

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Catherine Ross / Katarina Djordjevic
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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 children's home is owned and managed by the local authority. It can accommodate up to four young people aged between 11 to 17 years. The home provides care for young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties.

The home is a detached property amongst similar residential properties. The young people have single bedrooms with bathrooms located on the ground and first floor. The lounge, dining area, kitchen and staff office are on the ground floor. There is a garden to the rear of the property including a fully equipped gymnasium. Car parking is at the front of the property. There is easy access to local shops and leisure facilities and there is access to public transport.

Overall effectiveness

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

Young people make sound progress in relation to their starting points. Robust care planning systems are in place and young people receive suitable individual care and guidance from staff. Young people's individual care needs are well met and there is a commitment to helping young people to have their voices heard and challenge decisions they feel are unfair.

The committed, stable and well trained staff team work hard to help young people to reach their full potential. Young people's health needs are prioritised and they are enabled to access health services without delay. The management team understands the strengths and areas of further development for the home. Staff are committed to supporting and enabling young people to develop their skills and socially acceptable behaviour. There are some areas for the home to improve; these relate to facilitating plans for contact for young people more quickly, ensuring medication is recorded consistently and considering alternatives to methods of risk reduction which make the home have an institutional look.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure appropriate forms of contact are promoted and facilitated for each child in

a timely fashion (NMS 9.1)

- ensure there is a written record of all medication given to children during their placement (NMS 6.15)
- ensure risk reduction does not lead to an institutional feel or look; this is in particular reference to window restrictors and safety bar at the front of the property. (NMS 10.3)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people benefit from individualised support which help them develop a positive self view. Young people develop an understanding of their own identities through supportive staff and access to personal interests in the community such as horse-riding or biking. Young people's wishes about their placement and their futures are listened to and staff support them in understanding why it may not be possible to act on their wishes in all cases. Young people acquire adequate practical life skills to prepare them for adult life and young people continue to be supported by staff when they have reached independence.

Young people are helped to understand the importance of healthy lifestyles through key working sessions and individual support is provided to young people on issues such as relationships and sexual health. This information is shared sensitively and in line with each young person's development and understanding. This means young people gain appropriate knowledge to help them make informed choices. Young people enjoy a balanced diet and active lifestyles which keeps them healthy. Young people access suitable medical and mental health services, which could include confidential appointments with their own doctor and other health care providers. This means they receive personalised and age-appropriate physical, emotional and psychological healthcare.

Young people enjoy opportunities to plan for the group's activities and running of the home. Young people see the results of their ideas, which includes their own choice of activity or decoration of rooms. Each young person has an education and activity plan in place. This gives them the opportunity to have new experiences, learn new skills and grow in confidence. Young people are actively encouraged to attend educational provision and attendance in most cases is good.

Young people are able to maintain constructive contact with families, friends and other people who play a significant role in their lives. Staff support young people to maintain contact with their family and significant others; however plans to support young people in maintaining contact with people significant in their lives are not always facilitated quickly enough which could lead to young people engaging in risky behaviour to make contact.

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy sound relationships with each other and interact positively with staff and managers who are warm and supportive to them. Young people know how to complain, both formally and informally and have access to an advocacy service which enables young people to have their voices heard and actively challenge decisions which have been made about their lives. Young people feel their views are sought and can influence the running of the home, for example, through young people's meetings, menus are planned in regular consultation with young people.

Young people generally have a positive care experience within the home and are making sound progress. There is good staff awareness of young people's individual care and support needs. Detailed placement planning reflects that young people are treated as individuals; their individual needs are recognised and understood by the staff. Young people are encouraged to be part of their care planning. This enables individualised care planning in which equality and diversity issues can be positively addressed.

Staff receive regular training in behaviour management techniques. Positive behaviour strategies, risk assessments and individualised care planning is used by staff to support young people in developing skills in managing their behaviour. As a result of this, physical intervention is rarely used and the behaviour of young people is generally appropriate.

Young people's health needs are prioritised and young people have regular access to health services specific to their needs. In the event of serious concerns about the health of young people, staff are able support young people in accessing health care quickly. Medication is securely stored within the home and designated staff are trained to administer medication safely. Records are maintained for the administration of medication, however record keeping is not always consistent meaning records are not always accurate which could lead to errors in the administration of medication.

Young people enjoy healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs. They have opportunities to plan meals at their weekly residents meeting and can shop for and help prepare these meals. Young people have the opportunity to eat meals at the table and share social occasions. Young people have ready access to fruit and are encouraged to make their own snacks or drinks for themselves and others during the day, promoting young people's independence. Young people are encouraged to try food they haven't tasted before increasing young people's awareness of diverse ranges of food.

Young people benefit from a staff group who have a well developed understanding and sensitive approach to their individual needs regarding health, disability, ethnicity and family backgrounds. Young people are able to pursue their particular interests and are engaged in purposeful and enjoyable activities at home and in the community. Young people generally feel that their privacy is respected by staff. The atmosphere inside the home is that of a family home however, bars placed across windows as a risk reduction strategy and a safety rail outside the property lead to an

institutional feel and look which does not create a pleasant environment for young people to live in.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people confirm that they feel safe and protected within the home and their privacy is respected. The systems in place to promote the safety and welfare of young people work well and managers act swiftly if any safeguarding concerns or allegations arise providing effective protection for young people. Young people confirm they can openly talk to their carers over their worries and concerns. Staff care about young people's welfare and act upon their wishes where appropriate. The home has clear risk management strategies in place, which recognise the needs of young people and provide suitable strategies to manage any associated risks. The staff group is skilled at recognising and managing risk taking behaviour without delay.

When young people go missing, staff are able to demonstrate what action they would take to keep young people safe. Appropriate policies and protocols are in place with local police ensuring young people are protected. Young people do not identify bullying as a problem at the home. Staff are vigilant with regard to relationships within the home and supervision levels mean that there are limited opportunities for bullying or inappropriate relationships to develop. Bullying is discussed at residents meetings and individually which support young people in being protected from this behaviour.

Records show appropriate staff recruitment procedures are in place and visitors are appropriately chaperoned meaning young people are protected from unsuitable people having access to the home. Young people live in a home that provides physical safety and security. There are no major hazards to compromise welfare. The home is adequately resourced and managers ensure that health and safety requirements are met meaning young people live in a safe environment which meet their needs. For example, fire safety requirements including fire drills are carried out at appropriate intervals meaning young people and staff know what to do in the event of a fire.

Leadership and management

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

The home is effectively managed. The provider meets all of the aims and objectives in their Statement of Purpose which is clear and accessible. There are various systems to monitor quality of care which includes monthly visits by a designated person. Regulation 33 and 34 monitoring is regularly carried out and young people are consulted during monitoring visits. Staff feel they are well supported within the home.

Young people enjoy the stability of a consistent staff team and experienced management. Staff are sufficient in number and qualifications to meet the needs of the young people. Staff receive regular training and this is planned to meet both the needs of the young people resident at the home and the staff development needs. Managers keep up to date with new legislation and practice developments and share this with staff, for example, the new National Minimum Standards 2011. Young people benefit from a staff team which is enabled to provide good quality and safe care.

The management show an appropriate and sound capacity to improve the outcomes for young people. At the previous inspection three actions were raised. All three actions have been met. The procedure and record keeping in relation to young people going missing from care has improved meaning young people who do go missing are protected as far as possible. Any unnecessary risks to the health and safety of young people are now identified and risk assessments are reviewed accordingly meaning young people are helped to keep safe within the home. Staff are aware of how records in relation to methods of control should be kept meaning young people are supported to maintain positive behaviour.

At the previous inspection, four recommendations were raised. All four recommendations have been met. A new system is in place for recording all visits to the home meaning young people are protected from unsuitable people having access to the home. Staff have considered young people's wishes for privacy in relation to access to their bedrooms and young people confirm their privacy is respected. Risk assessments have been updated in relation to risk of bullying and young people confirm they feel protected from bullying. Placement plans now show a greater understanding of young people's cultural, religious, language and racial needs meaning young people receive personalised care that promotes all aspects of their individual identity.

Equality and diversity practice is **satisfactory**.