

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	27/11/2012
Inspector	Chris Scully
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This service is able to provide short-term breaks or shared care for nine young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties, physical disabilities and learning disabilities. The home is owned and managed by the local authority.

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**.

Young people are thriving as they live in an exceptionally supportive, caring and nurturing environment which enables them to make excellent progress. Young people enjoy extremely positive relationships with staff which are built upon honesty and trust. The home is making a positive difference to young people's lives and provides them with the tools and opportunities to achieve positive outcomes. This is echoed by social workers and parents who comment upon the 'excellent' care and support provided and how their children love coming here.

Staff are highly committed and have an innate understanding of each young person's specific and complex needs. Care planning is meticulous it is highly personalised and allows the uniqueness of each young person to shine. Staff have high, but realistic, aspirations for young people and work effectively to promote their growth and social and emotional development. Consequently, young people feel safe and are much more able to handle difficult and challenging situations.

Young people's views are central to everything the home does. Their views are actively sought by staff through various formats such as discussion with young people, their parents and advocates, through enhanced communication systems.

The home is well managed. The Statement of Purpose and young people's guide provide clear insight into the type of care and support each young person can expect to receive. Although, the revised Statement of Purpose has not been forwarded to Ofsted. Monitoring of the home is robust although recently reports from the independent person have not been sent to Ofsted in the prescribed timescales.

Records and documentation are generally well maintained though there are some minor shortfalls with regards to records of agency staff. However, these issues do not impact upon the care provided to 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 following a revision of the Statement of Purpose a copy is made available to Ofsted (NMS 13.1)
- ensure copies of the Regulation 33 reports are forwarded to the Registered Manager and Ofsted before the end of the month that follows the month in which the visit took place (Volume 5, statutory guidance, paragraph 3.13)
- ensure the home has a record of the vetting checks which have been carried out on those working in the home in particular agency staff's photographic identification. (NMS 16.3)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people are very happy and settled in the home. They enjoy extremely positive relationships with staff which are built upon trust. Social workers say, young people receive very good care and support, which enables them to feel settled and to engage with staff. Young people are growing in confidence and self-esteem. This means they are more able to engage with staff and the opportunities around them.

Young people are developing a very good awareness of healthy lifestyles. They are enabled to make informed choices about what they wish to eat. This is because of the highly effective communication and the revised menu books. Consequently, they are more able people to select the meal of their choice. Young people worked well with staff to achieve the excellence standard for the 'healthier homes' based on the principle of eating five pieces of fruit or vegetables each day. This enabled them to explore the importance of eating healthily and improve their own diets.

Staff are very attentive to the specific dietary needs of young people. They purchase specific branded items for individual young people as they will only eat these. Young people are encouraged to try new foods to broaden their dietary repertoire and regularly choose fruit and yoghurts for dessert. Although, some young people remain really, really pleased when cake is on the menu.

Young people's attendance at school is excellent. They are collected each morning by their transport providers and taken to school. This effective and smooth transition is achieved because of the clear routines in place, which enable young people to

prepare for the school day. Schools are very complimentary about the home and their input into supporting young people's education.

Young people are actively encouraged to develop independence skills in line with the age, ability and level of understanding. They regularly set the table, and are developing good personal hygiene skills. For example, some have moved on from needing support to clean their teeth to doing this independently. They enjoy the opportunities to go shopping, to purchase various items and to eat out with staff at their favourite food outlet.

Young people's views are intrinsic to the organisation of the home. Consultation with young people is excellent. Their views are sought on all aspect of the care and activities and are of paramount importance to staff. Staff go out of their way to support young people's choices and to ensure they have items around them that are important to them. Young people's bedrooms reflect their interests and they regularly bring in items from home to personalise them.

Contact with families is extremely well supported. Families enjoy positive relationships with staff and are confident to contact them throughout the day to discuss their child with them. They are carefully consulted and included in all aspects of their child's care. Their views are highly respected and valued and are as far as possible acted upon. Social workers say the home provides excellent support to families, they keep in regular contact which means families are reassured that their child is safe and well. Young people's families enjoy the opportunities to attend events at the home, such as coffee morning and the Jubilee celebrations. This provides informal opportunities for them to visit with their child and to talk to staff.

Quality of care

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

Young people thrive because they live in a stable, nurturing and supportive environment. Staff are excellent at building positive relationships with them. Consequently due to their innate understanding of each young person's needs they are able to adapt plans to ensure their needs are continually met. The atmosphere is vibrant and very child-centred. The rapport between young people and staff is simply wonderful.

Ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic diversity is fully recognised, valued and promoted. Imaginative and creative steps ensure young people do not experience any barriers in being able to participate in activities within the home or community.

Care plans are meticulous and allow the uniqueness of each young people to shine. Care plans effectively take into account the diverse and complex needs of each young person. This is exceptionally well supported by the staff's commitment to working in partnership with parents, health care professionals, and others to create a care plan that is tailored to each young person's needs. This means a comprehensive picture is created which clearly identifies their care needs, which are met very well in

day-to-day practice.

Highly effective health care arrangements are in place. Health care plans are extremely detailed and are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain current. The arrangements for administering medication are robust and ensure young people receive their medication at the right time. The use of enhanced communication has enabled young people to have a greater say in the medication administration process and also a means of alerting staff if they are feeling unwell.

All staff are trained in the administration of medication, including rescue medication. Young people live in a healthy environment that actively promotes their physical health and emotional well-being. Young people's health care needs are identified and are extremely well supported.

Young people's educational needs are extremely well supported. Staff have consistently high aspirations for young people and want them to achieve. They are passionate about ensuring that each young person has the best opportunities and can achieve their full potential. Staff regularly consult with schools as to the best way in which they can support young people. Schools say, they are very happy with their interaction with the staff who are professionals and very supportive of the young people.

Young people enjoy a wide and varied programme of activities based upon their specific interests. Young people are consulted daily on what they would like to do for some this may be watching their favourite television programme or going to the park or shops. Young people are keen to tell visitors that they are going to visit friends that evening and are very excited about this.

Young people enjoy a warm, welcoming homely environment in which they are flourishing. Staff have enhanced the homeliness of the building by incorporating various murals and young people's art work throughout the home. Each young person has their own room which they personalise to varying degrees. Each room is designed around the specific needs of each young person to ensure their comfort, safety and well-being. Fixtures, fittings and furniture match the diverse needs of young people and enable them to retain maximum levels of independence.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Staff consistently ensure the welfare of young people is paramount. They effectively enable them to overcome any difficulties they may face so they have an opportunity to lead happy and fulfilling lives. They live in a safe environment where they are effectively protected from harm and have a strong sense of safety and well-being.

Young people are safeguarded because of staff's secure understanding of the home's safeguarding and child protection procedures. This means they are clear on the

action to take should they have any concerns. Staff are highly committed to preserving the confidentiality, dignity and privacy of young people. Extremely positive relationships with social workers mean staff are fully aware of any issues which may impact upon young people's safety or well-being. Therefore they are able to take appropriate action to support each young person.

Young people do not go missing from care; this is because they are effectively supervised at all times. Comprehensive procedures are in place should a young person be missing, which are clearly understood by staff. Positive behaviour is consistently and effectively promoted. This is supported by staff's innate understanding of each young person's behaviours and their potential triggers.

Staff are vigilant and respond quickly and efficiently to the young people's ever changing needs. Staff effectively defuse situations by using simple hand gestures or by simply talking quietly to young people offering them reassurances. This avoids the behaviour escalating to a level where young people become distressed and place themselves or others at the risk of harm.

Young people are safe because staff carry out regular health and safety checks of the premises and obtain certifications for gas, electrical and fire safety checks. Young people are protected by a comprehensive range of health and safety procedures and risk assessments that are consistently implemented in practice. Staff are continually assessing the environment to ensure young people are safe and make amendments to this as necessary; for example, adding locks to the main exit doors for additional security.

The recruitment and selection of people working at the home is thorough and protects young people from having contact with unsuitable people. Young people are also protected by the effective arrangements for vetting and supervising visitors.

Leadership and management

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

The home is led by a highly committed, enthusiastic and competent Registered Manager. Staff are extremely well supported and have an excellent understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They demonstrate a very strong commitment to delivering exceptional childcare practice, tailored to the specific and diverse needs of the young people. As a result young people make excellent progress and feel safe. This is echoed by parents who say, their children 'love it here, it's like family' and describe staff as 'marvellous and fantastic.' Social workers comment upon the 'excellent support' provided to young people.

Staff are held accountable for their performance and their individual development needs are identified through regular professional supervisions. This means they are able to reflect upon their performance and consider ways of further enhancing this. Staff work exceptionally well as a team. They say 'we are family' and 'we all want the very best for our young people.'

They are continually looking at new ways to support young people, for example, the recent introduction of numerous documents in enhanced communication formats has significantly enhanced young people's ability to make choices. The skills within the staff team effectively match the needs of the young people. There are always a high number of staff on duty to meet the needs of the young people.

Staff receive good quality training to help them develop their individual skills and knowledge relevant to the young people they care for. This includes; sexuality and attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder (ADHD); impact of trauma and loss; legal, understanding ADHD; sexual abuse; sexual exploitation and managing self-harm in adolescence.

Records and documentation are well maintained and provide a clear picture of the young person's time at the home. However, while the home ensures the identification of agency staff is checked by the manager on duty, they do not always record this in the file. Also there are some instances where there are no pictures on file for these staff. This is a recording issue, as there are clear procedures in place for meeting with agencies to assess their recruitment and training to make sure their staff have the skills and expertise to support and safeguard young people.

The Statement of Purpose and young person's guide are shared with young people, their families and placing authorities. These are well written and accessible to all and provide a clear picture of the home's aims and objectives. This means placing authorities, young people and their families are well aware of the care and support young people can expect to receive. The home recently revised the Statement of Purpose and made some small amendments that have been shared with the appropriate persons. However, the home has sent a revised copy to Ofsted; this was an oversight on behalf of the home and did not impact upon the care provided to young people.

The home demonstrates a strong capacity for continued improvement based upon its performance and development of positive outcomes for young people. The Registered Manager has a realistic understanding of the strengths of the service and the areas for further development. Monitoring of the home is robust and enables the Registered Manager to help drive forward improvements. The home is monitored by an independent person on behalf of the authority. These reports are detailed, but in recent months have not been sent to Ofsted within the prescribed timescales. However the Registered Manager is aware of any issues from the visits and takes swift action to address these.

Effective action has been taken to address the recommendations from the last inspection. The home has improved upon the recording of any restraints in the home. This provides a clear audit trail of any physical interventions. The recording of accidents or incidents has significantly improved. This is because of the new documents implemented by the home which means all records are sufficiently detailed and provide the Registered Manager with additional information to track and monitor these incidents or accidents to see if there are any patterns.

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 children's homes.