

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Stephen Smith
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This local authority home provides care and accommodation for up to three young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service 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**.

This is a well-managed home with an experienced, well trained and supervised staff team. The manager leads the home effectively and monitors its activities well. This ensures that young people who live at the home are provided with a good quality of care.

The home is good at helping young people to keep safe. It works well in situations in which young people go missing from the home or are absent without authority. It promotes and improves their safety when they are away from the home and reduces the frequency of this behaviour.

Placement planning for young people is effective and young people are consulted about and involved in the care provided to them. The home provides young people with good support for their health and education. Staff have very good relationships with young people and their families. This helps them maintain positive contact and good relationships. Although the home provides young people with a good quality of care, the outcomes for young people are not always so positive. Young people's educational attendance and achievement are, at times, hampered by their lack of ability to engage with educational services or by a lack of service provision from external agencies. In the same way, although the home works hard to support older young people to prepare for a transition into adulthood, action is not always taken early enough to enable this to be a smooth and anxiety free experience for them.

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
17B (2001)	ensure where a measure of restraint is used on a child the record must include details of any methods used to avoid the need to use that measure. (Regulation 17B(4)(b))	09/05/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the written development plan for the future of the home identifies any planned changes or confirms the continuation of the home's current operation and resource. Specifically, that it is sufficiently detailed and specific. (NMS 15.2)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people's life chances improve as a result of the care they receive at this home.

Health outcomes for young people are good. They are able to access all the primary health services they require and receive the encouragement they need to attend appointments. Young people access any specialist health provision they require and benefit from good support that improves their emotional and sexual health.

Young people maintain and build on the relationships with their family and friends while living at the home. This helps them retain their heritage and the key relationships they will require in later life. Young people are able to develop and maintain friendships outside the home and can have friends to visit or go and stay overnight with them and their safety is well monitored in these situations.

Young people's attendance and achievement in education improves during their stay at the home. Sometimes this improvement is significant but their attendance and achievement does not always improve as much as it could. Sometimes this is because of the way in which young people react to the support provided but in other situations young people are not sufficiently well supported by wider services. Older young people who have left school but are not in employment do not receive the support with their continuing education that they should.

Young people who are getting ready to move into adulthood and leave the home do not always receive the support they need to assure this move is a positive and planned experience. This can lead to anxieties and uncertainties for young people which could impair their ability to make a successful and smooth transition into greater independence.

Quality of care

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

Young people living at the home get on well with each other and with the staff. Relationships between staff and young people are open, honest and respectful. This helps young people to manage their own behaviour appropriately. Sanctions are infrequent and the staff have not restrained any young person in the last 11 months. Monitoring of children's behaviour and the use of sanctions is good. This helps to ensure that methods used to manage children's behaviour are effective.

Young people have a significant say in how the home is run. There is an ethos of ongoing discussion between the manager, staff and young people. Each young person also has a key worker to ensure that they have opportunity to express their views. Regular meetings between young people and their key workers takes place. These are focused on any key issues young people are facing or any problems they have. They also reflect and acknowledge and achievements made. This involvement of young people in their own care and the running of the home ensures that their views are heard and helps them learn how to make good decisions about their lives and future.

Placement planning in the home is very good. The home ensures that it receives comprehensive information about young people before they are placed. The reasons for the placement are clearly identified which helps ensure that placement plans focus on achieving the desired outcomes for the young people. The home develops strong working relationships with the families of the young people who live there. This further improves care planning and delivery and improves the quality of the care provided to young people. Where care needs are identified, the home works closely with young people's social workers and external agencies to have them addressed. For example, the home has advocated strongly for one young person in a situation in which planning for the young person's future living arrangements has not been as proactive as it should have been. Cultural needs are also made clear and the staff show a clear commitment to enabling young people to gain their own sense of identity.

The home provides young people with good support for their health. Staff members are trained to administer first aid should this be necessary and in the safe administration of medication. Any medication needed by young people is well managed and safely stored. Young people are able to self-administer medication, such as painkillers, following an assessment of any risks involved. The home provides young people with a lot of support and advice regarding their emotional and sexual health, this can be provided through formal educational programmes and the home

works effectively with external agencies in this area.

The manager and staff of the home work hard to support young people with their education. The home works effectively with schools and other agencies to help young people get the education they need and works hard with young people to encourage their attendance and attainment. Young people have access to a computer in the home on which they can access the internet. This allows young people to access school websites and complete work set for them in this way. As stated earlier, despite the good work done in this area, outcomes for young people are not always as good as they could be. At times the work of external agencies does not support young people's education well enough. In these situations the home advocates strongly for young people and are often successful in enabling young people to access improved services. For example, a full time educational placement has recently been secured for you young person who has had limited access to education for some time.

The premises are well-maintained, homely and comfortable with young people's personal items being evident around the home.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Children feel safe at the home and the staff team work hard to keep young people safe. Where young people's actions place them at potential risk the home's diligent work ensures that risks are minimised and reduced over time.

The staff team receives regular training in how to safeguard and promote children's welfare. They clearly understand how to respond to allegations, suspicions or evidence of harm. Staff are alert to the potential of bullying and work constructively with young people to prevent this. Young people are helped to understand others and to accept their differences. This helps to protect them both within the home and when out in the community.

The home deals effectively with situations in which young people go missing. This behaviour is traditionally rare in the home and staff have been very successful in working with young people who have a history of going missing and in changing their behaviour. In situations in which young people do go missing the home manages this very positively by developing good relationships with young people, ensuring they are able to talk to them about their behaviour and helping equip young people to be able to keep themselves safe when they are missing. As a consequence young people's safety is improved.

Young people behave well and have very positive relationships with the staff. Physical intervention into young people's behaviour is very rare and record forms are in place to record the details of these incidents. However, these forms do not record any methods employed to avoid the need for the physical intervention that was used.

The home's premises are maintained in a safe condition. Professional technicians regularly service the electrical equipment, gas appliances and equipment for preventing, detecting and extinguishing fires. Fire drills take place appropriately. Hazards that may affect young people have been assessed and action is taken to minimise any identified risks. Recruitment procedures are safe and all new staff undergo thorough checks in line with relevant legislation prior to their appointment.

Leadership and management

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

This is a well-managed home. The manager provides a clear sense of direction for the home's work and understands its strengths and areas for development. The home has addressed the one recommendation made at the last inspection. All but one staff member is now qualified to NVQ level 3 and the remaining person is working toward this. This qualified staff team helps to ensure that young people's needs are met.

The activities of the home are well monitored both internally and by the home's external visitors. Young people's files are regularly monitored and the quality of recording checked. Their progress is monitored closely and the information is used to help formulate and review plans of care. The manager conducts a formal assessment of the home's operation every month and an external visitor visits the home once a month to monitor the care independently. The views of young people, their parents, staff, and social workers are sought as part of this monitoring and taken into account when matters are evaluated. However, plans for the future of the home are not clear enough because the home's annual development plan is not sufficiently detailed or specific. Currently this document sets out a number of aims rather than formal plans setting out how these are to be met.

The home employs an appropriate level of staffing to meet the needs of the young people. Additional staff cover is put in place where necessary. The staff receive training in a wide range of subjects that help to enhance the care provided to young people. Formal supervision and appraisal systems operate. These support staff development and guide and monitor practice and the care of young people.

Young people's care needs and the actions required to meet them are recorded in their individual placement plans. These are comprehensive documents that are regularly updated and monitored. Young people are regularly involved in discussions about the care provided to them. Regular progress summaries are made that include the monitoring of important matters relating to the young person. Statutory reviews of young people's overall plans of care take place on time and the home contributes effectively to these. Records are stored securely and confidentiality is maintained.

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.