

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Natalie Burton
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This is a privately-owned children's home which provides residential care for up to four young people with learning difficulties who may also have a physical disability. It is one of two operated by the registered person, situated opposite each other. Some children still in full-time education stay beyond the age of 18, when they move into adult placements.

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**.

This is a good service that provides positive outcomes for young people. The key strength lies within the staff team who deliver a good quality of care. Staff are motivated with enthusiasm and fully understand the needs of young people. They seek all available opportunities to enable young people to positively engage and enjoy their experiences by employing strategies to reduce young people's anxiety.

Safeguarding is a high priority in all aspects of the young people's care and the service in general. Young people feel safe. The monitoring systems effectively reduce risk and promote safety. Outcomes for young people are good in relation to their health, safety and well-being.

Improvement needs to be made to signing of supervision records. This does not impact on the outcomes for young people.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure the supervision record is signed by the supervisor and the member of

staff at the end of the supervision. (NMS 19.5)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

A strong focus is given to promoting children's physical and emotional well-being. For example, young people are supported to attend for check-ups with a dentist and an optician. They are also supported to visit a general practitioner when necessary. Staff are proactive when working with other health care professionals, such as therapists. This ensures that young people's welfare is promoted.

Young people are thriving in the staff's nurturing care. They grow in confidence and develop good emotional resilience because they are treated with respect, have their needs sufficiently assessed and their individuality facilitated and celebrated. They feel valued because they are encouraged to express their views, feelings and wishes, for example, decoration of their home, musical instruments to play and food to eat. Young people benefit from clear communication between staff, families, schools and placing authorities. One social worker said 'they are very good at communicating. I am kept well informed'.

Staff work unwaveringly to support young people to attend education and have built up good relationships with individual schools and colleges. As a result, young people are actively encouraged to achieve within their planned educational arrangements.

Young people benefit from a healthy lifestyle. They eat varied, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs, likes and dislikes. The staff team are aware of the importance of physical activity and young people are provided with outings and experiences that support their interests and individual preferences. Young people enjoy visits to the cinema, bowling, the theatre and local clubs. This provides young people with equality of opportunity and ensures that the environment is stimulating and enjoyable. As a result, young people socialise and learn acceptable social behaviour, and enjoy more frequent community opportunities.

Young people benefit from appropriate contact with their families and are supported by staff. Visits are arranged and staff ensure contact takes place where possible. This means that young people are supported to maintain contact with those who are significant to them and this ensures important bonds are maintained and strengthened.

Young people are prepared for adult life and independence. They benefit from assessments that demonstrate the level of support required for a successful transition, for example, using public transport, cooking and undertaking shopping tasks. These activities actively encourage young people's development of the necessary skills needed for life as an adult. As a result, young people have made good progress from their starting points.

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy positive relationships and interact with the manager and staff who are warm and supportive to them. Staff fully support young people to access a variety of social and leisure opportunities based on their individual need. This may require careful and considerable planning and the staff are proficient in ensuring that wherever possible young people's wishes are met. Parents are very positive about the care provided to young people. One parent reported 'my child's care is just so personalised', and 'they are very flexible to make sure he goes to activities'. A social worker commented 'I am very pleased with the placement' and the young person has 'had a lot of disruption previously. This placement has gone very well'. This reflects the view that young people are benefiting from the level of guidance and support that they are given.

There is diversity within the staff team providing young people with a range of different role models and support. Staff have a clear and in depth understanding of each young person's personality, this means young people benefit from fair and equal opportunities regardless of their differences. Staff support and encourage equality and diversity issues in both living and daily care planning.

Young people's wellbeing is central to practice and the focus of each day. Young people are regularly consulted about choices such as food and activities. Additionally staff actively listen to parents about the likes and dislikes for young people. There are forums such as key work sessions which the young people use to express their views and wishes of how the home is organised and run.

Detailed placement plans outline individual needs and highlight times where young people may need increased support, such as when going out into the community. Young people's progress is charted well and outlined in reports for reviews. These plans and risk assessments are updated in light of changing needs and risks. Young people's needs are very well understood enabling staff to respond to any discomfort and anxiety promptly. Staff are vigilant to any signs of changes and ensure young people's health, safety and welfare are promoted.

Staff engage young people in enjoyable activities both in and out of the home. Young people are encouraged to use their time creatively, such as singing, playing musical instruments and going to local clubs. Good relationships with schools ensure young people achieve well.

Young people live in a spacious and pleasant home. There are communal rooms which enable young people to engage in individual activities of their choice or spent time with the group. Young people have individual bedrooms which they can personalise. The home provides a good standard of accommodation that young people can be proud of.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Staff take their responsibilities seriously for keeping the young people safe. There are effective arrangements to safeguard young people. This is because the staff promote a culture that ensures young people are listened to and respected as individuals. Young people reported they were safe and happy at the home. Feedback from parents and social worker supported this view.

The service has not had to make a child protection or safeguarding referral. However, there are policies and procedures in place and staff demonstrate a good understating of the action to take should they have any concerns about the young person's safety or well-being. Staff receive regular child protection training and have sufficient knowledge about safeguarding young people's welfare; as a result young people are protected.

Practice is informed by clearly assessed risks which balance minimising risks without impeding young people's independence. As a result young people are not unnecessarily restricted when going out into the community and accessing activities. Staff support and high staff ratios are help to keep young people safe. As a result, young people do not go missing and there have been no incidents of bullying.

Staff know young people well and can often pre-empt a difficulty or divert young people when they appear anxious. Staff respond appropriately by reinforcing boundaries and making agreed changes to how they support young people. Young people benefit from this consistency. The quality of relationships between staff and young people is strong and reinforces the caring atmosphere throughout the home. There have been no physical interventions, and reflective time is used as a measure of control used with young people. As a result, young people develop appropriate behaviour.

The home follows well organised recruitment procedures and ensures that staff are suitable to work with young people. This means young people are cared for by suitably vetted staff. The home has in place established systems and structure to maintain safe practices and fulfil health and safety obligations. The environment is physically safe and appropriately secure, taking account of the needs and characteristics of the young people cared for at the home. Young people are additionally protected because they participate in fire evacuation drills. This means that they know the correct steps to take in the event of an emergency.

Leadership and management

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

The provider meets all the aims and objectives in their Statement of Purpose. A child friendly version explains for young people what they can expect. There is a clear staffing structure with clear lines of accountability in the home and staff succeed in providing a stable and structured environment for young people.

Staff are well supported within the home. Regular staff meetings are recorded and these cover a range of information, including the development of young people and general staff information. 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. Young people benefit from good staffing ratios enabling them to have the necessary individual attention.

Staff enjoy their work and opportunities to develop areas of expertise and interest. Staff are well trained and undertake the required qualifications. This means that young people experience an approach that is personalised to meet their exclusive needs. Staff understand young people's individual strengths and needs. As a result, there are consistent working practices which focus on enhancing young people's quality of life.

The Responsible Individual is in day to day charge of the home, therefore there is no need for external monitoring of the home. The service does have a system for internal monitoring of records within the home. This monitoring identified the strengths and areas of improvement of the home. Young people benefit as there is an efficient system to consistently monitor and review all records.

A comprehensive development plan outlines the aims and objectives for the year, with clear reviews to chart progress, such as updating the kitchen and a bathroom area within the home. there were no requirements from the last inspection and the one recommendation has been met. This is because all staff now receive supervision on a regular basis, and this also includes the Registered Manager. As a result, young people are cared for by a staff team who are well supported in their role. However, a further recommendation is made, as not all supervisions records are signed. This has minimal impact on young people.

Young people's records are held securely and kept confidential. These records inform staff practice.

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.