

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Nicola McEvinney
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Date of last inspection	30/01/2013
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home provides care and accommodation for up to five young people of either sex from 11 to 17 years of age. The home is registered with Ofsted to provide services to young people with emotional and/or 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 **outstanding**.

Outcomes achieved for young people are exceptional. They are cared for by an energetic, committed staff team who provide nurturing care to them. The approach used in the home instils positive behaviour in young people, whilst empowering them to make good choices which maximises their life opportunities.

Young people are central to how the home operates, their views are valued and they feel respected and well-cared for. Even those young people who are going through a highly emotional situation say, 'I know my behaviour has not been the best; I know I argue with him but he's one of the best people I have met'. The young people say they have someone they can talk to and they feel safe and are safe in the home.

Young people benefit from having a monthly overview report produced. This ensures progress is monitored, plans kept on track and identifies where young people require more support.

The minor shortfall identified related to the external monitoring of the home and lack of consultation with parents, although this does not impact on the excellent care provided in the home.

Areas for improvement

Statutory 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
34 (2001)	ensure the Regulation 33 visitor interview parents in order to form an opinion of the standard of care provided in the home. (Regulation 33 (4) (a))	28/02/2014

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **outstanding**.

Young people make exceptional progress at this home. This is made possible by the approach adopted by the home to enable young people to make positive choices about how they choose to behave. This gives them a sense of responsibility and builds on their self-esteem which has a significant impact on their life opportunities.

Most young people benefit from their exceptionally good attendance at school, college or their place of work and achieve well. Staff are proactive in accessing extra support for some individuals to enable them to achieve improved grades. This positively impacts on young people's ability to secure college placements or apprenticeships. Young people's files contain school timetables ensuring staff know times for attendance and the home transports young people to work or school as required. This demonstrates that staff value their education or employment.

Young people consider that they do not put themselves at risk when away from the home. The incidence of them engaging in harmful substances has ceased with young people saying, 'I used to be off my head but I don't do it any more'.

Young people benefit from having their health needs well met. All are registered with doctors, dentists and opticians and all outcomes from appointments are recorded. In particular young people attend dental appointments and have appropriate treatment; this instils good routines that they will hopefully carry through to adulthood.

The home enjoys good relationships within the community; which instils good community spirit. Although very rare, neighbours speak to the home if they have any concerns about young people's behaviour; this is immediately addressed with young people making amends.

Young people's contact arrangements are clearly set out in their file. However, the majority of young people are of an age where they make their own arrangements. Friends are made welcome in the home which fosters good relationships with staff.

Young people benefit from the highly organised approach to ensure that they attain the necessary skills to enable them to make a successful transition to adulthood. For example, the older young people have a comprehensive file detailing the skills they need to attain; their competence is assessed with clear evidence of their capabilities. This will ensure they are capable of living independently. Older young people have successfully passed their driving test which enables them to be more independent.

Quality of care

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

Young people benefit from being cared for by a highly motivated staff team who have high aspirations for them and take pride in their achievements. Young people say, 'they (staff) are always telling me that they are proud of me'. The approach used in the home is one where young people are placed at the centre of their practice. Relationships are built of mutual respect and young people respond positively to this approach by taking responsibility for their actions enabling them to develop into socially responsible individuals.

Young people benefit from the concerted effort of the staff team who work tirelessly to ensure that they are attending the right courses to suite their skills and aspirations. They will attend college interviews with them to ensure that they feel supported.

Young people are confident that they feel listened to, they report, 'I was always listened to and my point of view was always taken into consideration'. Young people are encouraged to have their views expressed at their house meetings which are facilitated by a member of staff who will feedback to the Registered Manager who responds to all points raised, in writing to the young people. This ensures young people feel listened to. Although, occasionally it is not the answer they want, it is clearly explained to them why they cannot have all their wishes realised. Young people are involved in staff interviews which further demonstrate mutual respect.

Young people know how to make a complaint. These are always dealt with appropriately with staff working on resolution, particularly if the complaint is about other young people.

Young people benefit from having the aims of the placement clearly set out with an action plan identifying how these are to be met. A monthly overview of the placement is produced which monitors young people's progress identifying where support is needed. This ensures support is focussed. Where young people have pathway plans a time frame is identified where support is required to ensure young people attain the necessary skills.

Young people benefit from having access to a range of services to help meet their needs. For example, the local authority employs two clinical child psychologists that meet with the Registered Manager monthly. They discuss each young person and

provide advice on strategies to support them. Young people can access child and adolescent mental health services for support on emotional issues and the looked after children nurse advises on sexual health issues.

Young people enjoy participating in a range of exciting activities. For example, roller skating, the cinema, going to museums, attending rugby and football matches at the nearby football stadium, playing basketball and football. Some young people are part of a musical group and are participating in a show; others enjoy drawing and film making. Some individuals enjoy looking after the homes chickens which provide them with fresh eggs.

Young people have needs relating to their heritage and culture clearly identified. They benefit further from having staff employed which reflects their ethnicity and heritage and provides excellent role models for them.

This children's home is situated in a pleasant location adjacent to parklands. The display of fresh flowers and pictures demonstrates that staff and young people value their home. It is well-maintained and furnished to a high standard creating a homely environment where young people thrive.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are safeguarded by having effective risk assessments in place which clearly identifies potential dangers with strategies in place to minimise the risk. These are regularly reviewed to ensure efficacy and there is good liaison with social workers to agree on strategies. Young people have trust in the staff and are able to discuss concerns with them and are involved in drawing up their safety plan which identifies what they need for support which minimises their risk.

Some newer young people continue to go missing but this has reduced in frequency. There are detailed protocols in place advising what action to take in the event of them not returning when expected. On their return they are nurtured, staff offer 'a hot drink and crumpets and a nice hot bath'. These individuals say that they consider that they are well cared for and say 'I love it here'.

Young people are protected by the effective links the home has with the local police to ensure prompt action is taken when a young person is reported missing. The missing person's protocol has recently been updated to ensure all parties are aware of their responsibilities.

Young people's wellbeing is promoted by the approach used in the home which negates the need for sanctions. Each young person has an individual incentive scheme that is unambiguous; it sets down very clear and consistent boundaries which are strictly adhered to. Positive behaviours are rewarded and negative behaviours ignored. This creates a harmonious home where young people take responsibility for their actions and instils a sense of self-worth. There has been one

restraint used since 2011; this was appropriate and properly recorded.

Young people are protected by regular health and safety checks being carried out. New young people are made aware of what action they should take in the event of a fire occurring in the home; records demonstrate that when the home is evacuated the response time is recorded.

Leadership and management

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

This is an exceptionally well-managed home; the dynamic Registered Manager leads a team of enthusiastic, highly skilled, well trained staff who are committed to the approach that is used in the home. This approach values young people, promoting their self-esteem, enabling them to make positive choices which impacts on their life opportunities.

Staff consider that they receive very good supervision and training opportunities and speak highly of the Registered Manager, 'who leads from the front'. His enthusiasm has ensured that the approach adopted is effectively utilised which optimises young people's opportunities.

Complaints are well-managed, young people are responsive when complaints are made and behave maturely to rectify the situation.

The home is visited by local councillors each month who speak highly of the care the home provides, although reports produced are rather basic. However, periodically, independent reviewing officers undertake a visit and produce a comprehensive report which includes the views of young people but does not gain the views of parents. However, the Registered Manager as part of his monitoring seeks the views of the young people, their parents and other stakeholders. All speak highly about the care delivered in the home. Ex-residents have written to the home, saying '(name) is a great place and really helped me focus on the positives in life. This place has made me a better person'.

The Registered Manager has a clear understanding of the strengths of the home. This is the dedication of the staff team who are committed to the approach used in the home. This enables young people to flourish in a nurturing environment where there are clear and consistent boundaries. He recognises the weakness identified at this inspection and has taken immediate steps to raise it with senior external managers. A development plan is in place setting targets for future development.

The Statement of Purpose is a comprehensive document ensuring all interested parties understand what service the home has to offer. The young people's guide is in the process of being reviewed with young people producing a DVD on what they can expect from living at the home.

Young people benefit from being cared for by a sufficient number of staff who are

appropriately trained. This is a stable staff team and any shortfalls in the rota are covered by a core group of staff who are familiar to the home.

Young people's records are in good order and easy to follow. They are able to access their files and make copies of their records if they choose. These records are supported by photographs of their time spent at the home.

The shortfall identified at the last inspection has been addressed; when the home is evacuated during a fire alarm test the response time is recorded.

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.