

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Elizabeth Tanner
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home, owned by a company, provides care and accommodation for up to four young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. There is also a school on site where young people can access education if this is appropriate to their needs. The home is set within a 14-acre site which contains a small working farm, also owned by the company.

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**.

This home provides supportive and personalised care for young people. Young people make good progress in relation to their starting point across all aspects of their welfare and development.

Young people say that: 'There are lots of good things here; the staff, the routine and planning, the trust, the consistency.' Young people feel safe in this home and are confident that any unsafe situations would be effectively managed by staff.

The experienced Registered Manager has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. Two requirements and three recommendations have been made to improve practice and outcomes for young people. These mainly relate to staff training and administrative procedures. These shortfalls have minimal impact on the immediate care of young people.

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
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, restraint or discipline in a children's home, a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose which shall include all the matters listed under this regulation (Regulation 17B(3))	28/09/2012
30 (2001)	ensure if any of the events listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 5 takes place, the registered person shall without delay notify the persons indicated in respect of the event in column 2 of the table. (Regulation 30(1))	28/09/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure staff have appropriate training if they are required to supervise and facilitate contact (NMS 9.2)
- ensure there is a record kept of the telephone enquires made to referees as part of the selection process (NMS 16.1)
- ensure staff are provided with regular supervision at a frequency outlined in the Statement of Purpose for the home. (NMS 19.4)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people achieve good outcomes in this home and make positive progress in many areas.

Young people's school attendance is excellent and they say that they 'like education now'. Young people have aspirations to attend college and a young person said the staff, 'Helped me do this. I never thought I would go to college.' They are supported to progress towards educational targets that are appropriate to individual ability. Young people express pride in their achievements and success is celebrated within the home. Achievements are recorded and young people praised for success. A social worker said that a young person had made 'massive leaps' in terms of educational attendance.

Extra-curricular activities are available and tailored to individual interests. This helps young people expand their horizons and build confidence when meeting new people. Young people are able to take an active role in caring for the animals on the home's farm and from this develop confidence and a sense of responsibility.

Young people benefit from excellent multi-agency working with health professionals and this liaison helps staff promote healthy outcomes. There is regular communication with specialist services. Young people are aware of the contents of their health plans and engage well with mental health services. They are encouraged and supported to make healthy choices with food and exercise. Staff acknowledge young people's emotional difficulties and encourage and support them to seek help in a timely manner. Because of this young people learn to recognise when they need to seek appropriate medical help.

Young people maintain contact with family and other significant people in line with their care plans. This contact is appropriately facilitated by the home. Staff have not received specific training in this area and to improve practice in this area a recommendation is made. This shortfall has not impacted upon the care of young people currently in the home but training would enhance good practice and the quality of care offered.

Quality of care

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

The quality of care provided is improving outcomes for young people. Individual needs are considered and met in care planning used by the home. A social worker said that 'all needs are considered and met' and the staff team are 'very good at boundary setting and consistency'. As a result of this young people feel secure and valued.

Young people feel that staff are always concerned about their welfare. A young person said that they 'love it here,' as the staffs have, 'stuck by me'. Effective referral and introduction planning ensures that placements are appropriate and individually tailored to meet specific needs. Existing residents participate in pre-placement planning to ensure they feel involved and are able to welcome new residents. Consequently, existing residents know their wishes and feelings are important to how the home is run.

Young people are cared for by a committed and motivated staff group who demonstrate a good understanding of young people's needs. Educational opportunities are promoted by provision of flexible educational planning. This makes effective use of in-house provision or local college facilities as appropriate.

Individual placement plans are clear and reviewed regularly. This means staff are able to provide care that is based upon the most up-to-date information available. Young people are involved in the development of these plans as is appropriate to their age and understanding. One young person said, 'I discuss all my risk

assessments. I like to know what is going on. I know my care plan.'

Young people's health and dietary needs are fully met. Specific dietary needs or preferences are central to the planning of menus. Key work sessions consider healthy choices. Young people's emotional and psychological health is closely monitored. Staff are able to access any guidance or support they may need to maintain good quality care.

The house is spacious and comfortable. Young people's pictures and art work are on display leading to a homely and young person-centred feel to the property.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people say they feel safe in this placement with one young person saying, 'I feel safer here than I did in (previous placement).' They say that over time they have built positive relationships with staff and 'got to trust them'. Consistent boundaries are provided by a team who are fully trained in safeguarding issues and are confident in implementing the home's procedures. Risk assessments and behaviour management plans are in place. These address young people's behaviour and help to protect them.

Young people do not go missing from this home. However, policies and procedures are in place to ensure staff know what action to take should this occur to ensure young people are protected.

Restraint is rarely used within the home. When it is used it is done so for appropriate reasons. Young people are encouraged to comment upon the use of restraint. There is a shortfall in the recording of all details of restraints in the home's central log. The impact of this on young people is minimal as restraints are also recorded on individual files.

Young people are protected by the organisation's robust recruitment practice. Staff personnel files are well-ordered and clear. However, records do not always demonstrate that references are verified by telephone and the home cannot always provide evidence of its good practice.

Young people live in a safe environment. The home and grounds are secure. Robust safety and servicing checks are undertaken. Regular fire drills ensure young people know how to exit the building safely in case of emergency.

Leadership and management

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

The home benefits from a committed and appropriately qualified Registered Manager who is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. A detailed development

plan is in place that aims to further improve outcomes and care for young people. There have been no complaints and the requirement from the previous inspection has been met.

Young people are cared for by a caring and appropriately trained staff group. Staff feel supported through daily discussions, team meetings and effective handovers; staff are able to develop practice and better meet young people's needs. Supervision is provided to all staff. However, this is not always at the frequency indicated in the home's policies and procedures and therefore staff development is not as consistent as it could be. The impact of this shortfall on young people is minimal because staff receive good quality support from the Registered Manager on a more informal basis.

The home's Statement of Purpose provides understandable and clear information about the services provided. A social worker said 'the placement is great' and this was partly because the placement is 'managed very well'. There are satisfactory arrangements for the external monitoring of the home. The manager effectively evaluates practice through observation and discussion as well as reviewing documentation.

The Registered Manager ensures significant events relating to the young people in the home are notified to the appropriate local authority. The action taken by the home following these incidents has been of a high standard and this has ensured the safety the young people involved. Some of these notifications have not been sent to Ofsted as required. However, the impact of this shortfall is minimal in respect of the care of young people because of the good communication with other agencies.

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.