

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Gaynor Moorey
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home caters for up to three young people who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is privately owned.

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 **adequate**.

Young people are provided with adequate standards of care, support and guidance so that they make some progress. Care planning and review are of a reasonable standard and promote the individual needs of young people. Such an approach is effective in practice and promotes positive outcomes.

Young people benefit from relationships with staff, which help them to improve their self-esteem and develop a positive view. The views of young people clearly influence the day-to-day running of the home and they are made to feel part of it.

The home strives to keep the young people safe, and staff respond appropriately to unacceptable behaviour. Some young people say they feel 'safe and looked after'; other young people feel they are bullied, which does not stop even when staff have intervened.

Young people live in a home that provides an adequate standard of accommodation. The staff team work hard to provide positive standards of care. The home currently has an experienced manager who is not yet registered with Ofsted; there is no application in place at this time.

Three recommendations are made as a result of this inspection, which relate to the bullying of young people in the home and how this is being managed by the staff team. The management also need to ensure staff are supervised to an appropriate level and that sufficient drivers are on shift to meet the needs of the 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 young people are safe from bullying, and staff and children understand bullying is unacceptable. Staff working in the home understand their role in helping to prevent and counter bullying by any adult or child living or working in the home (NMS 3.11)
- ensure a sufficient number of staff can drive the home's vehicles, to meet the individual needs of all children resident in the home, including activities and appointments (NMS 17.1)
- ensure staff have access to support and advice, and are provided with regular supervision by appropriately qualified and experienced staff. (NMS 19.4)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Outcomes for young people are adequate and in some cases good. Young people benefit from individualised programmes of care and from a committed staff team who work to attain the best for them.

Young people receive support to address their risk-taking behaviours. Young people do not always choose to follow the advice given and involve themselves with bullying and risky situations. Young people have behaviour management plans which guide staff in how best to keep young people safe, while simultaneously allowing them to take responsibility for their own actions. This is coupled with a key-worker programme that provides young people with many opportunities to build on positive relationships with staff to consider why they behave as they do. However, young people continue at times not to engage with staff and involve themselves in negative behaviour which can impact on other young people at the home.

Young people said they do have activities and enjoy bowling, go-karting, and cooking. Young people said they have individual trips rather than holidays. One young person was going to a spa for the weekend and was very excited about the trip. However, activities were at times hampered by a lack of staff who could drive the home's vehicles.

Young people are encouraged and supported to lead as healthy a lifestyle as possible. Healthcare advice and guidance are readily available and ensure that young people receive specialist interventions. Close liaison with the looked after children nursing team allows young people to gain appropriate advice, for example, in matters of sexual health.

Young people have their emotional needs met. Focused care enables them to gain a

greater positive self-view and develop stronger emotional resilience. Young people receive good levels of professional input regarding their mental health needs.

Young people are supported and encouraged to engage in their education. The home promotes education and learning, and young people make progress. Attendance levels are adequate. Young people at the home have reached the end of their formal education years but do not have set plans for their next level of education or employment. Young people are also awaiting decisions of education placements for the new school year.

Young people are suitably encouraged to develop their independent living skills and receive support when they move on. Individual programmes are put in place, which encourage them to develop their living skills at a pace they can achieve. Targets are set for the young people, which are related to developing their life and social skills. Young people are fully aware of what they need to do in order to progress, and are involved with their key workers in developing their independence plans. One young person said how she enjoyed undertaking this programme and was now budgeting and cooking independent meals across the week.

All of the young people, subject to any agreed restrictions, benefit from being able to maintain appropriate contact with family, friends and other people who are important to them. Young people have mobile telephones for their personal use and have ready access to the home's telephone. This ensures that the young people can make and receive calls at any time, including when they are away from the home.

Quality of care

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

Young people receive a satisfactory quality of care. Young people benefit from constructive and positive relationships with staff and make some progress as a result.

Staff are mindful of the changing dynamics within the group, notably when new young people move in. Recent admissions to the home have led to some of the young people finding it difficult to cope with the new dynamics and also the increase of bullying behaviour. Staff are fully aware of the pressures of living together, and encourage young people to behave appropriately when dealing with disagreements.

Young people's views are promoted and valued. Young people say they are listened to, that they can raise concerns easily and understand how to make a complaint. However, one young person said: 'I have made complaints and although they are dealt with, it does not change what is happening and I still get bullied.' The staff team ensures that each young person has numerous opportunities to voice their feelings and opinions. Each young person is offered regular key-work sessions and is able to voice their views informally and on a daily basis with the manager and senior members of staff.

A comprehensive programme of care planning ensures that young people have their specific needs met. Their individual needs are fully assessed and incorporated into plans of care. Such plans match the overall aims of the placement and guide staff in how best to meet their needs.

Reviews of care take place regularly and include advice and guidance from mental health professionals. Young people are involved in contributing to the development and review of their own plans and to participate in reviews.

Staff do promote each young person's education within a culture that supports and encourages learning. Due to the change in the young people's group and young people moving on from formal education, plans are yet to be finalised for the coming school term.

Young people have their healthcare needs met. A comprehensive approach to addressing their physical, emotional and psychological needs ensures young people are provided with individualised care. Healthcare plans are completed which provide a good overview of needs and how these are to be met by staff. All young people are registered with local doctors, opticians and dentists, and are assisted to attend appointments as and when required.

Members of staff enable young people to take part in activities. This approach allows them to develop their self-esteem and confidence and to experience being a positive part of a community. Individual needs are well catered for, and young people clearly enjoy one-to-one time provided by staff. This has been particularly beneficial for the young people in developing positive relationships with members of staff.

Young people live in a home that offers them a good standard of accommodation. The building is purpose built, providing reasonable amounts of space and comfort. Communal areas are comfortable but can be seen to need constant attention due to the amount of damage happening at the home. Young people are encouraged to personalise their rooms and do so with posters and pictures. The computer room offers young people valuable space.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Some young people say they feel, 'safe and looked after', and that they are helped to address their difficult or risky behaviours. However, this is not the opinion of all young people, some of whom raised issues of both physical and verbal bullying. Staff do use protocols and behaviour management plans to support dealing with these issues, but this has not stopped these behaviours from happening.

An adequate approach towards safeguarding ensures that young people are kept as safe as possible. Staff receive training in child protection on a regular basis. Responses by the management team to safeguarding concerns are swift and in line with local protocols. When issues arise, the home ensures that all parties, including

social workers and key workers, are brought together to identify strategies. This approach allows for comprehensive intervention plans to be implemented, leading to reduced levels of risk or concern.

Staff utilise the relationships they share with young people to encourage them to behave well. As a result, the need to intervene physically is minimal. Staff are trained in the use of restraint, and de-escalation is a core aspect of practice. On the few occasions where restraint has occurred, good records are kept and monitored. Behaviour during the inspection was at times disruptive, with inappropriate comments, attitudes and behaviours being addressed swiftly by staff.

Robust protocols are in place to address situations when young people go missing. These include individual risk assessments which highlight young people's risk and vulnerability. Appropriate liaison with the local police ensures that young people are reported missing in good time. Young people are given support to consider the reasons why they leave without permission and the risks they may face.

An appropriate system of sanctions provides a suitable response to unacceptable behaviour. Young people said that the rules of the home are firm but 'fair'.

A suitable recruitment procedure ensures only staff who have been appropriately checked work with young people.

Health and safety are taken seriously, thus ensuring the safety of young people and staff alike. Regular checks and tests are completed, including fire drills and fire alarm checks. Routine servicing ensures all areas of the home are maintained appropriately, including the testing of electrical installations and portable equipment. A very recent burglary at the home which left the staff and young people very concerned as to its nature, has caused the home to review their security procedure.

Leadership and management

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

The leadership and management of the home are adequate. The home does not have a Registered Manager. The manager, who was registered at the home seven months ago, is experienced and displays a clear understanding of the individual and group living needs of young people at the home.

The Statement of Purpose reflects current practice in the home. The children's guide is in an appropriate format. Young people spoken with confirmed they were supplied with a copy on arrival, so they had written information about the home.

One recommendation was made at the last inspection. The recommendation, in relation to risk assessing specific risky behaviour, has been addressed by ensuring risk assessments are in place and altered accordingly with changing circumstances, to provide better safeguards for children.

Staff receive good levels of training and undertake a thorough induction programme when they first join. Staff supervision has not been undertaken on a regular basis over the last six months, which means staff do not benefit from the regular opportunity to discuss their practice and developmental needs. Staff clearly understand the particular needs of young people in their care. They are committed to assist young people in meeting the aims and objectives of their placements.

The home is monitored from within and externally. The manager completes regular reviews of care and is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. Quality assurance monitoring reports under Regulation 34 are compiled, which enable patterns and trends of behaviour, practice and engagement to be fully considered.

In general, placing authorities comment positively on the running of the home and progress made by young people. However, they did comment that sometimes communication could be better and consultation on decisions made about young people could be more consistent.

The home ensures that records are maintained accurately. All information relating to the progress and development of young people is kept up to date. Minutes of statutory reviews are sought, and coupled with the high standard of record keeping, confirms the professional approach in place.

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.