

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC061795
Inspection date	14/12/2011
Inspector	Keith Riley
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	29/03/2011
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2011

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

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 setting is one of two homes operated by the same private organisation. The home aims to provide a holistic approach to the welfare and development of young people in their care, accommodating six young people on a planned or emergency basis. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties.

Overall effectiveness

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

This is a highly effective service that positively impacts on the young people's lives. Young people receive an excellent standard of care and highly personalised support from a committed and caring staff team.

Robust safeguarding procedures and practice that are well understood by staff keep young people safe. Young people say they feel safe and well cared for and enjoy positive relationships with staff.

Education is seen as a priority and staff successfully promote engagement with education and support young people's educational achievement. Young people also benefit from a highly effective approach to promote their independent living skills.

Young people's emotional and physical health needs are met with support from staff engaging with a variety of other professionals to ensure the best possible outcomes.

Effective management ensures that the home is monitored robustly and that practice is reviewed with a view to improving outcomes for the young people. There is a clear, written development plan in place which demonstrates a capacity for continuing improvement.

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Staff provide a caring, open and homely environment where young people are supported to work on their self esteem, behaviour, independent living skills and focus on the future. There are excellent outcomes such as young people disengaging from self-harming and destructive behaviours and finding other ways to understand and manage their difficult and challenging emotions. Excellent knowledge of young people's needs with unified staff support enables young people to express themselves in as calm an environment as possible. As a result significant incidents are infrequent.

Young people feel comfortable with staff and interact well with them in a relaxed manner. The highly individualised support keeping young people at the centre of practice generates a culture of respect and security. Young people say they feel secure. Their life experiences and confidence is enriched and they reciprocate the respect and dignity afforded to them. Young people say they are 'very grateful for all the times you (the staff) have helped me out' and 'the staff help me understand why I feel like that'.

Young people's psychological, physical and health needs are met. They have the best possible care and support through staff engaging with a variety of other professionals to ensure individual needs are being met. Young people are well supported to lead healthy lifestyles and have their health needs met. For example, there are lots of opportunities for exercise and outdoor activities. Healthy eating is consistently encouraged and young people have lots of opportunities for learning about healthy food. Young people are able to plan, budget and prepare their own meals. This increases their chances toward being able to live independently.

Comprehensive pathway plans and an innovative life skills programme further the opportunities young people have to increase their life skills and develop their independence. Young people are highly motivated to extend their skills such as learning how to drive or managing their own budget.

Education is seen as a priority in the home and young people have excellent support at school, college or through the home's own qualified tutors. Their achievement is exceptional taking into account their starting point at the time of placement. Young people speak proudly of their progress and have clear goals for the future. Education and support staff work closely together. This creates an ethos and culture in the home that helps to transform the attitude and approach of young people toward their education. Young people, who have previously disengaged from education, are now learning academic and practical life skills.

Children benefit from good levels of contact with their families and people who are important to them. Contact is fully facilitated by care staff, who support individuals to receive visitors or have home visits. Professional reviews show that 'family relationships are a lot better'. Young people have an understanding of their history and a sense of identity.

Overall, young people are receiving excellent levels of support and nurturing from a staff team who know their strengths and vulnerabilities.

Quality of care

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

The emphasis placed on identifying and supporting young people's holistic needs is outstanding. The opportunities for exploring young people's emotional and psychological health are central to care planning processes. Young people enjoy

excellent supportive relationships with staff that are based on effective communication and trust. They benefit from the consistent relationships that are in place between them and their key worker. Key staff demonstrate motivation and continued interest in the welfare of individuals. Young people say, 'the staff take time to sit and listen to my worries'.

Regular team meetings ensure the current needs of young people are discussed and there is a consistent approach. Young people speak positively of their relationships with staff. They know how their needs are being supported as a result of the ongoing dialogue and trusting relationship with the staff. Staff show empathy and understanding of how young people are feeling. This means that young people are able to express themselves and develop their self-management competencies.

Staff are unquestionably committed to de-escalation techniques when presented with challenging behaviours. As a result the potential for situations to escalate is minimised. Any incidents are analysed with possible triggers identified and positive corrective action taken such as supporting young people to deal with their upsetting emotions or updates to risk assessments. Staff and young people speak positively of this approach and the support they receive. This means that the number of significant incidents requiring physical intervention is minimal.

Young people have considerable input into their statutory review. Their views are promoted and seen as central to running the home. They benefit from numerous opportunities, both formal and informal, to consult with members of staff and to voice their feelings and opinions. As a result, issues such as bedtimes and access to a choice of television channels are resolved quickly without the need to access the formal complaints procedure. The complaints procedure is robust; any complaints from young people are taken very seriously. The Registered Manager takes swift and decisive action and young people are able to comment on the outcome. The number of complaints is low.

Young people are learning to understand the nutritional value of eating a good diet. They also have an appreciation of different cultures and a range of international cuisine. Needs relating to young people's cultural background and personal identity are identified and positively addressed in both daily living and care planning. For example, young people are encouraged and supported to explore their ethnic background and their belief system.

The home is decorated and furnished to an exceptional standard which creates a pleasant domestic environment. Young people are able to personalise their bedrooms to a very high standard to reflect their hobbies and interests. This gives them a sense of identity and belonging. Young people also engage in the things that interest them outside the home such as football, go-karting and fishing.

Young people benefit from carefully planned health care. Their emotional well being is promoted to an excellent standard, with the staff arranging and facilitating contact with other professionals if appropriate. Other routine health appointments are offered to the young people who make informed decisions about whether they wish

to take advantage of the assistance and support offered.

Staff have high aspirations for all young people, irrespective of their initial educational starting points. There is a robust staff structure and a carefully planned programme in place for each young person. This ensures young people have the maximum opportunity to learn. Excellent communication between education and care staff enable young people to continue to learn within the home environment.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Overall there are excellent arrangements to safeguard young people. Young people state they feel safe and secure at the setting. They feel comfortable in talking to their key worker and other professionals involved in their lives.

Effective management and adherence to robust policies ensure all are protected and supported. For example, extensive risk assessments are under regular review. The culture embedded in the home ensures that the young people benefit from a robust and rigorous approach which treats the young people's emotional and physical safety as paramount. The Registered Manager ensures that all the relevant agencies are informed of any safeguarding issues. This ensures that strategies and plans can be developed in the event of any concerns being identified.

Staff promote safe behaviours outside the home as well as positive behaviour within the home. Excellent care practice adopted by staff protect young people while empowering them to take responsibility, for example staying in contact with young people who are choosing to return back late to the home.

Staff are trained in the home's behaviour management programme. There is a strong emphasis on de-escalation and distraction. Incidents are analysed so care plans and risk assessments are amended as necessary. The consistent feedback into practice means that the incidents requiring physical intervention are low level and occur infrequently.

Rigorous recruitment procedures in line with the regulations ensure all checks are completed before a staff member is authorised to work in the home. This ensures that young people are cared for by appropriate adults with a full employment history.

Young people feel secure and their needs are being met. This means that incidents where young people go missing from the home are minimised. Staff are aware of the individual vulnerabilities of each young person and are very clear what action to take should an incident occur. This encompasses a robust 'Runaway and Missing from Home and Care' protocol with the police. Bullying is not identified as an issue.

Young people live in a safe environment that is well maintained. Regular health and safety checks ensure the standard is maintained. External agencies certify the safety

of the environment such as the fire alarm system. Young people know how to evacuate in the event of an emergency.

Young people are involved in setting behaviour management incentive targets. They are rewarded when their objectives have been met for example through the use of monetary rewards. Sanctions imposed relate to the loss of privileges. The methods being used are proving effective in the management of young people's behaviour.

Leadership and management

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

The Registered Manager is determined that young people have a positive experience of care. She ensures that the home has a consistent staff team committed to promoting the welfare of young people. There is a strong visible leadership team promoting high quality care and positive outcomes. Young people receive care from a staff team who are themselves highly supported and enthusiastic about their roles. This includes a vibrant team of home tutors who support young people who have struggled to access a mainstream education. Young people's attitude and approach to learning is significantly improving.

The organisation demonstrates a substantial commitment to staff training. Staff feel their training needs are met and they positively engage in the training on offer, such as attachment theory and therapeutic workshops. New staff are subject to a comprehensive induction programme and must satisfy the Registered Manager of their competencies during a probation period. Young people are cared and supported by a competent and professional staff team who are dedicated to meet their individual needs. Young people have the best possible opportunities to reach their full potential. Young people speak positively of the home; 'it has a good vibe' and 'the staff are brilliant and are fun to be with'.

The home offers care and accommodation for young people in line with its Statement of Purpose. The aims and objectives of the home are understood by authorities who place young people in the home. The Registered Manager regularly considers the running of the home to maintain excellent care levels. Internal monitoring arrangements are rigorous and visits by an independent visitor, who reports monthly on the service being delivered, are very effective. This means the quality of care that young people experience is under constant scrutiny and improvement.

Significant events are notified promptly to the appropriate authority. This means that incidents are dealt with appropriately and in consultation with other professionals. Young people benefit from living in a culture where the desire to adjust practice to improve outcomes is the norm.

Equality and diversity practice is **outstanding**.

