

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC043972
Inspection date	22/11/2011
Inspector	Pamela Nuckley
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	04/01/2011
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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 accommodates up to five young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties.

Overall effectiveness

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

Young people make excellent progress in their placement and are assisted to understand all aspects of their care. Young people receive support through a experienced staff team who are well qualified, trained and supported. The home takes pride in ensuring young people access education and celebrates any achievements young people make. Young people say that staff listen and take an interest in everything they do and they feel supported and safe. Young people enjoy being at the home and take an active role in their own care planning. A safe environment is provided for young people with good health and safety control measures. Behaviour management strategies are based on positive interactions, incentive schemes and with the full inclusion of young people. Leadership and management of the home promotes a culture of respect and individuality that positively impacts on the young people. Monitoring of the service is of a high standard and contributes towards improving practice. The staff are passionate about outcomes for young people and present as motivated, competent and well trained. The manager understands the strengths of the service and is continually improving and developing through consultation with young people, professionals and other significant people.

Outcomes for children and young people

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

The home provides young people with positive opportunities to develop and reach their potential. Young people have identified key workers and feel that all areas of their care and any issues are explored with them through this process. The young people have made excellent progress to develop a positive self view, emotional resilience and knowledge and understanding of their background. Young people benefit from a staff group who have a well-developed understanding and sensitive approach to their individual needs. Care is provided with a high regard for each young person's potential, promotes their identity and carefully considers their specific needs. Parents comment on the significant progress their children have made in all areas, especially given the short time that their children have been living at the home. One parent says 'I feel that my child has benefitted greatly from the care and support given by the staff, which has impacted greatly on our relationship'.

Young people say that they are fully aware of their placement plan and any changes are discussed with them fully. Young people are encouraged to comment on their placement plan and one young person said 'this is a good plan'. This ensures that young people are fully aware of the plan for them and how this is to be implemented into everyday life.

Young people are supported to attend education whether this is within main stream schools or through the company's educational provision. Young people's attendance is excellent and for young people who had little attendance or interest in education there is significant improvement. Young people say that they now enjoy going to school. The home works well to capture young people's progress and achievement by retaining certificates, education reports and compiling memory boxes. Young people say that because staff support and celebrate their achievements this motivates them to achieve and further their educational potential.

Staff support young people to maintain positive and healthy relationships with family members, friends and other people important to them, if appropriate to do so. Contact with friends is encouraged and they are invited to the home. The home is suitable for young people to meet with their family privately.

Young people's files are very well organised. There is close attention to their individual plans, for example, regarding remaining safe and family contact. Placement plans clearly evidence what the arrangements are regarding contact and how the young person is to be supported. Individual needs arising from personal issues or the need for protection for example, are addressed thoroughly. One young person said 'I like to see my mum and staff are really good in supporting me and talk to me about my behaviour and how it went'. This means that young people are made aware of the concerns of the responsible adults and learn suitable strategies.

There is a good approach to promoting the physical and emotional well-being of young people. Staff encourage young people to access health services, encourage physical activity and discuss the importance of sharing any concerns. Young people are registered at the doctors, dentist and opticians. A health plan identifies any health needs and is updated regularly. Young people live in a healthy environment, and say they are supported to access services to meet their health needs. Staff promote a healthy lifestyle. Young people are learning to understand the nutritional value of eating a good diet and are involved in the planning, shopping and making of meals. They are also encouraged to partake in exercise. One young person said 'I never use to eat well but I do now. I like curry and one of the other young people here makes an excellent curry'. This shows that some young people who have not had a varied diet before are now benefiting from advice and a healthy diet plus that other young people are practising their culinary skills and receiving praise from other young people. Young people say that due to the advice given by staff on eating healthy and exercise they feel that they make better choices, have a varied diet and exercise more.

Young people plan their own activities and they say staff encourage them to include physical activities. Staff encourage young people to make constructive use of their

leisure time by offering in-house activities such as art projects but also understand the young person's need for free time. Young people are supported and encouraged to take part in community resources either by having a hobby or accessing the local leisure centre. Through consultation with young people, the manager has given up his office so that young people can have a games room. Young people say 'our room is 'brill', we play pool with staff or each other, we can play computer games in here or just hang out'. As a consequence, young people feel that they are listened to and see the results of being involved in the home.

Quality of care

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

Young people benefit from excellent relationships that are based on mutual respect. Relationships between staff and young people are friendly, meaningful and good natured. This assists young people to develop skills to build and maintain positive relationships and resolve conflicts positively. Young people say that 'they get on well with all the staff'. Young people know how to complain and confirm that all concerns or complaints are addressed quickly and that they are happy with the outcome. The home's complaint system is accessible in several languages. This ensures that all people regardless of race, culture or language barriers can access the procedure. The home also responds in writing to all complaints, thus showing that they value any complaint or concern and young people say they feel respected because of this. Young people say they are making very good progress and are very happy.

Young people feel extremely positive and were very complimentary about their home and staff. One young person gave the home '10 out of 10' and said 'if I cannot live at home I want to stay here'. Young people benefit from a competent and able staff team who are able to meet their needs and support them throughout their placement.

Young people are fully consulted about all aspects of their care. They are able to discuss their progress and make decisions about their future with staff and attend their review meetings. Placement plans are thorough and show, for example, the involvement of young people in all aspects of their care and the progress they have made. Placement plans reflect the current assessment of need which young people comment on and include the culture, race, religion and gender of young people. This means that the individuality of young people is fully acknowledged and staff can give individualised care to meet these needs.

The staff at this home pride themselves on supporting young people within education and they celebrate all achievements that young people make whether small or large. One young person has gone from refusing education to wanting to attend breakfast club. Another young person whose attainment was sporadic before placement sat seven exams and staff celebrated this by taking them out for a meal and going on a holiday. This shows that young people are fully supported within education and are achieving excellent outcomes.

Young people are able to pursue their interests, develop confidence in their skills and are encouraged by staff to engage in leisure activities. The home is set up to offer a range of fun, leisure and educational activities which are planned in advance with the inclusion of all young people. Young people have recently completed a bullying project which involved designing a poster and a t-shirt. This project was then incorporated into the company's newsletter and young people were able to see the results of this project in writing and with photographs. One young person said 'it was great fun and I learnt a lot through it'.

Young people enjoy healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs. They have opportunities to shop and prepare meals. Young people eat meals at the table and share social occasions. Young people confirm they help decide menus, shop with staff and cook meals. Young people's dietary cultural needs are met, for example, the home provides appropriately prepared meat for young people in line with their religion.

Young people live in a healthy environment where their health needs are identified and prioritised. Files contain health plans and details of the young person's doctor, dentist and optician and any other services that are provided to ensure emotional well-being. Staff are trained in first aid and in the administration of medication and are vigilant in ensuring up to date records are maintained. This ensures that young people receive their medication in line with their prescription and that staff are suitable qualified to do so.

Young people live in a quiet residential area. The accommodation provides a pleasant, warm and comfortable home that young people enjoy living in. Furnishings and decoration are to a good standard. Young people are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms and are involved in choosing decoration. There is a pleasant atmosphere in the home. Staff ensure they apply a good level of privacy by respecting young people's needs for time alone and always knock on bedroom doors.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people say they feel safe and are safe at this home. They say all safety issues are discussed with them, at length, within placement plan sessions. Staff have received training in safeguarding and sexual exploitation thus, giving them clearer understanding of signs and symptoms of abuse. One staff member said 'the sexual exploitation training was really informative and has really given me an insight into behaviours that young people may display'.

There are robust arrangements to safeguard young people, and their general welfare is promoted by the care arrangements provided by the home. The manager and staff appropriately respond to suspicions of harm through strategy meetings, professional meetings and implementing behaviour strategy agreements. Young people say that they feel very safe living at this home. Staff receive safeguarding training and were

able to give a wide ranging and comprehensive knowledge of reporting procedures in the event of a child protection incident or disclosure. All concerns about young people's safety are acted on quickly and appropriately. Placement plans are effective in showing the progress a young person has made, the plans for their future and include an assessment of risk of actual or potential areas of concerns that are regularly reviewed by the Registered Manager and continue to protect young people.

The home follows the local authority's policy on young people missing from care and implements this in accordance with a young person's risk assessment and placement plan. Young people say that staff discuss the risks with them, encourage them to make contact and make sure that they are alright on their return.

The home's ethos is of staff being a positive role model and showing mutual respect. Staff use effective approaches, actively encourage and promote positive behaviour. Young people learn to take responsibility for their actions, and the reward system succeeds in helping young people develop and maintain socially acceptable behaviour. Sanctions are fair and generally restorative, and there is excellent evidence of positive behaviour being promoted within the home. This helps young people to interact positively and behave appropriately. There have been minimal physical interventions within the home since their last inspection. Young people say this is due to their behaviour getting better because staff are approachable and listen to them. Staff say by having a relaxed atmosphere and a culture of openness and training in de-escalation skills lessens the need for physical intervention.

There are robust recruitment practices and rigorous checks are completed to safeguard young people, before new staff start working at the home. All new staff have to complete an induction and probationary period and supervision is of a high standard. This ensures that young people are cared for by suitable vetted staff.

The home's health and safety control measures provide a safe environment for young people, staff and visitors.

Leadership and management

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

Young people live in a home which is well managed and resourced to meet their needs. The staff roster shows that there is a good level of staffing to meet young people's needs. Therefore, young people's individual needs are addressed thoroughly and are appropriately managed. A key strength of the home is supporting young people within education and this aspect of the service has been complimented on by parents.

Young people's files provide a comprehensive record of risk assessments and behaviour management plans which gives staff clear insight into the young people's needs and which informs the day-to-day care that they give.

The staff provide an excellent level of care, ensuring they themselves have the

necessary training and support to work effectively. The organisation demonstrates a commitment for staff to undertake training on a variety of topics which address the diverse needs of young people. Training programmes include all mandatory training with new staff completing an induction. There is a robust recruitment process in place. This means that young people are cared for by suitably cleared and trained staff.

Staff are positive about the management arrangements and feel they are given scope to care for and nurture young people. Staff say that formal regular supervision and appraisals provide opportunities to discuss professional development and plan actions to meet the needs of the young people.

Young people benefit from effective management of the home, for example, there are various systems to monitor the quality of care. This includes monthly visits by a designated person, in accordance with the regulations. These reports focus on the home's strengths and any actions needed to address shortfalls. The manager ensures that any shortfalls are actioned promptly through internal monthly monitoring checks. The home's development plan and monitoring systems incorporate consultation with young people, professionals and parents.

Information relating to significant events affecting young people's safety are notified to the relevant agencies, this includes Ofsted, social workers and the safeguarding teams from the local and home authority.

Equality and diversity practice is **outstanding**.