

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Maria McGranaghan
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This is a children's home for up to three young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties or learning disabilities. The home is managed by a private 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 **outstanding**.

Young people make exceptional progress in a home dedicated to providing a high standard of planned and effective care. Young people enjoy consistent sense of achievement particularly in areas such as, education, a reduction in risk taking behaviour and developing and sustaining positive relationships with staff and peers.

Highly effective placement planning ensures that young people's needs are thoroughly assessed. For example, excellent relationships are formed between partner agencies and this ensures that young people receive the right help, support and guidance they need to make suitable changes in their lives. Likewise, young people's views and opinions fully influence the care planning process and this assists them to feel in control of their lives.

Young people safety is exceptionally well managed in the home. Safeguarding systems are in place and work hand-in-hand with up-to-date risk assessments which sets out strategies in order to reduce potential risk. Likewise, young people are fully supported to understand the implications of risk taking behaviour through proactive relationships with external agencies. As a result, young people's actions or behaviour rarely places them at risk.

Young people live in a home with a strong and stable staff team. Regular supervision and training enable staff to maintain the excellent standards of care that are evident within the home. Young people form trusting relationships with staff which assist them to make progress in all aspects of their lives.

The home is suitably managed by an experienced registered manager. The managers

monitoring systems are in place and serve to identify areas for growth and development to enhance the overall performance within the home. However, information provided to Ofsted does not include an evaluation of the overall service provision including the progress made in the home. Similarly, while quality assurance reports have been further developed, reports also do not provide a suitable evaluation of the service provided in the home. These matters do not have an impact on the quality of care provided to young people living in the home, however, two recommendations are made at this inspection in order to further improve the practice in the home.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure when the manager monitors records, in line with regulations a clear evaluation on emerging patterns and trends and areas for development is included (NMS 21.2)
- ensure visits to the home carried out by Regulation 33 includes relevant checks and evaluation of the care provided in the home and areas for development (NMS 21.7)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **outstanding**.

Young people make excellent progress across all areas of their lives. This nurturing home is supported by consistent boundaries and routines and this enables young people to experience a safe and stable living environment in which to thrive and grow.

Young people have excellent relationships with staff. A strong, committed and highly experienced staff team work hard to secure positive outcomes for young people. Likewise young people benefit from additional support from a range of external services. This multi-agency approach assists young people to understand their personal circumstances and make positive and productive changes in their lives.

Young people are supported to attend the most appropriate educational provision. School reports highlight exceptional progress with young people gaining a range of high grade GCSE qualifications while others undertake access to university courses. Likewise, appropriate provision is made for homework and this is supported by an array of books and educational materiel to aid continued learning. It is clear that staff are consistent in promoting education as an important and essential feature in all young people's lives. Consequently, young people enjoy school and develop a sense of pride in their achievements.

Young people live in a home where their views and opinions are highly valued and respected. Consultation with young people is daily practice, from discussions around the breakfast table to more formal young people's meetings, keywork sessions and the completion of consultation documents. Likewise, young people are supported to personalise their bedrooms and make choices about their personal style and interests. This enables young people to feel important, enhancing self-confidence and esteem. Young people say, 'I love it here. It is like being at home. We choose the menus, Christmas decoration and how rooms are decorated. We decide what works best for us and what we might need the staff to help us with. It is just great.'

Young people benefit from a weekly activity plan which incorporates their individual aspirations in order to try out new activities. Young people say, 'I didn't used to do many activities, but now I really enjoy them. I enjoy going out with staff but I also enjoy activities in the home such as, competitions with staff on the Nintendo Wii.' Likewise, young people are supported to make valuable friendships within the community. As a result, young people feel part of their community and grow in confidence, self-esteem and develop essential social skills in order to make and sustain friendships.

Young people benefit from effective and consistent health care. Regular consultation with health professionals supported by targeted keyworker sessions ensure young people have a good understanding of their personal circumstances. Likewise, sessions such as, alcohol awareness, drugs, and sexual health are a consistent feature in the home and this supports young people to make informed decisions in their lives.

Staff encourage young people to develop independence skills in accordance with their age and abilities. For example, detailed programs coupled with focussed keyworker sessions help to ensure that appropriate steps are taken to maximise individual potential. Consequently, the person centred approach practiced within the home assists young people to prepare for adulthood while suitably equipping them with essential life skills.

Young people benefit from exceptionally well planned and supported contact with family. Staff maintain close links with families and involve them where appropriate in the overall planning of the young people's care. A parent said, 'This is the best home for my child, the staff are great, the home is beautiful and they are happy. I couldn't ask for anything more.' Detailed placement plans ensure contact only takes place with only those whom it has been agreed and arrangements are reviewed regularly.

Quality of care

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

Young people thrive in an environment dedicated to enabling them to achieve in all aspects of their lives. Staff demonstrate a strong commitment to young people and this is evident in the excellent relationships they have established. Young people and

staff enjoy appropriate banter and are clearly relaxed in each other's company.

Young people are encouraged to demonstrate socially acceptable behaviour. Individual behaviour management plans are supported by comprehensive risk assessments and where appropriate additional external support. This process enables young people and staff to work together in order to identify triggers for negative behaviour and effective strategies for positive behaviour management. Likewise, young people benefit from reviewing their individual risk assessments. Young people say, 'when I first came to live here my behaviour was really bad and we worked together to look at how I could manage things better. I don't behave like that anymore.' Similarly, methods such as an individual reward system enable young people to work towards specific goals and recognise positive and helpful attitudes. This has proved to be successful as there are no behaviour management concerns in the home.

Young people know how to complain. Information is provided in the young people's guide and organisational complaints documents. Procedures for managing complaints are in place to ensure they are handled fairly and investigated thoroughly by the manager or external nominated person. Since the last full inspection there have been no complaints to the home.

Young people's placement plans capture a clear picture of individual need. A range of external services work in partnership with the home to ensure young people are afforded professional support in order to maximise their overall potential. The manager said 'we are all very clear what help and support young people need and understand how important it is they get the right help, I think all the staff work really hard to help young people.' Similarly, plans clearly identify individual heritage and identity. Young people are encouraged to pursue their individual beliefs and are offered a range of material to develop their understanding of individual choice and difference.

Young people live in a home where there is a clear culture of promoting personal achievement and development. Education is viewed with high regard and is fully supported by a creative and enthusiastic staff team. Likewise, staff work diligently with partner agencies to ensure young people are provided with additional educational support where necessary. For example, young people are provided with additional private tuition in order to enhance their knowledge prior to undertaking formal GCSE examinations. Consequently, young people's accomplishment demonstrates the commitment and effort of a focussed and child centred team.

Young people live in a spacious, well maintained home that blends into the residential area. Young people are central to making the house into their home and proudly display photographs, drawings and comments around their home.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Staff undertaken child protection training in order that they are able to respond to suspicions or allegations of abuse. Clear and co-ordinated risk assessments are in place to encapsulate individual risk factors for young people such as being missing from home. Likewise, staff work hard to ensure young people understand risk with particular regard to personal safety. Consequently, young people receive the right level of support in order to recognise risk. As a result, there are no risk management concerns in the home.

Young people are supported to live together and to respect each other. Squabbles and bickering between young people is suitably managed and monitored. Where there is a concern that bullying is taking place, the staff and the manager raise a 'cause for concern' in order that the appropriate action is taken to remedy to situation. For example, records of specific keywork sessions highlight the staff commitment in maintaining a bully free home.

Young people living in the main home have their safety and well-being very well protected. Individual action plans are in place to ensure the correct procedures and strategies are implemented without delay. Likewise, external agencies work with staff and young people to ensure a consistent approach is maintained should a young person go missing from home. The approach to the continued protection of young people proves successful as young people are rarely missing from home.

Staff promote young people's on-going protection by undertaking regular fire drills and service tests making sure that all faults are efficiently addressed. Likewise, staff are vigilant when managing visitors to the home and take appropriate steps to verify visitors identity in order to protect the young people. Clear evidence highlights stringent monitoring of all systems within the home including the appropriate storage, administration and recording of medication.

Leadership and management

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

The home is managed by an experienced Registered Manager. The home meets the aims and objectives of the Statement of Purpose, and young people and their social workers are clear about the service and support the home provides.

Monitoring systems are improved and provide a suitable audit of the overall care provided in the home. However, monitoring reports provided to Ofsted do not contain a clear evaluation of particular patterns or trends or identified areas for further development. Likewise, regulation 33 quality assurance visits are undertaken at regular intervals and provide the home with an general overview of the service provision. However, quality assurance reports also no not fully evaluate the service provided in the home in order to influence continued development.

The home employs a committed staff team who are qualified at NVQ level three. The training of staff at this level ensures that they are suitably qualified in the care and

management of young people. Staff receive suitable support from the manager. Supervision takes place on a regular basis and serves to identify training needs and personal development targets of staff. Staff say, 'the manager is very supportive I am happy working here. The training is very good and really relates to the work we do.'

Young people are looked after by a competent staff team who have a wide range of skills and experience that are well matched to the needs of young people. The numbers of staff on duty are sufficient to meet the needs of young people in the best possible way.

The staff demonstrate a strong commitment to delivering excellent child care practice tailored to the individual and personal needs of young people. The effectiveness of this approach is measurable in the exceptional progress young people make particularly in education, a reduction in risk taking behaviour and developing and sustaining relationships.

The home shows the capacity to improve.

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.