

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Helen Walker
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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 service is a privately run children's home. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for seven children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Overall effectiveness

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

Young people have made excellent progress from the start of their placement to their current position. All young people benefit from a homely, caring and extremely supportive environment. The staff team are highly competent and suitably qualified to provide a consistent and high level of care. Staff promote young people's education and their access to health services which results in outstanding outcomes for young people. The promotion of education, work and college placements is a real strength in the home. Staff always take account of young people's individual and diverse needs.

Communication between the home and other professional agencies is strong and significantly benefits young people. Parents are confident their child is very well looked after in this home. Staff provide young people with consistent daily routines such as those usually found within a family home. Young people say they feel very safe, listened to and consider the home is a fantastic place to live.

To improve outcomes for young people one recommendation has been made. This relates to staff training for those who undertake supervision of contact with 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 staff have appropriate training, supervision and support if they are required to supervise and facilitate contact. (NMS 9.2)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people's good health is very well promoted. Young people's physical, emotional and psychological health needs are met through the home's strong links with a range of specialist health professionals. Staff are persistent in their support to young people in attending all their health appointments. This level of contact helps young people to achieve sound health care routines for life. Young people said that when they are ill the staff look after them really well and are kind and considerate.

Staff promote healthy lifestyles. Young people gain a wide range of skills for independence. This includes budgeting and their involvement in food shopping, preparation and cooking of meals. Young people talk enthusiastically about their shopping experiences and learning achievements. Young people keep fit through participation in a range of sporting activities. These are readily available in the local area, such as at the football pitch in the park opposite the house and sports facilities in the town centre.

Young people's current school and college attendance is excellent and they learn to engage positively with education. Young people make considerable progress from their starting point at the time of the placement to their present educational position. Staff are also committed to provide educational opportunities that interest the young people, such as visits to places of interest outside of the local area. Social workers and parents said the home provides a safe environment and enables young people to understand and maintain routines and boundaries. A social worker said staff engage young people to enable significant improvements in their behaviour.

Young people say staff help them to maintain and keep links to their family heritage and culture. Young people have many opportunities to positively reflect on their life and think about their family and friends. A parent said their child benefits from lots of different cultural experiences in the home. They said 'this is wonderful because my child then shares this with me.'

Young people have considerable support from staff to maintain regular contact visits to their family. This enables young people to retain significant links to those who are important to them. However, some contact arrangements are supervised by staff who have not had training for this role. Therefore, staff have limited understanding of the supervision task and their responsibilities to the young people, family and placing authority.

Quality of care

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

Young people have exceptional relationships with staff. Young people comment on the commitment of their key workers and said 'the staff are great, they listen to us.' External professionals confirm the staff enable young people to make very positive progress in their life and especially with school and college attendance. Young people talk about their aspirations to have a career and say staff talk to them about job opportunities. Some young people said 'I didn't go to school before coming here and

I go everyday now.' Other young people were happy and excited about the purchase of work clothing ready for the start of their work placement.

Professionals involved with the home said staff are motivated and effective in the way they engage young people to keep safe and develop a healthy lifestyle. Parents say staff keep them well informed about their child's progress and always involve them in their child's care. External professionals consider staff keep them consistently updated about young people's progress and any other relevant matter relating to their care.

Young people's behaviour is positively promoted. Staff employ effective ways to reward young people for their efforts. Young people say staff treat them fairly and their achievements are celebrated. This includes verbal praise, certificates, appropriate gifts and additional activities. Neighbours compliment staff and young people on their friendly and neighbourly contact with them.

Young people talk enthusiastically about their placement plans. They understand and are involved in their plans through formal and informal discussion with staff and in key worker sessions. This enables young people to be aware of and significantly contribute to their care in the home and for their future. Staff successfully use information in the placement plan to help them meet young people's diverse and individual needs.

Young people have many opportunities to give their opinions about their care at the home. They benefit from an array of consultation methods; these ensure their voice is heard. Young people eagerly give examples of improvements that benefit them; these include more foods of their choice on the menu. Details about the complaints procedure, children's rights and independent organisations are readily available and known to young people.

Young people participate in leisure activities, both on and off site, which allow them to be involved with the wider community and mix with their peers. These include trips to places of interest and participation in hobbies of their choice such as boxing and other sporting activities.

The accommodation is suitably and comfortably furnished. It provides a warm and homely environment for young people. Young people are very happy living there. They enthuse about their care and describe the home as a 'family home'.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people say they feel very safe in the home. Effective care arrangements enable young people to be cared for safely. Staff have a comprehensive understanding about child protection issues. Staff receive regular safeguarding training to support them in their work. Additionally, the home maintains strong links

with child protection professionals to promote the welfare of young people. Bullying is not an issue in the home. When bullying has arisen this has been dealt with properly and in a way that young people say makes them feel safe. Staff are vigilant and innovative in the way they promote anti-bullying, for example, through games and activities.

Young people benefit from the home's successful multi-agency approach to missing from home episodes. Together with excellent management monitoring systems this has meant that the number of missing from home incidents has reduced significantly. Staff have a positive approach to managing young people's behaviours. Young people say they are involved in and consulted about the consequences for unacceptable behaviour. This means consequences are meaningful to the young people. The staff team are trained in the appropriate use of physical restraint and say this is used as a last resort in order to help keep young people safe. Young people are settled, say staff look after them really well and confirm there have been no recent physical restraints.

Comprehensive health and safety measures help to ensure young people live in a safe physical environment. Young people are aware of the fire evacuation procedures and describe the action to take in the event of a fire. The provider follows a robust selection and vetting process to establish staff suitability to work with young people.

Leadership and management

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

The manager provides excellent leadership and is effective overall in his management of the home. The home benefits from an experienced and qualified assistant manager who deputises for the manager as necessary. The provider demonstrates a commitment to young people through the regular provision of varied training. This assists staff to develop their skills and competencies to work with the young people.

Young people are provided with an outstanding level of care. The manager has a comprehensive overview of the strengths and areas for development in the home. This results in vigorous monitoring of care practice for the benefit of young people. The home's Statement of Purpose outlines the aims and objectives of the home which are met and made known to those with an interest in the home. No requirements or recommendations were made at the last inspection.

Staff understand the diverse needs of the young people and through their work they actively promote positive care practice. Young people and staff are respectful of each other; this is a routine part of the daily life at the home. The home is suitably resourced and employs a sufficient number of enthusiastic staff to meet the needs of the young people. The staff team work well together and are competent and caring in their work; young people receive care from a dedicated staff team. Staff receive regular supervision from management this assists them in their work and professional development. Highly valued working relationships with other agencies

demonstrate staff work in partnership in the best interest of the young people.

Young people said, 'the best thing about living in the home is the way staff look after us, it's mint.' Staff show a real commitment to young people's care and engage with all the young people. Young people were seen to be comfortable with staff and readily discussed the events of the day with them. Social workers said the staff are very supportive to the young people, on the ball, accessible and approachable. A parent said 'I can't praise staff enough.'

Young people's progress is appropriately and permanently documented. Records are kept in meticulous order, securely stored and contain excellent evidence of young people's history and development.

Equality and diversity practice is **outstanding**.