

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	31/08/2012
Inspector	Deirdra Keating
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	01/03/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This home provides care and accommodation for seven young people from the age of 11 to 18 years old. The home looks after young people who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. It is owned 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 in this home benefit from highly personalised care delivered by a dedicated and experienced staff team. Relationships between young people and staff are good and based on mutual trust. The home provides holistic care, ensuring that young people continue to progress and develop in all areas of their lives.

Young people say they feel safe and staff address proactively any concerns they have. Young people are supported extremely well to understand their responsibilities and develop their independent living skills. They fully recognise the positive impact the quality of care has had on their lives and the extent to which staff support them. Social workers also recognise this and summarise the outcomes for young people they have placed. They comment, 'Tremendous work done by staff. This young person is a great credit to staff, I am very proud of her at the last review she is very positive about her future.'

The shortfalls identified during the inspection relate to the décor on the first floor, administration of medication, Regulation 34 reporting and staff interpretation of certain organisational policy. These, however, do not impact negatively on the safety of young people or the good quality of care provided.

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
31 (2001)	ensure that all parts of the children's home used by children are kept clean and reasonably decorated (Regulation 31 (2) (e))	10/12/2012
34 (2001)	establish a system for the review of quality of care to provide for consultation with children accommodated in the home, their parents and placing authorities. (Regulation 34 (3) (1))	10/12/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure that all staff's work is consistent with the home's policies and procedures (NMS 21.4)
- ensure that prescribed medications are given in accordance with guidance. (NMS 6.14)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

The outcomes for young people are very good. Young people have strong and lasting attachments to staff. This has helped young people accept their backgrounds and achieve positive outcomes in many areas of their lives. Comments from young people include, 'Thanks for being there when I was down' and 'They have helped me so much I honestly don't know where I would be without the staff here.' Young people greet staff who have been on leave with genuine enthusiasm. They gravitate to the office where managers are based and demonstrate their feelings of affection with hugs. Staff reinforce the quality of the relationships with young people. Staff summarise the relationships. They say, 'The best thing about working here, it's the children and staff, it can be so rewarding, taking children out and enjoying quality one-to-one time.'

Young people attend school regularly and have made significant achievements in their learning in relation to their individual starting points. This has helped build their confidence and self-esteem. Their health needs are met with routine appointments with health professionals and support is identified to address specific health needs. Staff bring their expertise to the home to help young people develop more active

lifestyles and promote sensible and healthy eating options. This helps young people feel supported in addressing their health issues and teaches them how to take responsibility for their own healthy lifestyles.

Young people contribute positively to the local community. They help with annual events and celebrations and actively take part in fundraising for the home and local charities. This proactive involvement in the community has helped young people understand people's differences, build relationships with neighbours and appreciate the value of helping others.

Young people benefit greatly from the home's locality to family and friends. Families visit the home and are warmly welcomed by staff. Staff are supportive and hospitable and, subsequently, feedback from parents is very positive. This helps young people know that their families are equally valued and accepted.

Staff support young people well towards gaining the necessary skills to help them in their adult lives. Young people are supported to make decisions regarding moving arrangements. This means that, while making life-changing decisions, young people benefit from continuous support with both the practical and emotional aspects of leaving the home.

Quality of care

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

Staff provide support that is planned well and tailored sensitively to young people's needs. Consequently, the majority of young people behave well and show respect for staff and for one another. There are some incidents, although there are very few sanctions. Those that are recorded show reflection and remorse from young people who are encouraged to record their views. The staff promote positive reinforcement and open communication. Comments made by young people to staff include 'We are truly sorry about our behaviours lately we will knuckle down'.

Staff value young people's ideas and seek these regularly through children's meetings, discussions and spending time with young people. Young people report that they are able to contribute their ideas and these are used to inform activity plans, décor and menus. Young people enjoy a wide range of both regular and spontaneous activities; they say there is plenty on offer and always something to do. Photographs around the home depict young people thoroughly enjoying a range of events with staff. This contributes to young people building happy memories of the home and enjoying new experiences. Young people know how to make their feelings known and complain. Grumbles are always treated seriously; staff hear young people and respond quickly. The complaints process is quick and efficiently managed. This has empowered young people who know how the system works and use the process appropriately.

Staff provide carefully in line with placement plans that have been devised with young people. These are updated with daily events and provide guidance and

background information for staff. This helps all staff provide individualised care in line with young people's needs. Young people's general health needs are supported well regarding access to health professionals and identifying and planning specialised support. Staff evaluate information from health appointments and help young people start to take responsibility for their health needs. Young people who are able take responsibility for taking medicines and medication is administered, when required. Medication is stored safely and records include all information. However, the actual systems relating to the administration are not sufficiently robust.

The home is a large detached house close to the sea. The ground floor has ample space and communal areas have been refurbished and painted promoting a fresh and homely feel. Young people have single bedrooms with en-suite bathrooms. While storage and space are adequate, some of the bedrooms are not decorated or maintained to a high enough standard.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people feel safe at the home. There are some recent incidents involving the dynamics of the group that have influenced young people's behaviours. This has been addressed proactively and changes are underway. Staff are responsive and quick to identify support. Young people report that, while there have been incidences, these are few and staff are highly vigilant. This approach helps them feel protected and safe.

There are very few incidents of young people missing from the home. Despite this, relationships with community police and safeguarding services are established and provide extra safeguards for young people. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to the protection of children. Good systems and training ensure that, in the event of a concern about a young person, staff are secure in their knowledge and responses. This helps protect young people from potential harm.

Young people's behaviour is good. Staff provide good role models and provide an empathetic and understanding approach while maintaining safe boundaries. This is based on a comprehensive understanding of each young person as a unique individual. Staff provide clear boundaries and sanctions in response to young people's actions. Sanctions are meaningful and relative; this gives young people opportunities to learn from their behaviours and reflect on their actions.

Staff are recruited safely by robust procedures and rigorous interviews and checks. Managers often employ relief staff who have previously worked at the home. This means that employed staff have demonstrated professional practice that reflects the culture and ethos of the home. Consequently, young people are cared for by safe staff that are carefully chosen. This helps young people feel secure and benefit from good continuity of care.

The environment is maintained safely; domestic appliances are checked regularly and

fire prevention equipment is in place. Young people are taught about safe evacuation from the building. This teaches young people about how to react safely in the event of a fire.

Leadership and management

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

The home is managed by an established permanent manager who leads a cohesive team of dedicated staff. There is a long-serving staff team that shares a clear vision for the home. This provides consistency and security for young people.

Improvements have been made to the home within the budgetary constraints available. Staff have worked hard on decoration and soft furnishings following suggestions from young people. This has raised the standard of décor on the ground floor. In term of outcomes for young people, staff have worked tirelessly to find new placements where required. This places the individual need of each young person first and foremost in their quest for the right placement. This has benefitted young people reaching adulthood and those requiring a more specialised care placement.

The requirement raised at the last interim inspection has been addressed and the development plan indicates further improvements to the environment. The manager is aware of the strengths and weakness and monitors the home carefully. This includes the use of independent monitoring reports and the manager's review of care, although the review of care does not include consultation with parents, children and placing authorities, as required.

The calibre and quality of the staff team is a key strength of the home. Their approach to young people is consistent, warm and genuine. Staff receive good training for their roles including regular supervision. However, there are some aspects of staff practice regarding smoking that contradict written guidance and organisational policy.

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.