

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Susan Mullin
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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 children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to two young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The home is one of four homes operated by an independent provider.

Overall effectiveness

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

Young people talk positively about their experiences within the home and make good progress from their starting points. Staff have a good understanding of young people's individual needs and this is reflected in the sensitive way that the diverse needs of the young people are met. A visiting social worker stated, 'The young person is doing well since he has been in the home and we are pleased with how the staff manage him and his behaviour.'

There is a committed management and leadership team who support a caring, enthusiastic staff team. Young people contribute to their care plans and have a range of opportunities to influence and comment upon the care they receive. They report that they feel safe and happy in the home and enjoy good relationships with the staff.

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people benefit from the well-planned individualised support which enables them to grow in confidence and develop a positive understanding of their background, emotional resilience and belief in their skills. The key worker system encourages young people to identify, focus and build on their abilities and goals. This is supported by the regular opportunities for discussion through one-to-one sessions in-house meetings and mealtimes, to express their views and feelings. Staff are aware of young people's strengths and help to nurture and celebrate their talents, achievements and interests.

There is a good approach to promoting the physical and emotional well-being of young people. Their health plans clearly identify their specific needs and they regularly visit their general practitioner, dentist and optician. Young people lead an active lifestyle including regular walking and outdoor activities.

Records in the home identify that not all young people are able to attend an educational curriculum at a school setting. Educational support is then provided

within the home and young people can earn rewards through their participation in the home's programme.

Young people receive consistent support to develop independent living skills and are assisted in being able to plan, prepare and cook light meals. Good transition programmes are constantly reviewed to reflect young people's achievements. Young people benefit from positive contact with family members in accordance with their care plans, and as appropriate.

Quality of care

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

Young people have a significant say in how the home operates. A house meeting is held regularly and their views are recorded and acted on. Young people also know how to raise concerns formally and informally and such concerns are dealt with quickly and thoroughly. The staff fully support young people to be involved in the content of their care plans. Each young person has a key worker who meets with them regularly to ensure the care plans are effective. They also write monthly summaries of progress and monitor trends of behaviour effectively. This ensures that young people benefit from a well-coordinated and implemented programme of care.

The staffing levels are good and the staff provide suitable amounts of one-to-one time with young people. This helps to ensure their individual needs are met. Young people said 'we can buy the clothes and toiletries that we want'. The staff also enable any cultural needs to be met well. This helps young people to develop a clear and unique identity.

Overall, behaviour is generally settled although instances of challenging behaviour arise from time to time. The recording of incidents is thorough and the staff always encourage young people to add their own comments and signature. Any reported or actual injuries are also reported. Sometimes the staff administer sanctions as a result of inappropriate behaviour and young people feel these are fair. They also reward positive behaviour.

Staff help young people maintain very good standards of health. They have regular check-ups with health professionals and young people can gain support from agencies who provide expertise in promotion of emotional health. The staff enable young people to take part in a wide and stimulating range of activities, which raises their esteem and helps them develop social skills.

The home is clean, appropriately furnished and decorated and is well maintained. Young people enjoy a homely environment.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

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Systems are in place to promote the safety and well-being of young people. Staff are provided with information about safeguarding during their period of induction and further training is provided as part of mandatory training. This ensures that they have current knowledge to promote the safety and well-being of young people.

Staff provide good individualised care and support young people to behave in a socially acceptable manner. This means that young people are highly valued and consistently involved in their own behaviour plans and measures of controls. This enables young people to develop an understanding and take responsibility for improvements in their behaviour. When incidents have occurred, these are accurately recorded and signed by the young person.

The home has clear practices and procedures regarding what to do if a young person is missing from the home. Individual risk assessments also underpin the procedures to follow and these are known and understood by staff. Health and safety audits are carried out regularly and the home has an up-to-date fire safety risk assessment. Fire safety measures are in place including regular equipment checks and fire drills are undertaken by all staff and young people. Appropriate arrangements are also in place to ensure that staff recruited to work with young people are suitable and safe. These measures ensure that the safety and well-being of young people is promoted.

Leadership and management

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

The Registered Manager is an effective leader who demonstrates real commitment and success in improving the lives of young people. A previous recommendation relating to recording the effectiveness of a sanction has been fully addressed. The staff team is sufficient in numbers to meet the assessed needs of young people in placement. Staff spoken to are also committed and work well together and offer consistency in care practices. The team are creative and resilient in their approach to care and support individuals with differing needs well. Staff said the best things about the home were, 'The young people, we make sure they get the best care we can give'.

Staff receive good training opportunities. These are provided on an ongoing rolling programme, available company-wide but monitored within the home. All mandatory training is up to date. The team are well supported by the Registered Manager through the supervision process which occurs regularly. The home's Statement of Purpose has recently been updated to reflect the current operation of the service. A young person's guide is given to young people when they move in, which provides them with useful information about the day-to-day operation of the home.

The home is monitored through management checks and checks by an external representative of the company. Monitoring visits occur monthly as required under the regulations and there are systems in place to identify and address any shortfalls. A

development plan is in place. This informs better practice and will enhance the care the young people receive in the home.

Confidential information is held securely and records are up to date and present a clear picture of young people's situations.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.