

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC033817
Inspection date	14/12/2011
Inspector	Mary Timms
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	15/02/2011
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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

This home is privately owned and is registered to provide residential placements for up to four children with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Overall effectiveness

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

A high standard of care is provided by experienced and knowledgeable staff who are passionate about their role within the promotion of good outcomes for young people. All aspects of care planning and care practice are highly personalised and well planned to meet the individual needs of each young person. There is strong management leadership with a focus on service improvement and development. The quality of care is well structured with good management oversight of all aspects of the service.

Young people feel safe and talk positively about the quality of care and support that they receive. They are able to identify areas where they have progressed while living at this home. There is a relaxed atmosphere within the home within which young people benefit from positive relationships with staff members.

The safety and general welfare of young people is prioritised and practice is underpinned by robust risk management strategies. Young people's views are seen as important and are used to inform service development and also individual care arrangements.

Two areas of record keeping are identified for improvement within this report.

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
17B (2001)	ensure that the records made in a volume kept for the purpose relating to measures of control include, the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure. Also, confirmation that the person authorised to make the record has spoken to the child concerned and the person using the	31/01/2012

	measure about the use of the measure. (Regulation 17B (3) (f) and (h))	
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Recommendations

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

- ensure that records are clearly recorded in a way which will be helpful to the child when they access their files now or in the future. In particular this relates to providing records which show that direct work is provided in line with the placement plan. (NMS 22.5)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

The outcomes for young people are outstanding. Young people benefit from positive relationships with staff members who are highly committed and care deeply about their role. Young people are confident in the staff who care for them and feel able to seek support and also to raise any concerns that they may have. Comments from young people include, 'when I first came I soon decided that I liked it here, staff are fair and reasonable'.

Young people are consulted in a number of different ways. For example, they are encouraged to discuss their individual placement plan each month with their key worker. Structured residents meetings are held and one-to-one time is facilitated with key workers. Also, an environment is created within which relaxed and open communication enables young people to have their say about day-to-day life within the home. As a result young people feel that their views are valued and that they are able to make a positive contribution within the home.

Young people make excellent progress in relation to the development of self-confidence, emotional resilience and a positive self-view. Comments from family members include, 'my child is beginning to understand and express his feelings which he was unable to do before, they are helping my child to become the mature young person he can be, and to enjoy being himself.' Young people talk enthusiastically about their personal achievements and progress. Comments include, 'I don't need to run away anymore as I have everything I need here.'

Young people make exceptional progress within education compared to the point they started from on admission. Young people with a history of poor school attendance progress to consistently attend planned and structured education and work based learning arrangements. Young people are pleased with their progress and talk positively about their educational achievements. Comments from young people include, 'I did not used to want to go to school but that is sorted now and I enjoy what I am doing.'

Young people benefit from a culture where they are expected to take part in daily chores and are able to learn an appropriate level of independent living skills and knowledge. Examples are, keeping their bedroom tidy, their involvement in planning menus, shopping for food and household supplies, preparing meals alongside staff and laundry tasks. Young people say, 'one of the best things here includes how we are taught about independent living'.

Young people enjoy good health and they take part in a range of leisure activities. Young people say that they feel, 'well cared for'. They understand that physical activity is important to being healthy. For example, they are encouraged to attend a local gym and are encouraged to take part in sporting activities such as table tennis. Young people's self-esteem is also enhanced by their success within leisure activities such as fishing. Evidence of successful catches are displayed around the home in the form of photographs.

Quality of care

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

High quality care is provided consistently by staff who place the well-being of young people at the centre of their practice within the home. Care is provided in line with broad ranging individual placement plans which are developed in consultation with the young person and the placing authority. Children are central within placement planning, care arrangements and risk management strategies are reviewed on a regular basis. Care arrangements take account of individual needs including those relating to gender, ethnicity and religion. Staff ensure that young people have access to the support services identified to meet their individual needs. As a result young people's individual and changing needs are identified effectively and are appropriately planned for.

The home is located within easy travelling distance of community resources and facilities. The premises are well maintained and young people are consulted about and are able to assist with decorating tasks. As a result they feel listened to and involved.

Staff confidently and effectively challenge barriers to young people's full participation within education. For example, they are proactive in pursuing appropriate education placements, they liaise with education authorities and agencies, they advocate for young people and attend educational planning meetings. As a result young people have well planned educational programmes which have been developed over time as the best possible plan for the individual young person. Attendance at school and work based learning is very good and for many young people is a vast improvement from the point of admission. Young people speak positively about the educational support that they receive.

Experienced and knowledgeable staff use every opportunity to provide emotional support and guidance to young people. As a result, young people's understanding of

their personal needs and their ability to plan for the future is enhanced during their placement at this home. Young people are encouraged to develop their understanding of both their own culture and also to become aware of the many different social groups within society.

Young people benefit from positive interactions with staff members who are highly committed and care deeply about their role. Young people have a positive view of the quality of care that they receive. Comments from young people include, 'there is no best thing about this service because everything is good'.

Staff plan and implement effective behaviour management strategies which support young people to develop both improved social skills and also personal skills in relation to conflict resolution. Positive reinforcement is prioritised within behaviour management strategies. As a result young people understand areas of their behaviour which cause a concern and are proud of the areas where they have made improvements. Young people receive an excellent level of support in relation to behaviour and effectively challenge inappropriate attitudes and language.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Staff members have a comprehensive understanding about child protection and safeguarding. All staff receive training and have access to clear information and guidance about safeguarding requirements. Written risk assessments and management strategies underpin care arrangements and the protection of young people, while enabling them to take reasonable risks as an appropriate part of their development. Safeguarding concerns are responded to promptly and in line with local safeguarding children board procedures. The Registered Manager and the named responsible individual have developed strong links with other agencies involved in the protection of young people. As a result staff are confident in the actions they should take should a safeguarding concern arise and take actions to ensure that young people are as safe as they can be.

Young people all report a strong sense of safety and well-being. They feel comfortable talking to staff if they have a concern and are confident in the complaints procedure. A safe and well maintained environment is provided within which fire safety is prioritised. Young people are also protected by robust staff recruitment procedures which ensure that required checks are completed before staff commence work in the home.

There is minimal use of physical intervention and this is used only as a last resort and for safeguarding reasons. The Registered Manager is a trainer for the adopted behaviour management techniques used within the home. As a result staff are provided with regular training sessions in this area of care. The use of physical intervention is monitored closely by the Registered Manager and also by external managers who visit the home. Staff understand the potential for bullying to occur.

Young people say that there is no bullying at the home, also confirming that they are confident that any bullying would be addressed promptly by staff.

The home has developed positive working relationships with the local police in relation to occasions when young people go missing. Staff are proactive in securing the safe return of young people found to be missing. They attempt to maintain regular contact with the individual young person and encourage their prompt return. The local vulnerable missing person's police officer reports positively of the way staff deal with incidents of young people who go missing. As a result the appropriate actions are taken to keep young people safe and incidents of young people going missing have reduced, in some cases substantially, since they were first admitted to the home.

Leadership and management

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

There is strong leadership within the home. The Registered Manager and the named responsible individual within the provider organisation set high expectations of staff and closely monitor the quality of care provided. Young people's views are seen as central and are spoken to regularly by the Registered Manager and also external manager's who visit the home. Staff feel supported in their role and talk positively about good communication and support within the team. Staff training is prioritised and practice is underpinned by appropriate policies and procedures. As a result staff understand what is expected of them and know how best to care for and safeguard young people.

The Registered Manager understands both the strengths and the weaknesses of the service. Development plans have been produced to guide service development. The staff team are proud of the successes they have achieved over recent months but are also focused on further improvements. As a result young people are cared for within a forward looking culture.

Records are well maintained and kept in good order. However, while detailed records are kept of the use of physical intervention, there are some areas where the level of detail required by regulation is not maintained in the dedicated log. Also, while there are no concerns about the level of support young people receive, there is not always a trail within records to evidence that one-to-one support is facilitated in the manner set out in the placement plan. This means that there are times when it is difficult to track the care and support provided to young people.

The requirement set at the previous inspection has been addressed. Testing of portable electrical appliances has now been undertaken. As a result young people's protection is enhanced.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.

