

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Louise Redfern
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for five young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is privately owned.

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 benefit from individualised and consistent support from a committed manager and staff team. Relationships between young people and the staff team are good.

Young people feel safe in the home and value the well-planned and individualised care that they receive. This care enables them to develop in emotional maturity and promotes positive behaviour. Young people's needs and views are central to all aspects of how the home operates. Young people enjoy varied opportunities to plan and engage in activities, both in the home and in the local community. As a result, they improve their social skills and increase in confidence. For example, this has meant that young people have experienced quad biking and paintballing.

Effective and robust monitoring of the home's performance enables the manager to identify the service's strengths and areas for development. This ensures that young people continue to enjoy good quality care.

Recommendations have been raised to ensure improvements. These include ensuring all young people regularly attend education, notifications are received by HMCI within timescales and internal care planning addresses individual's sexual identity.

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 children receive personalised care that promotes all aspects of their individual identity, this specifically refers to sexuality (NMS 2.1)
- ensure that children are supported to attend school, college or alternative provision regularly (NMS 8.3)
- ensure that the registered person has a system in place to notify within 24 hours the persons and appropriate authorities of the occurrence of significant events in accordance with Regulation 30. (NMS 24.1)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people receive individualised care and support which helps them grow in confidence. They are supported to understand their background through meaningful contact with their families and individual planned placement sessions. Staff promote young people's independence and they are encouraged to take acceptable and measured risks and responsibility. They are involved in the daily running of the home, cooking, shopping, menu and activity planning. They participate in young people's meetings and contribute their views for change and improvement. These practices empower young people to have control over their own daily lives.

Young people's health care is of a good standard with all young people having access to local health services. Specific and specialist health provision is provided by professionals external to the home and staff support young people to engage positively with them. As a result young people feel confident their health needs will be met.

Most young people make significant progress in their educational attendance given their individual starting points. One social worker commented 'X is now attending school. This is huge progress, prior to being placed at the home he poor attendance.'

Young people contribute to menu selection and are aware of healthy options. Advice, guidance and support on choices which impact on having a healthy life such as smoking and drug use is available through trained staff and external agencies. The looked after children nurse visits regularly to support young people.

Young people are supported to develop life skills which helps prepare them for adulthood. Young people say they like helping with preparing meals, cooking and shopping. There is an expectation that they will keep their rooms tidy.

Quality of care

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

Staff genuinely have high aspirations for all young people in the home. Young people's well-being is considered paramount and is consistently placed at the forefront of their practice. The enthusiastic, committed and child-focused approach of staff is clearly evident in the home. Young people recognise that staff care about them and say, 'I like the staff, and they listen to me and give me my space when I need it. I have got everything I need here.'

Internal placement plans include individualised risk assessments, behaviour management plans and daily routines. Objectives are in place for each young person, which are underpinned by individual incentives for young people. This ensures that all staff have written guidance to support young people consistently and in a way that results in positive outcomes. Staff ensure full attention is paid to a young person's religious, cultural and family background. However, plans and other documentation currently do not explore the individual's sexual identity.

Information is made available to the young people as soon as they are admitted to the home so they know how, and to whom they can make a complaint. They confirmed they know how the process works. Young people can be sure that all complaints are taken seriously with a robust investigation carried out in close liaison with other professionals, if required, and outcomes relayed back to the complainant. Records of complaints are well-maintained and monitored by the management team.

Young people's medication is stored securely. There are clear procedures in place for administering and disposing of medication which are followed in practice by trained staff. These practices ensure that all medication brought into the home is accountable.

All young people at the home have an identified educational placement. Some are successfully making progress in their educational attainment and improving levels of attendance. However, despite regular planning and encouragement, some are not regularly attending school. This means not all young people are reaching their full potential. One professional commented 'the manager is committed to a multiagency approach to secure the best outcomes for X, including supporting their engagement in education.'

The home is well maintained. Young people have a say in how the home and their individual bedrooms are decorated. They personalise their bedrooms with posters and pictures. Young people have access to a computer which has appropriate safeguards installed.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people say that they feel safe living in this home. One young person commented 'I feel safe living here, staff keep me safe.' a view which is further endorsed by social workers and parents. Staff ensure that detailed risk assessments and behaviour management plans are in place that protect young people from harm

and promote their well-being and safety. Individual planned placement sessions enable young people to take managed risks and build on their life experiences.

There are clear safeguarding procedures for when young people go missing. Despite effective monitoring and young people being supported to understand the risks associated with going missing, some continue to go missing from home. The manager has developed strong links with local police officers who they can call on for support when young are missing from home.

Staff are trained in behaviour management and physical restraint techniques and consistently apply these in practice. Young people benefit from the positive and firm boundaries in the home. As a result, there are very few incidents of young people being physically restrained. When inappropriate behaviours do occur young people reflect on their behaviour and share their views on the resulting consequences.

All staff are selected and checked through the organisation's recruitment procedures. The manager takes an active role in recruitment, ensuring the safe recruitment of staff who are able to meet the young people's needs.

Young people live in a physically safe environment. Routine health and safety checks are robust. Insurance certificates are up to date. Regular fire drills take place to ensure young people and staff are aware of what to do in the event of an emergency.

Leadership and management

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

There is an experienced manager in post, who during this inspection successfully completed the registration process. Staff report they enjoy working at the home and that 'the manager is approachable and he takes the time to listen to staff. He is firm but fair.'

Sufficient numbers of staff are on duty for each shift. They are suitably qualified or working towards the appropriate qualification. Staff report that they have good access to regular training to ensure that they are kept up-to-date with developments. All staff have regular supervision and appraisals which helps to promote their professional development and reflective practice. Staff are well motivated and relate to young people in a thoughtful way, this promotes mutual respect and environment in which young people feel settled and happy.

The home has internal and external monitoring processes in place. These contribute to monitoring the progress young people make in the home. To the continuous improvement of the home and identify areas for development. The Statement of Purpose and children's guide are up-to-date and accurately reflect the service that young people can expect to receive.

Significant events are notified to the relevant authorities and appropriate action is

taken to protect young people when events occur. However, notifications received by HMCI are delayed. There is no direct impact on young people as a result of this delay. The manager addressed this issue and changed the process at inspection.

This provision has a strong record of compliance, no requirements or recommendations were raised at the last inspection.

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.