

Inspection report for children's home

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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 provides medium to long-term care to young people. It specialises in working with four children and young people aged five to 11 years, who suffer from an attachment disorder or difficulty.

As well as residential provision, the home provides individual therapeutic programmes. All such activity takes place away from the home environment. It remains the responsibility of placing authorities who purchase a therapeutic package for a young person to ensure it is appropriate to meet their individual needs.

Overall effectiveness

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

Young people live in a caring and supportive environment that enables them to make good progress. Achievements in education, behaviour and social mobility are being consistently met and in turn providing good outcomes for the young people.

Young people are safe and feel protected from significant harm. They are positive about the care they receive and the relationships they have formed with staff. Young people thrive in a home that provides a nurturing and safe foundation supporting young people with attachment disorder.

Young people benefit from very well-planned and personalised care. Clear and detailed placement plans include essential information that ensures the young people are cared for consistently and in line with their individual needs. Staff work together with external services and this ensures young people get the right help, guidance and support. Young people's consultation is seen as important to the overall running of the home. Staff actively seek young people's views about all aspects of their care. They listen to young people's opinions, suggestions, moans and groans and always take them seriously. One young person said, 'the staff are great I love it here they help me with everything and make me feel special'.

Young people benefit from very good relationships with staff. Suitable staff ratios ensure that young people are afforded the care and attention they need in order to feel safe and secure in the home. One young person said, 'I like the staff and I really like my keyworker and I know they like me, that makes me feel good'. Staff receive regular training, supervision and support and this is complemented by the home having a strong staff team. Staff have a very good understanding of young people's needs and consistently offer a nurturing environment for young people to thrive and grow.

The home is well managed and the manager places a strong emphasis on providing a high standard of childcare practice. Monitoring systems are in place and help to ensure that care is reviewed regularly and updated in accordance with the needs of the young people. Where safety is a concern the manager operates a 'red flag' system, and this ensures the exact processes are followed in order to maintain the young people's safety.

The home has made good progress in addressing the two previous recommendations from the last inspection. Specifically, all areas of the home are appropriately decorated to a high standard and records in relation to physical intervention now contain the appropriate information.

Despite these strengths there is an area for improvement that relates to the quality of some records within the home. This shortfall does not have a direct impact on the quality of care the young people receive, but as a result, one recommendation has been made.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure information about a child is clearly recorded in a way which will be helpful to the child when they access their files now or in the future specifically key worker sessions (NMS 22)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people are making consistent progress in their education, emotional resilience and especially their trust in staff and professionals who offer additional support outside of the home. They enjoy a range of services including regular therapy sessions with psychologists and counsellors. One young person said, 'I really like my therapist and I enjoy seeing them. They help me with my muddles and sometimes they make me laugh'. The professional support offered to young people helps them to understand their situation and begin to make sense of their lives. Excellent partnerships are developed in order to effectively support young people and develop strategies to manage the young people's behaviour effectively. Likewise regular individual key worker sessions provide a supportive forum for young people to review their care. However, the quality of records in respect to some key worker sessions does not clearly capture the good work evidently being undertaken with young people.

Staff support young people to live and lead healthy lives. Detailed health care plans capture individual health need and are supported by regular practitioner assessments. Medication is robustly monitored and effectively administered ensuring that young people receive the correct amount in accordance with their health needs. Young people enjoy a range of home cooked wholesome meals including regional and international cuisines. They are supported to develop a weekly menu and this assists them to begin to understand the benefit of nutrition essential to growth and development. Furthermore, young people have access to good health information including suitable books and posters. This supports young people's day-to-day learning within the home and addresses age appropriate curiosity in a suitable way.

Staff understand that young people's social skills are delayed by attachment disorder and this makes socialising in the community very difficult for them to attain. Staff work hard to ensure that young people are supported to develop the necessary confidence and skill in order to take part in a range of community activities. As a result, and with continuing support, young people attend scouts, guides, swimming and running club on a regular basis. Some young people have taken further steps and have developed friendships outside of the home. Risk assessments are in place to ensure individual young people's complexities are taken into account and this ensures the continued safety of the young people outside the home. It is evident that the commitment of the staff team has enabled young people to take huge steps into the community serving to maximise their overall potential.

Young people living at the home have a recorded range of difficulties in their attendance of education. However, the young people all receive full time education and boast 100% attendance record. School reports highlight good progress and specifically recognise the support offered by staff in helping young people to engage positively. Observations of staff supporting young people to complete homework highlighted the staff understanding of young people and the excellent relationships between them. One young person said, 'I like doing my work when I came here I couldn't read or write now I can do both and I love reading'. The staff promote education offering time and commitment that enables young people to make consistent progress and gain the ability to recognise their own achievements.

Young people benefit from planned and supported contact with family and friends. Staff maintain close links with families and involve them where appropriate in the overall planning of the young people's care. Detailed placement plans ensure that contact only takes place with whom it has been agreed and this is reviewed on a regular basis.

Staff encourage young people to develop independence skills in accordance with their age while not deterring from the nurturing and caring environment young people thrive within. Simple tasks such as helping set the table, clearing away the pots or helping to tidy their bedroom demonstrates how settled young people are and that they have developed a sense of pride and ownership of their home.

Quality of care

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

Young people are thriving in a stable, nurturing and supportive environment. One young person said, 'The staff really care, it feels like home and I think it helps me for when I get a new family'. Staff display clear warmth for young people and this is evident in the ambitions they hold for them. Young people were seen to be genuinely happy and confident in the company of staff.

Young people's positive behaviour and their smallest achievement is celebrated within the home. Individual behaviour management plans and incentive schemes supported by therapy and key worker sessions help young people to develop an understanding of what is acceptable behaviour. Staff are animated and provide a consistent approach to managing unwanted behaviours and as a result sanctions are child focused and appropriate.

Young people's care plans are regularly reviewed to ensure the care offered is consistently meeting their individual needs. Changes are discussed with the young people through consultation inviting honest feedback about the care they receive. A staff member said, 'we talk to the young people about living here all the time we want to make sure they are happy and if there is anything else we can do help. The young people enjoy our talks, I think it makes them feel important, and why not, they are important to us'. The consultation process is viewed with high regard in the home and ensures young people's wishes, views and opinions are actively sought and taken seriously to assist the overall running of the home.

Young people confirm they know how to complain and how to access information to assist them to do this. Information is available in the young people's guide and notice board within the home and includes contact numbers for external agencies. The positive relationship between staff and young people ensures that the young people's views are valued and that they feel confident to raise matters. One young person said 'I know how to complain, my key worker has told me and she asks me all the time if there is anything I am unhappy with. I can talk to all the staff they are really good and they take the time to listen to me'. There has been one external complaint made since the last inspection and this has been appropriately addressed.

Care plans are developed in partnership with external therapeutic services and are realistic and reviewed regularly. Plans are well written and inform the day-to-day practice within the home ensuring the needs of the young people are consistently met. One young person said, 'my plan is to have a family I can live with until I am grown up. Staff help me to think about what sort of family I would like and we do work on this'. Young people are actively involved in developing their care plan and this helps them to understand and prepare for their future.

Staff promote consistent aspirations for the young people. They are fully committed to ensuring that each young person has the best opportunities and can achieve their full potential. Examples of such progress can be seen in the achievements young people have made in education and social mobility. As a result of well planned and managed care young people are developing essential skills in order to maximise their full potential.

Young people's heritage is given high priority and is central to the day-to-day practice in the home. A dedicated diversity play room assists young people to learn about cultures, religions and colonial histories whilst enabling them to celebrate their own identity. One staff said, 'we promote each individual's heritage by having special meals, trips to different places of worship and fun evenings such as quiz nights. Young people learn how to greet people in different languages and they really enjoy it'. Evidence of young people's participation is on display and included drawings of world flags and facts about different countries coupled with age appropriate information on disability and growing up. One young person said, 'we choose a country to look at and then we find out lots of information about the place, people and what they like to do, I really like it'. The home demonstrates a commitment to ensuring young people are afforded opportunities to understand their diverse nation.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people confirm they feel safe in the home and have good relationships with staff in order to report any matters of concern. One young person said, 'staff keep us safe, they watch me when I play and take me to places. I am happy here and feel very safe'. Young people receive a high level of support in order to maintain their overall safety and well-being, as a result there have been no young people missing from home. Positive behaviour is promoted and rewarded and as a result young people are making good progress in recognising what is unacceptable behaviour. Behaviour management plans are in place and take into account individual needs through good care planning and clear risk assessments.

Young people have unpredictable behaviours which results in them placing themselves in harms way. Young people with attachment disorder display behaviours such as hurting themselves or others as a result of an early inability to control anxieties or worries. As a result, physical intervention is necessary to protect young people. Individual behaviour management plans and clear risk assessments identify specific triggers for young people and the actions to be taken in order to reduce the likelihood of harm. Comparatively, joint working with external agencies assists in maintaining a consistent approach to behaviour and this has resulted in physical intervention being significantly reduced in the home. Records capture events and include debrief sessions. Incidents are consistently monitored in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the homes strategies. Similarly, young people are offered intensive support in order to begin to understand and manage their own behaviour

The home maintains policies and procedures for the protection of young people living in the home. Similarly, staff are appropriately trained in order to respond quickly and efficiently to allegations or suspicion of abuse. Staff acknowledge young people's vulnerabilities specifically communication difficulties that may serve to hamper a young person's ability to make their feelings known but may serve to escalate their behaviour. As a result, young people are closely monitored and changes in behaviour regularly recorded and reviewed. Effective communication with external agencies involved in the care of young people ensures a holistic approach to maintaining the safety and well-being of young people.

Young people confirm bullying is not tolerated in the home and feel that staff will take the appropriate action should an incident occur. Staff demonstrate that they are vigilant to any bullying and efficiently promote the home's zero tolerance approach to this matter ensuring the continued protection of young people.

The home employs a robust recruitment procedure that ensures young people are protected by staff that are appropriately checked in order to work in the home. Visitors are appropriately vetted and this helps to make sure that young people are protected while in their home.

Young people live in a spacious and well equipped home that suitably meets their individual needs. The home is situated on a quiet residential estate away from main roads. It has ample external gardens for young people to play in the safety of the home's grounds. Young people have individualised bedrooms that are beautifully decorated and flatter individual personality and interests. Similarly, young people

have access to a bright and colourful play room and a room dedicated to diversity. Additional child focused play rooms ensure that young people have the space to play and be alone if they wish. Comparatively, health and safety risk assessments are regularly reviewed and internal checks are consistently undertaken in order to maintain the overall safety of the young people living in the home.

Leadership and management

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

Young people live in a home that is suitably managed in their best interests. The home meets the aims and objectives of the Statement of Purpose, and young people, social workers and families are clear about the service and support the home provides.

Internal and external monitoring systems provide the home with a consistent approach to the overall monitoring of care. Detailed information highlights areas for development and the manager's action plan details the methods used to enhance the service. Staff receive suitable support from the manager. Supervision takes place regularly and serves to identify training needs and personal development targets. Staff receive good quality training and this ensures that young people are looked after by the most suitable staff.

The manager and staff demonstrate a strong commitment to delivering good childcare practice tailored to the individual and personal needs of the young people they look after. The effectiveness of this approach is measurable in the good progress young people have made such as education and social integration.

The manager makes good use of reflective practice, the views of young people, external services and families are consistently taken into account to ensure young people's needs are appropriately met. The home demonstrates good capacity to improve based on the progress the young people have made to date.

The home employs a strong and committed staff team. Of the staff team, 60% of staff hold the national vocational award at level 3, of which 40% also hold level 4. Evidence indicates that 30% of staff are enrolled on the new diploma, while 10% of staff are completing a probationary period prior to commencing the course. The training of staff at this level ensures that they are suitably qualified in the care and management of young people.

Young people's records are appropriately stored and regularly updated in order to capture the essence of young people at a given time. Information provides a clear history, progression and development in order to suitably assess the overall improvement in young people's attachments and related behaviours.

The manager is aware of the procedure for notifying Ofsted of incidents under Regulation 30, Schedule 5 and has been consistent in the reporting of all incidents occurring in the home. This practice ensures that information is shared with the regulatory agency in order that the actions and outcomes for young people can be suitably assessed.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.