

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Jennifer Reed
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Service information

Brief description of the service

A private organisation owns and operates this children's home. The setting supports and cares for one young person who has complex emotional and behavioural difficulties.

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 is well managed and provides young people with a good standard of individualised care and support. The home's robust implementation of young people's care plans focuses care practice on meeting the assessed needs of young people in placement. Safeguarding young people is given high priority by the staff team and its consideration is central in all aspects of the home's operation.

Young people are fully involved in daily decisions about the running of the home and they are happy living here. Their development is enhanced by the positive relationships they form with staff and their enjoyment of new opportunities and activities. They are making good progress.

Three areas of practice are identified to improve the provision of care provided to young people. These relate to the quality of risk assessments, care plans and the provision of internet access for 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
22 (2001)	ensure that electronic or mechanical monitoring devices for the surveillance of children, for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, is provided for in the child's placement plan. (Regulation 22 (1) (b))	31/07/2013

Recommendations

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

- promote the welfare of children living in the home by ensuring risk assessments for young people's activities are not limited by following a prescribed formatted assessment process (NMS 4.2)
- ensure the home provides young people with suitable facilities so that they have any help necessary for the completion of homework and to emphasise the value of private study; in particular, all young people should have easy and regular access to a computer with internet access to support their education. (CA1989 Volume 5: statutory guidance 2.21)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people are making good progress in many areas of their lives, given their starting points on admission to the home. They are learning how to keep themselves safe and they are enjoying taking part in the local community. Young people's self-esteem and confidence are increasing as they develop their skills and abilities. Young people are learning how to cook, to do their laundry and to take some responsibility for their self-care and well-being. This will support young people when they move on to more independent living situations.

Young people are fully participating in their educational provision. They are taking national examinations and considering further education opportunities. They benefit from the good support and encouragement they receive to achieve and to do well. Staff listen to young people's views, help them to access information about local courses and discuss their options with them. This helps young people to make realistic and achievable choices. Young people sign-up to courses that interest them and which they are likely to enjoy and complete. This improves young people's life chances and will potentially help them to move successfully into the world of work and adulthood.

Young people are fully involved in daily decisions about what happens in this home. For example, they plan the weekly menu and I choose what they are going to eat each day, choose activities and tell staff what they think about things. Young people's inclusion in planning and decision-making within the home contributes to

their satisfaction with the care and support they receive. Young people like it in the home and do not have anything to complain about.

Young people receive good support to help them make informed decisions about their care. The home works collaboratively with young people in decision-making to give them shared ownership of care plans. This approach provides transparency and openness in the delivery of their care; young people are clear about why they are living in the home and any plans for their future. Young people can read the records kept by the home and what is written by staff about them. They can add their comments to their records or discuss amendments they think should be made to particular documents. This inclusiveness helps young people to take some personal responsibility for their development and progress and develop trusting relationships with adults.

Quality of care

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

The home provides individualised care and behaviour management strategies for young people. These detailed documents guide staff in how best to keep young people safe and how to promote their welfare. Young people's well-being is the priority consideration in all aspects of their care. Their placement plans are regularly updated to reflect emerging needs and the identification of effective and supportive staff interventions. However, the arrangements in place for the use of door alarms to safeguard young people are not included in young people's care plans although, a social worker confirms their authority's agreement for this measure to promote young people's welfare.

Staff are committed to finding the best way forward to help young people fulfil their potential. Each young person's unique identity and characteristics are positively embraced by the staff and diversity is acknowledged and celebrated. Relationships between staff and young people are very positive. Young people are at ease living in this home and say that they can talk easily with individual staff members. Staff recognise young people's vulnerabilities and strengths. Good consideration is given to ensuring they do not suffer discrimination and have equal access to safe opportunities.

The home ensures young people receive regular medical checks and good health care. The system for the administration of medication is robust and medication is securely stored, ensuring young people's welfare is promoted and they are safeguarded. Staff monitor the quality of menus to ensure young people are offered balanced and nutritious meals to support them in developing healthy eating patterns. The home provides young people with a wide range of activities which they enjoy. Many activities include physical exercise which helps to keep young people healthy and fit, for example, there are plans to participate in the 'Race for Life' soon.

Staff support young people in their educational achievements and there is sufficient, suitable space within the home for young people to privately study. However,

although the young people's computer has internet access, this has not been in working order for several weeks. This limits young people's access to learning opportunities.

The home is adequately furnished and decorated and young people can personalise their bedrooms and choose their furnishings. The garden is laid to lawn and young people enjoy spending time playing there. The home's location provides young people with easy access to the local town, and staff support young people to use its facilities.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

The home's operation focuses on supporting young people to feel safe, and to be kept safe. Individualised behaviour management strategies and care plans guide staff in effectively dealing with any challenging behaviour or difficulties young people are likely to present. This contributes to young people feeling more secure. Young people are aware of their plans and understand the home's boundaries, staff expectations of their behaviour and what may happen when difficulties arise.

Staff skilfully help young people to understand how to protect themselves and how they can be kept safe from harm. Staff support young people to address identified safeguarding issues and to develop personal strategies to keep themselves safe. This sensitively delivered care encourages young people to trust staff and accept their support. Their increased understanding and acknowledgement of key issues that affect them helps keep young people safe and contributes to the development of their confidence and identity.

The home provides young people with ample literature about bullying and how the home deals with such unacceptable behaviour. This helps young people know what to do should this ever occur and contributes to protecting them from such behaviour. In addition, young people are protected by knowing how to access advocates and external professionals to discuss differing concerns, and how to find out about their rights and available support. This empowers young people to take a proactive stance to deal with issues more independently.

Staff are proactive in searching for young people who go missing to ensure their swift and safe return to the home. Staff provide a high level of vigilance within the home to protect young people and promote their well-being. The home rigorously implements the local Missing from Home and Care protocol. The home has established a strong working relationship with the police, resulting in the provision of a robust response to finding young people as quickly as possible to keep them safe from harm.

The home makes sure that any activities that young people take part in are, so far as reasonably practicable, free from avoidable risks. However, risks assessments for activities are mostly completed within a prescribed, written format of considerations.

Consequently, these documents do not sufficiently highlight the unique needs of individuals. This lack of specific focus potentially places them at possible risk. However, to date, this shortfall has not adversely impacted on the welfare of young people.

Recruitment and selection procedures for new staff are robust. The requisite vetting processes are undertaken to check that suitable persons are employed to look after young people.

Leadership and management

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

The Registered Manager's vigilant oversight of the home's operation ensures that staff know how to provide a sound standard of care to young people and the home is well organised. The manager is registered with Ofsted to manage two of the organisation's children's homes. The staffing of the home has been restructured to ensure that a senior worker is available to deputise for the manager in their absence.

The home strives for continuous improvement and the staff team demonstrate a strong commitment to providing exemplary care to young people. The home utilises the evidence gathered from internal and external monitoring practices to identify areas of strength and areas for further development. Action is promptly taken to address any identified shortfall in service provision. The home has satisfactorily addressed the one recommendation made at the last inspection.

The stable staff team provides young people with good levels of support and a continuity of staffing in their placements. This helps young people to trust known members of staff and feel more secure. Staff receive a good range of relevant training to help them look after young people well. Training opportunities ensure all staff can achieve an appropriate level of professional qualification. Recently employed staff are working towards achieving these awards. These 'newer' members of staff work alongside experienced practitioners to ensure that young people benefit from effective care practices at all times. An independent reviewing officer said, 'The staff do all that you would expect them to do; they show warmth to young people and they are approachable.'

Staff attend regular team meetings and individual supervision sessions. They benefit from the management guidance and developmental opportunities these forums offer. Staff are encouraged to reflect on their abilities and skills to effectively implement care plans and to improve the standard of care provided to young people.

Records are clear, up to date and securely stored. They provide a detailed history of young people's placement and the progress that they make.

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 the inspection of children's homes.