

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Gaynor Moorey
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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 home caters for up to three young people who have emotional and behavioural difficulties from the age of 10 to under 18 years. The home is privately owned.

Overall effectiveness

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

Young people benefit from living at this home. High levels of staff commitment and an ethos of valuing young people's opinions makes them feel that they are being cared for to a outstanding standard. Young people say they feel safe within the home; this is underpinned by efficient systems to protect and promote welfare. Not all young people know the emergency plans and aware of how they are physically undertaken. Young people are given the skills to become independent and to look to the future. Young people have excellent opportunities to participate in community activities and socialise with peers from outside of the home. Young people are given excellent support to enable them to enjoy and get the best from educational placements. Care planning effectively focuses on young people's individuality. They benefit from extensive support particularly in regards to their emotional well-being.

External monitoring does not take place regularly to ensure the on going assessment and development of the home.

Areas for improvementStatutory 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
33 (2001)	ensure Regulation 33 visits and report are undertaken (Reg33 NMS21.7)	30/11/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure Regulation 33 reports are sent to the home on a monthly basis (NMS21.8)

- ensure all young people are aware of emergency escape plan and have practised so they know what to do in an emergency. (NMS 10.9)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people benefit from excellent individualised support which helps them develop their life skills, education and self-confidence. Carefully planned support from key workers and consistent care provided by the staff team helps the young people to achieve set goals and targets and to develop their self-esteem. Young people report that they can share their feelings with members of staff who help them, particularly when they are struggling with difficult issues. The staff team are aware of each young person's preferences with regards to activities and interests and offer support for the young people to achieve these.

Young people benefit from very well planned health care services which includes access to psychological and psychiatric assistance if they need it. The young people particularly benefit from having their emotional health and well-being promoted to an excellent standard by the staff team. Excellent access to a psychologist enables the staff team to offer carefully thought out strategies and support. They are also offered routine medical appointments to opticians, dentists and doctors. Any specific needs are identified in their care plans and the system to administer medication robustly ensures that the young people receive medication when they need it. Healthy living is encouraged by offering a balanced and healthy diet and by encouraging exercise. Specific advice with regards to issues such as sexual health and drug awareness is also available to the young people.

Young people receive consistent support to develop their independent living skills. Individual programmes are put in place which encourages the young people to develop their living skills at a pace they can handle and at a level commensurate with their maturity and understanding. They are involved in cooking their own meals and on occasion help members of staff to cook meals for the whole group. Targets are set for the young people to achieve which are related to developing their life skills. The young people are fully aware of what they need to do in order to progress.

Young people's views are valued and encouraged by the staff team. Numerous opportunities, including key work sessions, house meetings and informal discussions are available to the young people. These forums enable them to speak about how they feel they are being cared for. Young people are able to influence decisions about menus, activities, target setting and their care plans.

Education is promoted to an excellent standard. All the young people have educational placements and the staff work extremely hard to promote attendance. Two young people have been able to work through educational placements and now are going to college. Both college students have outstanding attendance records. Both young people take responsibility for their travel to and from college One young

person said how much they were enjoying college and were glad they had chosen their specific subject. One young person has a educational placement but is struggling to attend due to personal issues but is still supported in going on a part time basis. Members of staff liaise with key teachers at the education settings to ensure all professionals are aware of any specific issues. This ensures that the young people receive the care and support they need when they are at their educational setting. Members of staff actively advocate on behalf of the young people, particularly at times of difficulty, in order to ensure that their education is being promoted.

Young people benefit from carefully and sensitively delivered support. Staff commitment is excellent and great effort is made to give every opportunity for the young people to make the right decisions and to have opportunities to develop their life chances. One young person reported that ' Staff look after us and are there if we need them'.

Quality of care

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

Young people benefit from positive relationships with members of staff. It is clear that the members of staff know the young people very well and are very aware of their vulnerabilities as well as strengths. The staff approach ensures that young people are confident that members of staff will advocate for them and support them with any difficulties. It is clear that members of staff are highly committed to ensuring that young people will benefit from close support and clear care plans which include realistic and achievable goals. The approach used by the staff team ensures that young people are cared for in a nurturing and supportive environment.

Young people's comprehensive care plans clearly identify their individual needs. Excellent monitoring enables staff to evaluate young people's progress and to ensure that care plans are up to date and outline the needs of each young person. This process in turn positively contributes to statutory reviews and means that reports and staff input accurately reflects each young person's progress and areas of concern.

Staff routinely consult with young people. There is a culture of promoting young people's rights and encouraging them to voice their feelings and opinions appropriately. Young people are able to influence decisions relating to their daily lives, such as menus and activity planning. Young people benefit from having routines and guidelines which encourage them to make the right decisions. In addition to key working sessions, the manager ensures that she meets with the young people on a regular basis to seek opinions and feelings on how the home is being run.

Healthy lifestyles are encouraged by the staff guiding young people in choosing healthy menus and by encouraging them to partake in physical exercise and activities. Staff awareness of each young person's background and vulnerabilities

ensures that the young people's emotional well-being is promoted to a particularly outstanding standard.

Other health needs are known and the care staff ensure that these are met to an excellent standard. The approach encourages the young people to make the right decisions with regards to lifestyle issues and other health matters, such as contraception and drug awareness.

There is a clear complaints process in place which is readily available and used by the young people. They are aware of the system and know the various adults and organisations to whom they can complain. The manager addresses complaints promptly and ensures that the young people are happy about and understand the resolution to any complaints they have made. Young people are observed to be confident in expressing their feelings and opinions. Neighbourhood concerns and complaints are responded to quickly and efficiently.

The home provides a spacious and comfortable environment which is maintained to a good standard. Young people are encouraged to personalise their rooms and to keep their rooms and the house clean and tidy. They are also encouraged to be involved in gardening.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people feel safe living in the home. There are comprehensive systems which are understood by members of staff, relating to reporting any issues of note or concern to the relevant agencies. All members of staff have attended training in child protection and know what to do and who to inform if they have concerns about a young person's well-being. Records indicate that this is achieved effectively and promptly and that the manager robustly checks and monitors any records in relation to safeguarding issues.

The home has a clear process in place for each young person in the event that they are missing. This includes individual risk assessments which outline their particular vulnerabilities. Records and conversations with local police officers show that the home reports young people as missing if this is required. The young people are aware of their individual protocols, such as timescales if they go missing.

Staff manage rare incidents of bullying. Young people are encouraged to speak out about any issues and incidents they are having including those happening with other young people at the home.

Staff actively encourage and promote positive behaviour. Young people are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and to develop strategies to deal with challenging situations. Occasionally staff have to sanction young people. Records of sanctions are checked and endorsed by senior members of staff to ensure that they are appropriate. Young people report that sanctions imposed are fair and

are given an opportunity to sign and comment upon the record.

All members of staff are trained in the method of restraint used in the home. If an incident does occur whereby physical intervention has been needed, the manager ensures that the incident is analysed and justified.

All members of staff are subject to a rigorous recruitment process which ensures that all necessary checks have been carried out before they work in the home. This ensures that only adults with an appropriate employment history are employed to work with the young people.

The home has a robust risk management system. Risk assessments address the general building and fire safety. Young people's individual guidelines highlight behavioural management issues and other risk factors such as self harm. Fire equipment is regularly checked generally young people are aware of what to do in the event of a fire. However one young person has not undertaken a fire drill since arriving in July.

Leadership and management

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

A comprehensive Statement of Purpose is available at the home. A children's guide is produced in a appropriate format. Young people confirm they are supplied with a copy on arrival. The Statement of Purpose is available to social workers, parents and carers. The home operates in line with its stated objectives and is efficiently and effectively managed.

Young people are provided with consistent and excellent standards of care from a committed, competent and well-trained staff team. Sufficient staff ensure that both group and individual needs are met. Members of staff undertake regular training which provides them with skills, knowledge and competencies required to meet the needs of the young people. Members of staff receive regular supervision, informal supervision and yearly appraisals. Team meetings provide an opportunity for staff to discuss practice and keep up-to-date with any issues related to the care of the young people.

The manager makes efficient use of established internal systems to monitor and improve on the quality of care and to ensure compliance with regulations and national minimum standards. The manager has a good understanding of the home's strengths and takes positives steps to address and rectify any weaknesses. External monitoring of the home undertaken by the organisation has not been kept up to date and a regulation 33 report has not been completed since July 2011. The home received one recommendation at the last inspection which was to ensure that 80% of staff had completed their National Vocational Qualifications. This is in the process of happening and all of the staff have either completed or are in the process of finishing their qualification..

Members of staff and the young people report that the manager is approachable and will listen to comments and observations. The systems and management of the home ensures that the care of the young people is scrutinised and that practice seeks to improve their life chances and opportunities to enrich their experience of living in the home.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.