aspects of their care is central to how the home operates and is a real strength. Parents and placing

authorities have positive views about the service and the outcomes being achieved by young people. 'Wonderful', 'excellent communication', and 'he is happy there and has made lots of progress', are some of the comments received. The home's development plan is being implemented effectively with improvements made showing there is a clear commitment to the continuing positive development of the service.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- make every effort to achieve a continuity of staffing, specifically to reduce the frequency of agency workers being employed at the home. (NMS 17.8)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **outstanding**.

Outcomes for young people are outstanding. They enjoy living in an environment where they feel totally safe, where they get on exceptionally well with one another, and where they have remarkably positive relationships with the staff who look after them. 'Fantastic', 'brilliant', and 'ten out of ten', were comments from young people when asked how they felt about living at the home. Young people are all physically and emotionally healthy and have an excellent understanding of the major risks to health and the importance of adopting healthy lifestyles. The behaviour of young people is excellent and has resulted in their levels of risk being reduced and them earning more free time in the community as a result. Much improved relationships with parents, including now unsupervised contact is a real achievement for some young people.

Young people respond incredibly well to being treated as developing adults. 'He is growing up fast', and 'he is much more independent and confident', were some of the positive comments received from parents. The educational attendance of young people is exceptionally good and the achievement of some is excellent. Developing from a school phobic to undertaking a high level college course, gaining work experience, and successfully appealing to a placing authority for a further years funding to stay at the home are some examples of the positive outcomes young people are achieving. Young people also make outstanding progress in developing life skills as preparation for the transition to adulthood and independence. Ironing shirts, preparing packed lunches, and assisting with meal preparation are all examples of this observed during the inspection.

Quality of care

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

The quality of care provided for young people at the service is good. Young people get on with each other exceptionally well and have extremely positive and mutually respectful relationships with the group of staff who look after them. Seeking the views of young people and involving them in decisions affecting their lives is central to how the home operates. Good quality care planning supports the delivery of individualised care with young people fully involved in the process and an excellent newly introduced format for personalised plans being used. Young people are fully aware of how to make a complaint should they need to. There have been no complaints received since the previous inspection, however one young person has successfully complained to his local authority and has achieved a further years funding to stay at the home as a result.

All young people have weekly individual and group therapy sessions with a qualified therapist employed by the provider, and have good access to specialist services to meet any health related needs they may have. Young people respond extremely well to the clear boundaries set for them and the high expectations that staff have. Staff work closely with external agencies for the benefit of young people and have good relationships with placing authorities. 'Communication is good, there is a good care plan, he is happy and making good progress', were comments received from a young person's social worker. Young people's educational attendance and achievement is excellent with staff successfully adopting a proactive and supportive role. The home provides an environment which is well suited for its purpose and has excellent accommodation. Young people have access to a range of activities both within the home and in the community.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Safeguarding arrangements at the home are good and provide well for the protection of young people from harm of any kind. Young people feel safe within the home and are being safely cared for by staff who are vigilant in relation to safeguarding matters and who have a good understanding of safe working practice. Relationships between young people and staff are excellent, ensuring that there is always someone to talk to about any concerns they may have and re-enforcing their sense of safety. Incidents of young people going missing are very rare with staff following procedures and working closely with the police and placing authorities to help ensure their safety. Staff work very closely with other agencies and the professionals involved with young people to assess the risks that they present and to respond accordingly. Written risk assessments are being regularly reviewed and make good provision for the management of the risks associated with individual young people.

Young people respond extremely well to the high expectations that staff have of them and their behaviour within the home is excellent. They get on exceedingly well with one another and bullying is not an issue for any of them. Behavioural incidents are rare and there has been no use of physical restraint since May 2012. The home provides a safe and secure physical environment and there is good provision for addressing all health and safety matters associated with the premises. Young people develop a good awareness and knowledge of matters relating to both personal and environmental safety as part of the independent skills programme that they undertake within the home. Fire safety arrangements are good and there is good provision for the management of risk related to activities undertaken by young people. Thorough recruitment procedures for both permanent and agency staff contribute effectively to the welfare and safety of young people.

Leadership and management

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

Leadership and management of the service is good. The Registered Manager is suitably qualified and has extensive experience, having worked for the organisation for over ten years. The home has a good track record of addressing requirements and recommendations from previous inspections and there have been no complaints received since the last inspection. There is good information relating to the service provided for young people, parents and placing authorities, and the homes stated aims and objectives are clearly being met. The home is running very smoothly on a day-to-day basis with Regulation 33 reports providing very effective monitoring and reflecting positively on the overall operation of the service. A development plan specific to the home has been implemented in response to a recommendation from the previous inspection and clearly demonstrates a commitment to the continuing improvement of the service. Improvements made since the last inspection include a new and excellent care plan format, and the implementation of a newly developed independent skills programme.

Seeking the views of young people is a strength of the home and they are routinely involved in devising individual targets as part of the care planning process. Records demonstrate clearly the positive impact that the service is having and has had over time on young people's lives. The home is adequately resourced and is being maintained to a very high standard. The staff group operate well as a team and are very supportive of one another. They receive training which enables them to meet the needs of young people and work closely with the therapist who sees all of the young people on a weekly basis. Currently the provider is experiencing difficulty recruiting staff and while staffing at the home is being maintained at the prescribed level, agency workers are being used to cover shifts on a regular basis. This is not having a significantly adverse impact on young people, however it does not enable the desired consistency of staffing to be achieved. There is very close and effective monitoring of individual young people and their welfare.

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 the inspection of children's homes.