

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Susan Southey
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This home provides long-term residential care for up to six young people who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is owned and operated by the local Children's Services Department.

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**.

The Registered Manager with his deputy and senior practitioner provide strong leadership for the home. Staff receive exceedingly good support from senior staff that enhances their performance. Furthermore, managers consistently monitor the running of the home and seek solutions that promote continued improvements to the service.

Young people benefit from excellent care provided by a staff team who place young people's well-being at the heart of their practice. Furthermore, young people establish positive relationships with staff and their peers that sustain these attachments.

Young people make good progress in all aspects of their development with the practical support of dedicated staff. Young people with complex needs access appropriate healthcare and maintain educational placements. Their attendance is good and they make positive progress when considering their starting points.

Young people receive exceptional individualised care supported by person centred care plans. Staff practice is extremely child focused and all young people are treated as individuals. Young people say staff listen to their views and they have their requests met where possible. Neither the service nor the local authority have signed placement plans to demonstrate agreement about targets. However, this has minimal impact on the care of young people as the practical provision of care reflects the goals set at young people's reviews.

There are effective systems in place that promote the safety of young people. They have robust risk assessments and behavioural management plans that assist staff to keep young people safe. In addition, staff receive child protection training and demonstrate they have a good knowledge of safeguarding practice.

Areas for improvement

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
12A (2001)	ensure that in the case of a child who is looked after by the local authority the registered person must cooperate with the child's placing authority in agreeing and signing the plan prepared for the child's placement prepared in accordance with the provisions in regulation 9 of the Care Planning Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations (2010). (Regulation (12) (a))	31/05/2013

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people enjoy good health and understand the benefits of pursuing healthy lifestyles. Young people who smoke benefit from medical professionals who support them to quit. Young people are able to practice and prepare nutritious meals that support varied and well balanced diets. Physical fitness is encouraged with young people enjoying activities such as rounders and football arranged by their care staff. Young people receiving education in the promotion of good health, such as practiced by this home, have a greater opportunity of taking responsibility for their own well-being.

Young people are encouraged to and engage in a broad range of community activities. Examples include young people making trips to the cinema and theme parks. They have visited the theatre and exhibitions. This has given them opportunities to enjoy new experiences that are both educational and enjoyable.

Young people maintain regular contact with their family. Staff assist young people to sustain relationships by maintaining good communication with parents. Furthermore

they offer advice and supervision to promote positive experiences for young people and their families when they spend time together. This has proved effective as young people benefit from increased contact with those that are important in their lives.

Young people make a positive contribution to the home and are involved in the decision-making processes. They choose what colours are used to decorate their bedrooms enabling them to express their own personalities. They have opportunities to contribute their views through residents meetings and key worker sessions. Staff discuss their comments at team meetings and young people are advised when their wishes can be met. Young people feel valued because they have a voice and staff have demonstrably taken action to meet their requests wherever possible.

Quality of care

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

Young people with complex difficulties have formed exceptional attachments with both staff and other young people. One young person said 'the best thing about the home is the staff; they treat you like family.' Committed staff promote the development of young people's friendships both within the home and in the wider community. One example of how staff encourage young people to make appropriate peer links is attending a weekly climbing club. This helps support young people to expand their social circle and make positive friendships outside the home environment.

Young people have their emotional and psychological health needs met extremely well. Staff have formed excellent relationships with local children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) and advocate for young people to access support. This has enabled young people to receive effective therapeutic care in a timely manner. Young people in receipt of appropriate treatment from CAMHS sustain better mental health and emotional well-being.

Staff are dedicated to ensure that all young people receive the best opportunity to achieve through education. They form constructive partnerships with schools and colleges and seek solutions to resolve issues that threaten young people's ongoing attendance in education. Examples of purposeful practice include staff accompanying young people when they experience classroom difficulties. Staff work with education professionals by implementing written agreements that help in promoting young people's improved behaviour in school. This level of support proves effective as young people are in full time education and attend regularly. The prevention of educational placement break down provides young people with improved opportunities to achieve academic success.

Staff support young people using highly individualised person centred care plans. These promote positive outcomes in all aspects of young people's development and reflect multi-agency plans agreed at reviews. Staff promote young people's participation in compiling, completing and signing these care plans. All young people have placement or pathway plans produced by the placing authority, which identify

how they will be assisted when eventually leaving the home. None however have as yet been signed by social workers or the service. To date this has had a minimal impact on the outcomes for young people as in day-to-day practice staff execute young people's agreed plans effectively.

Staff are dedicated in supporting young people in making successful moves to adulthood. All young people are encouraged to be independent and undertake their own laundry and domestic chores in addition to participating in meal preparation. Those young people subject to pathway plans are encouraged to be more self-reliant. Staff confirm that for some young people this is difficult. They monitor closely the success young people approaching adulthood make in achieving their planned goals. Should young people experience problems such as not managing their allowance or find cooking every night difficult; plans are adapted in agreement with the social worker. This encourages young people to continue to become fully independent, while benefiting from the provision of additional help. Young people who learn the skills they need to be self-sufficient from their carers have a greater chance of success when they move onto adulthood.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people say they feel safe and protected by staff. Staff are competent and demonstrate they know what to do if a young person makes a disclosure. Staff have received updated child protection training since the last inspection ensuring they are knowledgeable about and competent in safeguarding practice which supports young people to stay safe.

Young people rarely go missing from the home or leave without permission. When incidents happen, staff follow the organisation's 'missing from home' procedures to help ensure the continued safety of young people. Comprehensive 'missing from care' risk assessments are in place that provide other professionals with information about the young people and identify potential risks associated with their absence. This dialogue supports young people's safety when they are missing. On their return staff always discuss with young people the reasons for their absence. In partnership with young people, staff explore other ways to resolve their issues without leaving the home and putting themselves at risk. This is effective, as there have only been two incidents since the last inspection.

The management of young people's behaviour is effective. Staff work together to provide consistent boundaries for all young people. Restorative justice is used when young people present challenging behaviour. Young people are helped to take responsibility for their actions and agree strategies and consequences to promote positive improvements. This approach to behaviour management is successful as physical interventions have not been required for many years. Young people show positive improvements in behaviour when considering their starting points.

Staff take assertive action to prevent incidents of bullying. They complete 'group dynamic risk assessments' that identify risk factors and give guidance on strategies to be used to reduce the risks of bullying and managing the group. Although young people say they are not bullied, these measures support effective management of potential bullying behaviour and promote the continued safety of young people. In addition, young people have individual risk assessments that identify areas of possible risk and how they can be managed to support young people's safety.

Staff promote young people's safety by regularly checking emergency and fire equipment. Regular fire drills take place to ensure that young people are aware of and practice the procedure in the event of a fire at the home. The home has developed an emergency escape plan in place to promote the safe evacuation of all young people should an incident occur.

Leadership and management

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

The Registered Manager is experienced and provides exceptionally strong leadership that maintains the high quality care provision for young people. A deputy manager and senior practitioner support the efficient running of the home. They are self-motivated individuals who are proactive in making continued improvements. For example, monthly auditing takes place of all young people's files to check information and establish if records require updating. This process additionally enables managers to monitor the standard of written records. This practice is beneficial ensuring records are clear and staff update assessments regularly. It also gives staff the information they need to provide effective day-to-day care and young people a record they can access should they need to.

An independent visitor regularly monitors the home. Managers address any actions raised following these visits and take prompt action to make improvements. The home managers undertake monthly internal monitoring. They analyse this information and complete a comprehensive summary report twice yearly to provide evidence that helps staff identify and tackle weaknesses. Managers produce annual development plans to improve the service based on the evidence compiled through the ongoing rigorous monitoring of the home.

Staff are competent and say they are very well supported. Young people benefit from the stable, very experienced staff team who are dedicated in promoting positive outcomes for young people. Care staff receive regular supervision and annual appraisals that evaluates and supports their care of young people.

Staff receive on-going training to support their professional development. All staff have, or are working towards achieving the level 3 Children & Young People's Workforce Diploma. Furthermore, managers provide regular ongoing training to increase staff knowledge. They also have opportunities to attend courses that support specialist needs for example attending workshops about substance misuse and self-harm. In this way young people with specialist needs receive care from

workers appropriately trained to understand them.

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.