

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Thomas Webber
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is owned by a private organisation. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to a maximum of nine young people, who may have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

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**.

Overall the home provides a good and consistent quality of care to young people with some outstanding features. Young people benefit enormously from living at the home where they receive a high level of care and support from a very committed and dedicated staff team. As a result, young people make significant progress and thrive within a warm, supportive and nurturing environment. Good and supportive relationships exist between staff and young people. Young people feel safe living at the home and are extremely positive about the quality of care and services provided and their overall experience of living at the home. Robust safeguarding practices promote the safety and welfare of young people. Staff fully support and promote young people to sustain their educational placements to assist them to realise their full potential. Effective management ensures that good use is made of a range of monitoring activities relating to the quality of care provided to continually improve 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 that the supervision records are 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 children and young people are **good**.

Young people benefit enormously from the individualised care and support they receive which helps them to develop a positive view of themselves. They are also supported to take pride in their own identity and heritage as well as to develop an appreciation of others. Staff demonstrate a very strong commitment in supporting young people to make good progress socially, emotionally and educationally. The home's clear boundaries, expectations, rules and routines also contribute to providing young people with an environment that focuses on positive outcomes.

Young people are actively supported and given every opportunity to achieve their educational ambitions. Young people attend various educational placements, including further education, which are tailored to meet their individual needs. The well-established ethos and routines of the home enable young people to attend their educational facilities which results in them achieving good attendance. They are also supported and provided with suitable facilities to engage in private study which further enhances their educational achievements.

The home ensures that young people's families and their respective placing authorities are kept fully and regularly informed of the progress and well-being of the young people. Staff recognise the importance of young people being able to maintain constructive contact with significant people in their lives. Staff are very committed to supporting and facilitating young people to maintain the level of agreed contact between them, their families and friends in line with their individual placement plans. Staff will also act as strong advocates to ensure that contact is not compromised.

Young people are supported to develop a range of practical and financial skills to develop and gain independent life and social skills. These skills help and equip them to cope with the transition into semi-independent living. Comprehensive pathway plans are well established for this purpose.

Quality of care

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

Young people benefit from living in an environment where warm, caring and supportive relationships exist between themselves and staff. Young people spoke extremely positively about the care and support provided to them and their overall experience of living at the home. The dedicated staff team undertake their duties in a warm, supportive and professional manner. Young people are extremely relaxed and at ease in their company and within their environment.

The home operates an open culture of consultation with young people. Their views, feelings and wishes are actively sought through a range of forums which contribute to and influence the way the home is run. The use of individual key worker sessions

also provide young people with an invaluable opportunity to discuss and reflect on their past and current situations/behaviours. They also provide young people with opportunities to consider alternative strategies to manage and deal with their feelings and frustrations.

Clear policies and procedures are well established for dealing with complaints. Young people understand how to complain. They feel comfortable and are fully supported to raise any concerns or worries openly. The home has received no complaints since the last inspection. However, records show that previous complaints are taken seriously and responded to and addressed without delay. This ensures that good outcomes are achieved for young people.

Young people are extremely well cared for in line with their placement plans. These and other associated documents provide staff with sound guidance on how to effectively work with and to meet the day-to-day needs of young people. Young people are fully supported and encouraged to attend and contribute to their statutory reviews which are held at the required intervals.

Young people live in an environment where they are supported to access the various health care professionals. These include specialist input, where appropriate, to meet their emotional and psychological needs. They are also fully supported to access a range of information, advice and support regarding a range of other health care issues. This includes the opportunity to give up smoking when they are motivated to do so. Appropriate systems are established for the safe storage, receipt, administration and disposal of unwanted medication to ensure the protection of young people.

Young people enjoy and are supported to eat a healthy, varied and balanced diet. They are fully consulted in the menu planning process. Staff also support young people to gain an appreciation of a diversity of dishes. Young people spoke extremely positively about the quality and quantity of meals provided.

Staff fully promote and support the education of young people to ensure that they are given every opportunity to achieve their educational potential. The well-established boundaries and routines of the home, together with excellent staff support ensure that young people maintain a good level of attendance. This helps them achieve objectives set out in their behaviour plans as well as ensuring that they have a good understanding of the subjects that they are taught. Excellent communication is maintained between the home and the educational placements of young people to ensure that they are appropriately supported.

Young people live in a stimulating environment where they are provided with every opportunity to engage in a wide range of purposeful leisure activities both within the home and in the wider community. Holidays and various trips are also organised to enhance the experiences of young people. Young people are also actively encouraged to pursue any particular interests and hobbies they may have. This ensures that young people have the opportunities to develop a positive and successful view of themselves.

The home's design and location is suitable for its stated function. It is maintained to an excellent standard, being clean, tidy and very comfortable. It is also extremely well-furnished and in good decorative order. Young people with the support of staff take a great pride and responsibility in the maintenance of the home. The premises provide young people with excellent communal facilities to meet their individual and collective needs. They are provided with their own bedrooms, which are personalised to their own tastes. All bedroom doors are fitted with appropriate locks. The premises also provide young people with good bath, shower and toilet facilities and suitable locks are fitted to these doors to promote their privacy and dignity. This provides them with a positive experience and enables them to take a pride in their living environment.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Management take appropriate steps to ensure that young people feel safe living at the home and are protected from harm. Staff have a good understanding of safeguarding matters through receiving regular training. This ensures that they are kept up to date with any changes in guidance and legislation and that is translated into practice. These practices ensure that all safeguarding concerns are handled in a way that fully protects young people.

A clear anti-bullying policy is well established which is conveyed to young people. Staff take all incidents of bullying very seriously and take effective measures to protect young people. Clear strategies are in place to ensure the safety of young people should incidents occur. These include involving them in regular stimulating physical activities which positively challenge their energies. This practice minimises the number of incidents of bullying occurring. However, where they do occur, they are promptly addressed. Young people and staff do not currently see bullying as a cause for concern.

Staff take effective steps in respect of all absences where young people go missing. The high staffing levels ensure that young people are effectively monitored and incidents of them going missing are kept to a minimum. A clear reporting and recording system is well established which ensures that all relevant parties are kept fully informed should such an event occur. Individual protocols and information is fully shared with the local police based on the particular needs and risks of young people. These practices contribute to the safe return of young people at the earliest opportunity.

Young people are fully encouraged and supported to develop and maintain appropriate levels of behaviour and they describe the rules as fair. Young people are making significant progress in managing their own behaviour with positive results. Clear routines and boundaries together with the positive relationships with staff and behaviour incentives help to contribute to this progress. Comprehensive behaviour

management strategies are well established and embedded in practice. These provide staff with effective strategies for the management of young people's behaviour. Staff are also trained, skilled and quick at diffusing potentially difficult situations. This avoids the escalation of situations and ultimately reduces the number of incidences of challenging behaviour exhibited by young people. All methods of control are suitably monitored with comprehensive records being maintained. Records also indicate that the number of incidents of restraints are decreasing.

Robust staff recruitment practices are well established which contribute to the effective safeguarding of young people. These practices ensure that new staff are suitably vetted and do not commence employment within the home until all the relevant checks are carried out.

Young people live in an environment which is kept physically safe and appropriately secure, without restricting the freedom of young people. Health and safety policy and practice guidelines are well established to ensure that staff and young people are appropriately safeguarded. Young people and staff regularly practise fire evacuation procedures and the various health and fire safety records are accurate and up-to-date.

Leadership and management

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

Young people benefit from living at a home which is extremely well managed. The Registered Manager demonstrates strong and effective leadership. This ensures that young people enjoy stability and consistency of care. The manager is both approachable and supportive. This is appreciated by staff and young people. Staff are highly motivated, well organised and clearly understand their roles and the expectations placed upon them. They are strongly committed to providing a high quality service and continue to work vigorously towards improving outcomes for young people.

There were no requirements and recommendations identified at the last inspection conducted in February 2012. The manager ensures that any requirements and recommendations identified at previous inspections are always fully addressed.

The Statement of Purpose clearly outlines the aims and objectives of the home. It also describes the level of service young people can expect to receive and how they will be cared for. This information is readily available to placing authorities and all other interested parties. A young people's welcome book and guide is also produced which provides young people with relevant information they need to know about the home.

Good staffing levels are maintained throughout the day and night to meet the individual and collective needs of young people. The staff team reflect the diverse cultural needs of young people accommodated. Staff and young people benefit from an effective on call system to maintain their welfare and safety at all times.

Staff are very well supported to fulfil their roles to ensure that young people receive a quality service. Daily handover meetings and regular staff meetings are held to provide staff with the opportunity to regularly discuss matters relating to practice issues and young people. These ensure that staff are kept up to date in all matters relating to the home and that staff practice is consistent. Staff also receive individual formal supervision in line with best practice. This together with annual appraisals ensure that their performance is appropriately monitored. However, supervision records are not signed by both parties to confirm that the minutes are a true reflection of what has been discussed.

Young people are looked after by a staff team where currently only half of them are trained. However, the remaining staff are either working towards achieving the required qualification or completing their induction programme. Staff are provided with good opportunities to develop their knowledge, expertise and competence through attending appropriate training, including both mandatory and more specialist courses. Staff commented very positively about the range of opportunities available to them.

The organisation ensures that suitable arrangements are in place to monitor the delivery of care provided to young people. The manager also ensures that comprehensive and evaluative reports are completed as part of the internal quality of care review monitoring process. Any actions identified from the monitoring visits or manager's reports are implemented to ensure better outcomes are achieved for young people.

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.