

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 of either gender 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 make excellent progress in their educational attendance, given their individual starting points. They enjoy varied opportunities to engage in activities, both in the home and in the local community. As a result, young people improve their social skills and increase in confidence. Young people enjoy positive relationships with staff and each other. One young person commented, 'I feel like the staff really care about me and respect me.'

Young people state that they are safe in the home; this is supported by the views of parents and professionals. Young people receive highly personalised, well-planned care, taking into account their individual needs. The home strongly promotes positive outcomes for all young people. The manager and staff team are particularly proactive and successful in engaging young people in the placement and developing strong attachments. As a result, young people make good progress in relation to their starting points across all aspects of their welfare and development.

An experienced and effective manager, who is committed to improving outcomes for young people and securing improvements to the care provided, manages the home. One recommendation and two requirements have been made to secure further improvement in the home.

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
28 (2001)	ensure that the registered person shall maintain in respect of each child who is accommodated in a children's home a record in permanent form (Regulation 28 (1)(a))	21/12/2012
34 (2001)	ensure there is monitoring of the matters set out in Schedule 6 and that it is an effective system for improving the quality of care provided in the children's home. (Regulation 34(1)(a))	28/12/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure that staff have access to support and advice, and are provided with regular supervision. (NMS 19.4)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make exceptional progress in developing a positive self-view, because the support they receive meets their individual needs. One parent commented, 'the change in my son has been dramatic, the improvement in his behaviour have been amazing.' Young people benefit from excellent support. One young person commented, 'because of the staff I am really trying to work on my independence plan and do something with my life.'

The staff team are highly skilled and able to provide individualised care. As a result, young people maintain healthy lifestyles that maximise their quality of life and assist in improving their well-being. Young people's physical, emotional and psychological health is proactively supported. They attend regular appointments with opticians, doctors and dentists that best meet their individual needs. Support agencies such as children and adolescent mental health services are readily available to the young people both in the local community and in the home.

Young people actively participate in day-to-day decisions, for example, planning their weekly menus and activities. Individual and group activities are wide ranging, for example, going to 'spooky land' or playing football with a local community team. This enhances young people's skills, promotes independence, and improves social relationships.

Young people make excellent progress in education and attendance is exceptionally high. For example, one young person has returned to education after a significant period of non-attendance and is currently undertaking GCSE's. Staff facilitate attendance and liaise consistently with education providers, ensuring that communication is current and robust, and contributions are efficiently made to all care planning arrangements. This means that young people benefit from an integrated approach to sustaining and progressing their education.

Young people are making exceptional progress, in relation to their individual starting points, in developing their independence skills in preparation for adulthood. For example, they choose meals, shop and cook for the whole house. As a result, young people are empowered and encouraged to develop skills for life.

Young people benefit from appropriate contact with their families, friends and significant others. Young people understanding the importance of maintaining contact and developing relationships that are important to them. Staff are proactive in encouraging sustainable relationships by supporting visits and arranging transportation to contacts. This means that young people are not isolated from their families or peer groups and build sustainable friendships and relationships with people who are important to them.

Quality of care

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

Young people benefit from excellent relationships with staff, built upon a consistent approach. This helps young people to develop strategies to manage previous challenging behaviours incorporating a system of rewards and incentives for positive behaviour. Young people benefit from highly individualised support that helps them to build self-esteem, grow in confidence and address challenging behaviours. Young people benefit from effective engagement with behaviour management plans, which also assist the staff in maintaining consistency.

Young people's views are regularly sought through daily conversations, weekly consultations, planned placement sessions and statutory review meetings. Young people feel listened to and can recognise the occasions when their views and choices have been acted upon. The home has a comprehensive complaints procedure in place, which is child focused. Young people in this home say, 'I know how to complain but I don't need to because this home is outstanding. It's the best care home I have ever lived in.'

Young people are well cared for in line with their individual placement plans. The contribution of the home to placement plans is of high quality and involves the young people and people who are significant to them. The plans are comprehensive documents. They provide an extremely detailed overview of each young person and how the home is working towards the aims and objectives of the plan. Young people are consistently and centrally involved in the planning and review of their care.

Young people confirm that they attend their reviews and that their views are taken into account. For example, a young person has expressed a wish to remain in the locality when they turn 18. Their social worker has commented that, 'the home is working with me to source an appropriate move on placement in the local area to the home.'

The home provides a healthy environment where children and young people are able to access the services and support they need to meet their physical, emotional and psychological health needs. Staff consistently and effectively challenge barriers to the full participation of young people at school, in their community and wider society. As a result, all the young people placed at the home have an identified educational placement that they regularly attend.

Young people live in a quiet residential area. The accommodation provides a pleasant, warm and comfortable home that young people enjoy living in. There have been recent renovations to the bathrooms and re-decoration in the house, which has improved the home. Furnishings and decoration are to a good standard. Young people are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms and are involved in choosing decoration. The relationships between the young people and staff provides for a pleasant and calm atmosphere.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people say they feel very safe. One young person commented 'I feel safe in the home and I am happy to stay here.' 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. Young people contribute to the risk management plans and are encouraged to evaluate their individual levels of risk. This promotes a better understand of the risks the young people are taking and enables them to review their progress over the period of their placement.

Staff are able to identify vulnerabilities and triggers and put measures in place to reduce risks and episodes of negative behaviours. For example, offering young people time out in their personal space. As a result, young people feel better supported to manage their own behaviour. One young person commented, 'the staff have helped me, now when I am about to kick off they give me space and time to calm down. Then they talk to me.' Risk assessments enable young people to continue to take reasonable risks wherever possible, ensuring that they have the opportunity to grow and develop. For example, engaging in community based activities, such as travelling independently across the city.

Managers and staff are well trained in safeguarding and the home has extensive policies and procedures in place to underpin effective practice. The home has a strong focus on safeguarding young people. One professional commented, 'the young person is supported to keep himself safe and make the right choices, as a

result his behaviours have really improved.'

There are clear safeguarding procedures in place should young people go missing and there has been a significant reduction in the number of missing from home episodes. Through effective monitoring of the incidents, the manager and staff team develop a clear understanding of the reasons why young people do go missing. Young people are supported to understand the risks associated with going missing through regular planned placement sessions and effective behaviour management plans. The manager has developed excellent links with the local Police to promote the safety of young people in the local area.

Young people benefit from positive and firm boundaries in the home. As a result, there are few incidents of young people being physically restrained; which is only ever used as a last resort. Records are appropriately completed and enable young people the opportunity to reflect on the incident. When sanctions are imposed they are fair and appropriate.

All staff are selected and checked through the organisation's robust recruitment procedures. The manager takes an active role in recruitment, ensuring the safe recruitment of staff that are able to meet the specific needs of young people. Effective health and safety risk management ensures the home is well maintained. The home provides for a safe environment for the staff team and the young people. Young people practice fire drills. This means, they have a clear understanding of what to do in the event of an emergency.

Leadership and management

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

The management team are a well-established, committed and enthusiastic team that are committed to improving outcomes for young people. The staff team are an established team who are balanced in terms of age, gender and experience. The home is well resourced to meet the needs of the young people and high staffing levels are in place on each shift.

The manager has a good approach to identifying young people's individual needs. Effective individual placement plans are established to enable young people to make progress and achieve their full potential. The manager can clearly demonstrate the impact and value that living at the home has had on young people's lives and how their life chances have improved over time. For example, this includes young people successfully returning to full time education. One parent commented, 'the change in my son is amazing, he had not been to school for a long time, he is now doing really well.'

The Statement of Purpose and young person's guide accurately represents the specific service the home provides for young people. The staff team are experienced and culturally diverse professionals, committed to improving the outcomes of young people. They are supported to meet the needs of young people through regular team

meetings, a comprehensive training plan, appraisals and supervisions. However, a small minority of staff do not receive regular formal supervisions in line with the company policy. This currently has no impact on the care received by the young people.

The manager undertakes regular monitoring of the quality of care, on a daily and monthly basis. However, the system had not identified that a young person's statutory review minutes were not available. As a result, a requirement has been raised to ensure that the documentation is available and that systems for monitoring are robust. The manager has acted on the previous recommendation; where applicable each young person has an education plan in place.

Good communication, regular handovers and staff meetings ensure continuity of care. The home employs a sufficient number of staff. Any shortfalls in the rota are covered by overtime or with a small number of company bank staff, known to the young people. This ensures a level of consistent care to meet the needs of the young people.

The home demonstrates good quality record keeping. Records contribute to an understanding of young people's lives and show the progress made by the young people. They are up-to-date and are stored securely. Young people routinely sign risk management and placement plans. This encourages and enables young people to be part of their care planning and setting goals.

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 children's homes.