

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Caroline Brailsford
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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

The home provides care for up to four young people aged between 10 years and 17 years old. The home is registered to provide care for young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties.

Overall effectiveness

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

Young people remain the focus in the delivery of a quality service. Outcomes for young people are positive. In relation to their starting point, young people make good progress and are continually supported well by the staff team. However some documents lack detail to fully explain the staff practice, particularly how educational attainment is supported. There is no written development plan in place.

The home is well managed by a dedicated manager. The staff group are experienced and committed to their work; therefore good relationships have been forged with the young people. The staff group are themselves supported and knowledgeable about the young people and the home's policies and procedures. This helps to keep the young people safe.

Young people feel safe and the procedures in place in the home ensure the safety and well-being of the young people. A robust risk assessment process further promotes this area of work, where young people are able to take controlled risks in a safe and nurturing environment.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure that young people are helped by staff to achieve their educational or training goals, this is in particular relation to providing evidence within documentation (NMS 8.4)
- ensure that the registered person has a written development plan. (NMS 15.2)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people live in a healthy environment where their physical, emotional and psychological health is promoted. Young people's health is well documented and regularly reviewed. This helps to promote their well-being because progress is closely monitored.

Young people enjoy the home cooked food which reflects their own personal choices; it is very healthy because the meals are all made from scratch. Young people's health is further promoted by staff working closely with other health professionals. For example, the looked after children (LAC) nurse. Young people benefit from this input. This is because staff encourage them to engage in the appointments and place a high importance on maintaining good health in the home. Young people's medical and health needs are further promoted by a clear procedure for the administration of medication which is effectively implemented by staff. Staff are very consistent and tenacious about support and advice that they give to the young people. As a result, young people take notice and are beginning to develop strategies to keep themselves safe in terms of their health.

Young people feel listened to which helps them feel valued and builds up their self-esteem. They are actively encouraged to make decisions about their daily lives. Opportunities include contributions to the running of the home through young people's meetings and regular quality time with staff on an individual basis. For example, young people have regular input into the menus and they are involved in producing their weekly planners and incentive charts. Young people also attend their review meetings which enables them to have a say in their future plans.

All young people feel that relationships are good enough with staff to raise complaints and issues with them as they arise. However, they are also well aware from the young people's guide how they can make a formal complaint. They are very confident that their complaints are always taken seriously and are dealt with fairly by the manager.

Young people are supported to reach their full potential educationally with a view to entering further education or employment. Education and training is tailored around individual's needs, skills and interests and also takes into account previous experiences. Staff work hard with young people to re-engage them in education where they have been out for some time. As a result, all young people have plans for their education and future. Pathway planning has a high priority and fully supports work to prepare for independence. This is an ongoing process and takes into account young people's individual needs including age, previous experiences, abilities and levels of risk. Young people are encouraged to take part in the cooking and cleaning of the home. When young people are ready, they are given a budget which helps them to develop budgeting and cooking skills. In addition to developing practical skills, young people's self-esteem and confidence increases. Furthermore, work is ongoing with all young people to enable them to live safely in the wider community and access community resources. As a result, young people do make progress in preparation for adulthood.

Young people are actively supported and encouraged to maintain and develop family contacts and friendships where appropriate. The home is proactive in engaging and supporting the forming of strong bonds with all those important to the young people. Staff give both practical and emotional support to young people and their families. Social workers comment positively about the support young people and their families are given by staff in facilitating contact arrangements.

Quality of care

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

The manager and staff are highly committed in their approach to the young people in all aspects of their care. This can be attributed to open and nurturing relationships with staff. As a result, young people make good progress in all areas of their lives. The staff enjoy their work with young people and have developed very good relationships with them. The staff communicate well and spend time with young people and therefore clear boundaries for behaviour can be maintained consistently. As a consequence, young people have trusting relationships with the staff and are clear about what is expected of them.

Staff consider equality and diversity and this is demonstrated in the culture of the home. Young people are treated equally and fairly irrespective of their religion, race, sexual orientation and religious belief. The opportunities provided by staff, allow young people to recognise their own identity, this means young people can grow with confidence and self-esteem. Staff spend time ensuring that young people are actively involved in planning their care. They regularly ask about if they would like to view their files. They also ask them what they think about their own lives and the running of the home. This ensures that they have a voice and that they strive to remain in control of their life experiences. The manager ensures where young people are not happy with their life situation, they can be further supported to use independent advocacy services if they wish. This promotes the manager's view that young people should be consulted and listened to when they have concerns about their future.

Staff clearly support young people to recognise their full potential. Staff work tenaciously and effectively to find educational provisions which will suit individuals. Staff consistently encourage young people to do well and have a very individual approach. Staff also actively encourage young people in their chosen vocational choices to ensure that personal interests and aspirations can be achieved. Young people are very well supported by staff in this area who invest a lot of time in preparing young people for adulthood. Staff recently telephoned a young person further to a job interview that they had, in their own time to see how it had gone. This shows the high level of commitment from staff.

Individual risk assessments and associated care records are of a good standard although the care planning does not always show the extent of the good work. At times, documentation provides general information rather than the high level of

detail that actually takes place, this was particularly evident in the care planning areas in relation to education. Staff work hard to promote individuals' identity by ensuring they have the appropriate knowledge about different cultures. Staff are creative in using opportunities for teaching young people about such issues; they also regularly talk about political and topical issues around the world and encourage young people's discussion and learning.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

All young people feel safe living at the home and that the environment is also safe. Safeguarding young people always has a high priority. Young people live in a safe and secure environment because staff know what they must do to protect young people from the risk of harm. A robust risk assessment process also promotes the safety and welfare of young people. This is because the risk assessments are highly individual and take into account the issues that young people have. The documentation is well understood by staff who are very clear about the steps that they should take to keep the young people safe. This reduces the levels of risk that young people present. Young people are supported by staff to take controlled risks in a nurturing environment which helps them to develop their self-confidence and learn how to keep themselves safe.

Staff work patiently and sensitively with young people and are committed to finding ways of encouraging positive behaviour. As a result, young people are able to learn how to change their behaviours. Young people are supported to develop socially acceptable behaviour and staff support them well to take responsibility for their actions in a way that is appropriate to their age and abilities. Young people feel clear about boundaries set by staff and what is expected of them.

The staff have good relationships with the young people. This directly reduces the amount of incidents of physical intervention due to the respect they have for each other. Where physical intervention does take place, young people are all very confident that this is a last resort. Young people are also clear that any physical intervention is to keep them safe; they report that that the holds are comfortable and do not hurt. This reflects staffs' regular training and competence in this area.

There are clear procedures to follow that are based on individual needs and risks in the event of a young person going missing. Staff implement procedures effectively. These include actively searching for young people who are missing and discussing with young people the dangers. Detailed records are also kept which help the manager to monitor and identify any patterns and triggers. Staff have good links with the local police and share vital information with them when young people go missing. As a result, young people are located more efficiently. As a consequence risks of harm are reduced.

Management of health and safety is good. This is attributed to the effective implementation of clear health and safety policies and procedures, staff training and

regular servicing and maintenance of equipment. As a result the building is safe to use for the young people, staff and visitors.

Staff receive a range of training which further promotes the health, safety and well-being of young people. All staff are fully aware of the safeguarding procedures and are able to recite them, ensuring a good working knowledge. Staff fully understand their responsibilities in reporting any child protection concerns. They are very aware of safeguarding information with regard to individuals and work within risk assessments to ensure that young people are as safe as they can be.

Leadership and management

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

Young people benefit from a well-managed home where they receive a good level of care. The manager takes into account young people's individuality, personal attributes and difficulties. The effective management and monitoring of the home ensures that young people remain central to the focus of the home's aims and objectives. The Statement of Purpose clearly states how the home sets out to care for the young people.

Young people benefit from positive relationships with the manager based on trust and respect. This is a result of his commitment to improve the lives of the young people in his care. Young people and staff think very highly of the manager. One member of staff said, "he is fantastic." The manager provides clear leadership and direction to a committed and enthusiastic staff team and has ensured that robust procedures and systems in the home continue to benefit the young people. For example, the monitoring of the progress that young people make and the difficulties that they face.

Although the manager has a very clear picture of the development of the home he has not yet recorded development plans to evidence this fully. However this has had no impact on the young people. He is fully aware of what is happening in the home both regarding the individual needs of the young people and the operational running of the home. This is because there are a range of systems within the home to monitor the quality of care provided and the running of the home. In addition to these internal systems, Regulation 33 monitoring visits are carried out by a representative of the company and reports produced. Furthermore, the staff team strive to constantly improve the quality of care for young people.

The staff team is diverse in their attributes and sufficient in number on individual shifts. They are also well respected and liked by the young people. They are well motivated by their enjoyment of the work and the progress that young people make. They value their support from the manager. Staff receive a thorough induction and regular training which is very relevant to the needs of the young people. They also participate in regular supervision and staff meetings which are held regularly. These discussions enable them to discuss each young person's well-being, any changes in policies and procedures and any staffing issues. Staff work well together as a team

and maintain consistent and clear boundaries to the young people so that they can develop.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.