

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Angela Whiteley
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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

This home is privately run and is registered for up to two young people.

Overall effectiveness

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

Staff provide highly personalised and well-planned care through comprehensive risk assessments and care plans to meet young people's individual needs. Documents are reviewed regularly to keep young people safe in a supportive environment.

Young people's individuality is respected and promoted to help develop their positive self-image. They are encouraged to develop new skills and emotional resilience at their own pace in preparation for adult life. Managing behaviour positively has been a particular strength at this home but this is not effective for all young people. Staff recognise the need to review plans regularly to promote welfare. Sanction records are maintained but do not clearly reflect the views of young people.

Young people benefit from clearly written policies and procedures that staff fully understand and can implement. The manager demonstrates strong leadership having developed a committed and creative staff group who aspire to support young people to achieve better outcomes. Not all young people are willing to access this support at the same time.

The monitoring and quality assurance systems do not reflect the views of young people, parents and placing authorities. This is not forming part of the home's self-evaluation process to ensure the young people's needs are central to the running of the home and that they continue to receive high quality standards of care. This is a requirement under the Children's Home's Regulations 2001.

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
34 (2001)	establish and maintain a system for improving the quality of care provided in the children's home. The registered person shall supply to the HMCI a report in respect of any review	04/01/2012

	conducted by him for the purpose of paragraph (1). The system referred to shall provide for consultation with children accommodated at the home, their parents and placing authorities. (Regulation 34 (1)(b) (2) (3))	
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Recommendations

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

- ensure where any sanctions, disciplinary measures or restraints are used, children are encouraged to have their views recorded in the records kept by the home. (NMS 3.18)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people are helped to understand and address the impact their life experiences have had on the behaviours they exhibit. The positive behaviour management plans, which help to strengthen emotional well-being, are not effective for all young people. Not all young people at this home are benefiting from the nurturing environment offered due to their specific circumstances. The use of physical restraint has not been necessary in this home.

Young people are supported in their education, however a lack of regular attendance at school means not all young people are able to achieve educationally.

Young people have detailed health assessments, which try to address their psychological and emotional health needs through the provision of specialist services. Some young people are not ready to benefit from this support because of more pressing behaviours that staff are trying to address. Young people are able to enjoy a healthy balanced diet using a diverse range of foods that staff help them prepare and eat together.

Young people are encouraged to access a range of social and sporting activities. Young people in this placement do not take full advantage of these opportunities.

Staff are committed to maintaining and facilitating agreed levels of family contact as young people's identity and family origin are viewed as important in developing positive self-esteem.

Individualised pathway plans help staff support young people to develop independent living skills as part of their transition to adult services. Young people are able to work at their own pace as plans are regularly reviewed as new skills are learnt.

Quality of care

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

Young people receive an excellent quality of care based on individualised and well-planned packages of care. An experienced and stable staff group demonstrate a good understanding of young peoples' needs and support young people accordingly. Staff have a diverse range of skills, which complement each other. They make positive contributions to finding imaginative ways of engaging with young people to help them achieve their potential. Some young people are not willing to accept the level of care provided to them.

Staff work tirelessly to provide opportunities for young people to succeed. Staff are realistic in how they set targets for young people to achieve positive outcomes and recognise this cannot always be achieved when young people are in crisis. Staff work pro-actively with the placing authorities to ensure reviews and meetings are held at timely intervals, and that young people are able to contribute their views.

Young people's needs are central to the running of the home. Young people say sanctions are imposed fairly and effectively. Sanction books are in place but do not always reflect young people's views. Young people are encouraged to acquire the knowledge and skills required to enable them to become self-sufficient and prepare them for adult life. They are able to develop skills in a caring and nurturing environment commensurate with their age and understanding whilst acknowledging their individual need for support.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people feel safe and comfortable staying at the home. Young people develop respect for themselves and others through individually negotiated positive behaviour management plans that are regularly reviewed. This helps young people develop positive self-esteem and social behaviours, however, some young people are not receptive to this at the time.

Staff actively promote the welfare of young people at the home. Young people are protected by a range of highly effective measures that balance their need for increased independence with safeguarding requirements. Not all young people accept the need for such levels of protection. Highly experienced and competent carers support young people to take reasonable risks as part of their growth and development. They can demonstrate a clear understanding of the policies and procedures that are necessary to protect each young person in their care.

Young people know how to make a complaint. Young people say they can speak to staff if they have concerns. Records show that immediate action is taken to address matters and they are dealt with effectively. Young people say bullying is not an issue

at this home as clear policies and procedures are in place that supports a zero-tolerance approach.

This home has an extremely robust system in place for the reporting and recording of events where a young person is missing from home. Staff are pro-active in trying to persuade young people not to run away from home. Staff keep in touch by phone and look for young people to facilitate their safe return. Young people know the circumstances when they will be reported as missing. The home has developed excellent links with missing person's officers in two police authorities. Regular meetings are held to agree strategies to manage and minimise risks to young people who go missing without authority. Staff undertake direct work with young people when they return to help keep them safe in the future.

All staff are carefully selected and vetted. Robust recruitment procedures are in place, which ensures all staff employed are suitable to work with young people. Visitors to the home are monitored and supervised appropriately to ensure young people are protected.

Young people live in a home where there is a strong ethos on safeguarding. Fire safety systems are in good order and the manager monitors all health and safety areas on a monthly basis.

Leadership and management

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

Young people receive extensive support and continuity of care from a highly qualified staff group who have a broad range of skills and experiences. Young people benefit from high staffing ratios, which comply with their needs and the home's Statement of Purpose. They live in a home which is efficiently managed and well resourced and where communication is vital to young people's safety. The staff group are committed and motivated. They say they are well supported and have strong leadership from their manager who provides regular supervision, team meetings, training and daily shift handovers.

Staff are trained in a wide variety of safety and childcare subjects, which enhances staff competency. The target of 80% of staff achieving National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People is not currently met, however, all staff are registered on appropriate courses and are working towards completion with the full support of the manager.

Young people are able to benefit from effective management and high standards of care. The manager is striving to improve the service to achieve outcomes that are positive for young people. The monitoring and quality assurance system in place is not sufficiently robust in ensuring a range of information is used to improve the quality of care for young people.

Young people's case files are well maintained and organised and are stored securely,

which respects young people's privacy. They contain relevant information to give a clear picture of young people's experiences during their time at the home. Other key documents are in place including a comprehensive development plan to drive forward further improvements.

Equality and diversity practice is **outstanding**.