

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Robert Curr
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This is a local authority children's home, which provides care and accommodation for up to five young people from 11 to 15 years with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

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 receive a good standard of care. The staff team provide personalised care with clear objectives; although not all young people experience improved outcomes across health and education.

Staff feel well supported and have good relationships with the young people. Young people have their views heard and have some say on the running of the home. Young people say they feel safe and there are sound safeguarding measures in place.

The leadership team at the home is strong and can demonstrate the early stages of effective outcomes for the young people in residence. The home is well organised with a comprehensive paperwork system in place. Good monitoring systems are in place and overseen by the management to ensure the well-being and safety of the young people. The management of the home is aware of the strengths and weaknesses in the service, and actions are continually taking place to secure improvement.

This inspection identifies areas for improvement around the quality assurance systems and introducing formal and comprehensive support for eligible care leavers.

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
33 (2001)	interview with their consent and in private, such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home, as appears necessary in order to form an opinion of the standard of care provided in the home and supply a copy of the report to HMCI within stipulated timescales. (Regulation 33 (4)(a),(5)(a))	31/08/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure each young person has a pathway plan which the home and young person contributes to (NMS 12.2 and Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 5, Chapter 2, 2.134)
- improve the system that reports upon the previous six months monitoring of the matters listed in schedule 6 in order to enable the provider to identify any trends and issues of concern so that they can continually improve the quality of care at the home; in particular, include consultation with children, their parents and placing authorities. (Volume 5, statutory guidance, paragraph 3.14)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **adequate**.

Not all young people are making good progress in developing emotional resilience but most are growing in confidence and maturity. Young people are very aware of their past experiences and are able to discuss how they feel about this with staff. This effectively enables young people to identify how this has impacted upon their life and how to move forward.

From the starting point at the time of their placement, some young people are making good progress with their education and their achievements are celebrated. Young people are clear about the career options they wish to pursue and have recently attended interviews and secured training places to develop their skills.

Young people currently engage well with the local community and neighbours, undertaking gardening duties and car cleaning from time to time. This gives young

people confidence to contribute to their home and community.

Young people have strong family links and benefit from appropriate contact with them. They are able to visit them independently and sometimes have overnight stays. Young people are confident to bring friends to the home and to spend time with them there. This means young people are beginning to sustain positive relationships with those people who are important to them.

Although staff provide appropriate support and offer a wide range of healthy and nutritious meals, young people are choosing not to fully recognise the immediate and long-term risks of poor diet, smoking and substance misuse. However, they attend their health appointments with their doctors, dentists and opticians. Young people who need specific emotional and psychological support engage with, and benefit from these services.

Young people are being prepared by the staff team for independence and to make a successful transition into adult life. They are in the early stages of being prepared to manage on a budget, for example, ensuring they have enough money for their food and personal requisites. Young people are confident to purchase their own clothes and other personal items. Although the staffs' focus on independence goes some way in preparing young people for adulthood, this is not always formally agreed in the independence plans or pathway plans.

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy positive relationships with staff, which are built upon trust, honesty and respect. Young people say that they can talk to the staff about anything. One young person said 'the staff are great, they are always there for me and never give up on me.' Consequently young people are enjoying a stable, nurturing and supportive environment. Young people feel safe here and have a strong sense of belonging. Outside professionals say young people live in a supportive environment. This has enabled young people to develop the skills to move on with their lives and become independent. Staff always see young people in a positive light and have high aspirations for them. Staff speak fondly of young people and are very proud when they achieve in aspects of their development.

Young people's views are central to the running of the home. Young people say that they feel respected as staff listen to what they have to say and give honest answers to their questions. Young people are aware that their requests may not always be possible but know that the staff will do their best to make things happen for them. This shows that staff are respectful of young people's wishes. Young people are aware of how to make a complaint. Young people say that complaints have arisen and have been acknowledged and competently addressed by the manager. Records show the action taken and the outcomes of investigations into complaints have been undertaken without delay.

Staff plan young people's care and accommodation well. They have a good understanding of the diverse needs of the young people and plan well to meet these needs in practice. Care planning is child-centred and allows the uniqueness of young people to stand out. This is because care planning is specifically tailored to the young person's needs, interest, background and views. Care plans are regularly reviewed and adapted to meet young people's ever changing needs. Staff use innovative ideas to help young people develop the skills they will need later in life; however, formal pathway planning is not in place for all eligible care leavers.

Young people live in a healthy environment which promotes their physical health and emotional well-being. Staff understand the importance of having a well-balanced diet and meeting specific health needs. This ensures young people receive the right support at the right time. Good systems are in place for the administration and storage of medication.

Young people are consistently reminded of the importance of education. Staff have realistic aspirations for young people's education. Staff are very supportive of young people's career choices. They have arranged and supported interviews and assessments at the local city college to secure places. Staff continue to support young people as they make sure that daily routines are planned. This ensures they are up and prepared for their day. Young people are able to engage in a range of leisure activities of their choice but as yet, they have made no plans for the summer holidays.

Young people live in a comfortable, well maintained and homely house in a residential neighbourhood. The home is decorated and furnished to a good standard. Young people are fully involved in how the home is decorated and are able to personalise their room. Young people are keen to show their home in a positive light. Staff say 'it is important that young people are involved as this is their home.'

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are safeguarded because of the staffs' clear understanding of the home's safeguarding policy and procedures. Staff demonstrate the action they will take should they have any concerns regarding a young person's safety. Staff are extremely aware of young people's vulnerabilities and risks when away from the home and plan effectively to ensure young people remain safe. Staff work very well with social workers and families to manage young people's personal safety. Staff carefully and effectively balance the need to protect young people by enabling them to take reasonable risks as part of their on-going development. Young people are confident to talk to staff about anything that they may be concerned about. This is because of their increasing maturity and confidence in themselves and the staff.

Young people are not always well behaved and can be disrespectful of the house rules. Young people are beginning to develop strategies for coping with difficult situations. This means that some young people are beginning to manage their own

feelings in a constructive manner. Young people benefit from a consistent, caring environment in which they are praised and valued. There have been no incidents resulting in physical intervention. This is because of the clear consistent boundaries and effective behaviour management strategies in place.

Being missing from care is not an issue. On the few occasions young people have not returned home they ensure that staff know where they are and the reason why they cannot return, such as missing the bus home. In these circumstances staff act responsibly, they speak to the placing authority to ensure the young person's safety.

Staff carry out regular health and safety checks of the premises, which includes certifications for electrical checks, gas and fire safety checks. Young people are further protected as all visitors to the home are checked and appropriately supervised while in the building. Staff recruitment procedures ensure that staff have the skills, competencies and qualifications to meet the needs of young people.

Leadership and management

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

The home has a Statement of Purpose that sets out the aims, objectives and services of the home. The home meets the aims and objectives of their Statement of Purpose. This means young people, their families, social workers and placing authorities are clear on the type of care and support young people can expect to receive.

The home is lead and managed by a qualified and committed Registered Manager, assistant manager and group leaders. The management team demonstrate a strong commitment to delivering tailored care and support to young people's individual needs. The effectiveness of this approach is evident in the progress young people are beginning to make across all areas of their development.

The manager has a clear and realistic understanding of the strengths and areas for further development. The manager and the independent person for the organisation monitor the home on a monthly basis and report back on any areas for development. Although the reports from the independent visitor make clear recommendations, there is no consistent evidence that young people are consulted as part of these visits. Therefore it is not clear whether young people can actively contribute about the quality of their care during independent visits. The managers within the home consult with social workers and family members as part of their monitoring. This is much improved and provides a wider view on how the home is perceived. However, these views are not incorporated into the regulation 34 six monthly quality of care report to enable to managers to clarify any trends or issues, so that they can continually improve the quality of care they are providing.

Records and documentation are well maintained and secure. They contain up-to-date written information which provides a comprehensive picture of young people's progress, development and needs. Clear systems are in place to ensure all

appropriate persons are notified of any significant events. This ensures transparency and keeps young people safe.

Young people are cared for by a competent and committed staff team. Staff have a wide range of skills and experiences which effectively meet the needs of young people. Staff and young people without exception are very complimentary about the Registered Manager and say that they feel well supported. Regular opportunities are in place to meet as a team. Staff feel it is important that young people are able to contribute to their discussions. Consequently, young people forward their views to every staff meeting to raise any issues. The manager provides direct feedback to young people which promotes transparency and means young people continue to have a say in how the home is managed and organised.

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.