

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Jackie Callaghan
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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 privately owned children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four young people of either gender aged between 9 to 17 years on admission, who have emotional or behavioural problems.

Overall effectiveness

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

This is a good home with many outstanding features. Young people are safe and feel safe. The staff are effective because young people receive personalised, well planned care, taking full account of the individual needs of young people. The home strongly promotes positive outcomes for all young people. One parent said 'it is very homely and comfortable for my child.' All staff are well trained and experienced to meet the diverse needs of young people. The home works exceptionally hard to ensure young people receive effective healthcare, assessment, treatment and support to reflect their individual needs. All these aspects of care are captured in a placement plan that is highly personalised and inclusive of young people's participation. The utmost priority is given to helping young people develop a sense of self-worth to help them face everyday challenges.

Young people hold their quality of care in high regard. This extends to viewing the staff as a major strength within the home. There is a wonderful rapport between young people and staff that is trusting and sincere. A young person described the home as 'outstanding' and 'carers are very caring and it is a nice environment to live in.' This assessment is further endorsed by other stakeholders that hold the home in high regard.

Records and documentation are well maintained and contribute well to the ongoing care and support young people receive. Two areas of practice are identified for attention in order to improve outcomes for children.

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
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33 (2001)	ensure that the regulation 33 visitor interviews, with their consent, children accommodated at the home in order to form an opinion of the standard of care provided by the home. (Regulation 33.4 (a))	08/07/2011
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Recommendations

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

- develop the bullying risk assessments to clearly show individual risks and vulnerabilities of each young person in order to help staff prevent and counter bullying. (NMS 17.11)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Care staff take immense interest in the welfare of young people by listening and supporting them gently through significant events in their lives. Young people receive exceptional help to identify how they feel about what has happened to them and what they want to achieve in the future. Young people have important relationships preserved because of the dedication of the staff who work hard to support family contact. This commitment helps to re-establish meaningful contact with people who are important to young people.

Young people presented some extremely challenging behaviours prior to admission which had led to a breakdown in their past care arrangements. Young people's behaviours are transformed by highly competent staff who set consistent boundaries. For example, young people are engaged on a healthy living programme which results in young people relaxing and enjoying their lives.

Young people are given maximum support to re-engage with the community at large. With each new milestone in attainment or progress, praise and motivation is never far away. Young people have substantial help in planning a successful transition to adulthood that takes into account their very complex needs and which takes their views into account. Young people have excellent access to multi-agency health care that provides the essential support they need to help safeguard their physical, emotional and psychological health.

The staff place the well-being of young people at the heart of everything they do irrespective of the challenges and barriers faced by young people. The staff work hard to help make a difference in a young person's life by celebrating the smallest achievements. This is done irrespective of ethnicity, faith, gender or sexual orientation. Young people are well cared for in line with their individual placement plan. The home is exceedingly good at involving young people and people who are significant to them in helping to develop the care. For example, regular consultation forms completed by social workers and young people's families provide the home with active feedback that helps them to continually develop practice.

Quality of care

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

Young people clearly benefit from a competent and very able staff team who genuinely care about the young people in the home. Young people build positive relationships with staff and engage in meaningful conversations with them. These positive relationships enable young people to feel safe in their care and helps them to improve poor self-image and build up emotional resilience.

Young people are positive about the care they receive and state 'staff really do care.' Staff are providing the right balance between nurturing and enabling young people to be independent. For example, young people are encouraged to shop, prepare and cook meals, clean and tidy their own rooms as well as maintaining good personal hygiene. One young person said when asked about the standard of care provided, 'I say they are outstanding.'

Staff are knowledgeable about the young people in their care. The wealth of information they are provided with through planning documentation and risk assessments is excellent. The individual needs of the young people including cultural, religious, language and racial needs are fully identified and addressed. In addition, all young people have regular meetings with their key worker to discuss their recent progress, success, problems and concerns. Staff are excellent at helping young people understand why it may not be possible to act upon their wishes in all cases. As a result, young people feel involved and consulted about all aspects of their lives and feel they are given every opportunity to contribute to their own care planning arrangements. Staff actively seek young people's views at both an individual and group level and respond in a way that makes the young people believe that their opinions are truly valued.

Young people are successfully encouraged to express their feelings and emotions without infringing the rights of others. Staff are effective in teaching young people models of good behaviour such as courtesy and respect, which promotes personal, social and emotional development. Young people are helped to understand the consequences of their actions because of the home's ethos to promote positive behaviours.

Staff are proactive and consistent in supporting young people's educational achievement. They successfully engage with the company's school and as a result young people's attendance is excellent. The emphasis given to education by the home's staff is purposeful and this helps young people to maximise their talents and be successful in their endeavours.

Young people live in a home that is appropriately located, designed and maintained. Although the home is rural in its location the company have more than compensated for this with the excellent level of transport provision. This means that young people have convenient transport for activities, shopping and home visits.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Risk assessments are in place for each individual child or young person, the premises and activities. These clearly identify the potential risk and effective strategies are in place to minimise this risk. However, the current anti-bullying risk assessments, due to their generic design, do not contain enough information about young people's individual vulnerabilities and risks. Young people's behaviour management plans, however, are focussed on the individual and give clear guidance to staff about managing anti-social behaviours. One young person shared this view as they said 'I have come along way since being at this home'.

The staff are very clear about their responsibility to protect young people. The staff promote a culture that ensures young people are listened to and respected as individuals. The process for dealing with complaints is fair and transparent. The careful selection, recruitment and retention of staff helps young people feel secure and to have a consistent team of staff that know them well. There is a substantial commitment to working and engaging constructively with internal and external stakeholders to secure the safety of young people.

Young people are protected because staff attempt to prevent unauthorised absences. When this occurs staff initiate procedures and actively make telephone contact and look for young people at known locations to encourage a safe return. Joint protocols with the police are followed and attempts to break patterns, divert from criminal activity and re engage with young people are part of reviewing plans. As a result, young people are appropriately protected and are choosing to run away less frequently.

The environment is physically safe and appropriately secure, taking account of the needs and characteristics of the young people cared for at the home. Young people are additionally protected because they regularly participate in fire evacuation drills. This means that they know the correct steps to take in the event of an emergency

Leadership and management

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

The home is effectively and efficiently managed. The Registered Manager provides good quality leadership which helps staff champion young people to overcome complex and challenging problems. This open and honest dialogue helps young people to make small and big changes in their lives. Staff help young people achieve their aspirations, take personal responsibility and nurture more awareness around safety. Staff work hard to help manage and co-ordinate all these areas effectively. The level of progress young people have made is a testament of the impact the management staff have made to help young people aspire, irrespective of their ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or faith.

The Registered Manager understands the strengths and weaknesses of the home and has a clear development plan in place. The current regulation 33 visits are mainly taking place during school hours. This means that this monitoring is not routinely consulting with the young people in order to get a full view of how the home is operating. However, regulation 33 reports are comprehensive in every other detail. The home is adequately resourced, indicating the financial viability of the provider. The one requirement and two recommendations from the previous inspection have been fully addressed. The home has improved and reviewed their fire risk assessment and ensured that all young people assessed as being able to have their own bedroom key, do indeed have a key.

The home employs a sufficient number of staff, who are appropriately trained and effectively supervised and supported. The staff team attend regular team meetings and the Registered Manager and deputy manager are diligent at ensuring staff receive monthly supervision and an annual appraisal. In addition, staff receive good quality training to enhance their individual skills and to keep them up-to-date with professional and legal developments. This enables young people to enjoy an excellent quality of service.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.