

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Alicea Churchward
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Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	23/11/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This is a local authority home that provides care and accommodation for six children with emotional and/or 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**.

Young people benefit from good quality care that promotes their needs effectively. They make positive progress and this is evident across all aspects of their care, development and welfare. Young people's views about their care are positive. They benefit from very good relationships with staff and they sustain their positive attachments.

Young people are routinely involved in the running of the home. Their views, suggestions and opinions are taken seriously to enable them to contribute to decisions made about daily life within the home. Care planning and practice is highly individualised. Young people benefit from well-tailored plans that promote their needs very well.

Young people's welfare and safety is at the centre of staff practice. Young people are kept safe and they benefit from a strong sense of personal safety. They also benefit from a home that is managed effectively, where the strengths and weaknesses of the home are clearly understood. The home strives to achieve good outcomes possible for all young people.

As a result of this inspection, a small number of requirements have been made in respect of: independent visit reports actually stating on each occasion whether or not they have spoken with young people; and that the manager robustly monitors staff files to ensure there are no gaps in employment histories.

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
33 (2001)	ensure that Regulation 33 reports make specific reference as to whether young people and staff are given the opportunity to meet with the visitor in private (Regulation 33 (4)(a))	28/06/2013
26 (2001)	ensure that all staff files contain a complete employment history or a written explanation of any gaps (Regulation 26(1)(d) and Schedule 2 (6))	28/06/2013
34 (2001)	ensure that the Registered Manager checks all staff files to ensure there are no gaps in employment histories. (Regulation 34 (1)(a) and Schedule 6 (8))	28/06/2013

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people make good progress in relation to their starting points at the home. They benefit from high quality care that promotes their needs comprehensively. Young people are taught to value their positive attributes to promote a positive view of themselves. They are supported extensively with all aspects of their care to promote their social, emotional, educational and physical development.

Young people's health needs are promoted effectively. They are registered with local health services and attend their routine health appointments. Young people access a range of services to secure their physical, emotional and psychological well-being. Those who need specialist support, benefit from the services sourced to meet their identified health needs. Young people lead a healthy lifestyle. They learn the value and benefits of healthy eating, diet, nutrition and physical exercise.

Young people make a positive contribution to the home and the wider community. The home promotes activities to support young people to pursue their specific interests. Young people are encouraged to benefit from a range of positive activities and a weekly activities plan is drawn up with them. Many of the young people currently resident are of an age whereby they pursue their individual interests with their friends generally.

Young people benefit from contact with their friends and families. They are provided with the support they need to sustain these positive attachments. Young people's family links, friendships and support networks are all enhanced as a result of the support provided to them. Young people are allowed to take reasonable risks as part

of their natural growth and development. They develop life skills to promote their independence and preparation for adulthood.

Quality of care

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

Young people continue to mature in a supportive and child-centred environment. Staff demonstrate a clear commitment to young people and this is evident in the good relationships that have been established. Young people actively engage with staff and they take part in activities together and annual holidays. These positive relationships are the foundation for managing young people's behaviour successfully and contribute to the stability of their placements.

Young people are central to care planning and young people's placement plans are tailored to meet their individual needs. Detailed care planning and proactive relationships with partner agencies ensure that young people's changing needs are consistently identified and met.

Staff work directly with young people and complete work to ensure they have a good understanding of their backgrounds and identity. Training is currently underway to enhance these skills within the staff team with support from child and adolescent mental health service. There is a culture of promoting young people's rights in which their views are sought and responded to regularly in the daily running of the home; young people's meetings and through the authority's Care to Change Council. Young people know how to raise a complaint and records demonstrate that they are responded to seriously. The children's guide is available and includes information on how to access advice and support from independent sources.

Young people live in a healthy environment where their physical, emotional and social well-being is promoted. They engage in physical and social activities with friends and have easy access to health care services to meet their individual needs. The home encourages a healthy diet and young people assist in the preparation of the home's menu and food which improves their understanding of nutrition.

Staff champion young people's educational needs through proactive partnerships with teachers and social workers. Some attend school and specific programmes that are tailored to meet individual needs. Some young people are reluctant and are about to finish their formal schooling. Staff recognise young people's achievements in the home and celebrate these through lots of verbal encouragement and incentives.

Young people live in a homely environment. They have their own bedrooms that reflect their interests. Young people are involved in plans for decoration of the home which promotes ownership and responsibility. They have space and privacy to see their friends and family and to do their homework. This affords respect and dignity to young people.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people's welfare and safety is at the centre of staff's practice. Risks associated with young people are identified comprehensively and staff adhere to safe working practices to ensure young people are kept safe. Any matters arising whereby young people may be displaying risky behaviour are managed well. Young people are taught to behave responsibly and their positive behaviour is promoted successfully.

There is effective use of rewards systems to celebrate young people's achievements and to promote their self-esteem. Young people respond to their care positively. They take on board the excellent support, guidance and advice that staff provide them with. Young people are actively supported to make positive decisions and choices. As a result, many do not engage in risk-taking activities.

Staff are trained in child protection. They know how to protect young people from abuse, neglect, bullying and exploitation. Proactive safeguarding practice actively promotes the welfare and safety of young people. Staff are knowledgeable about which procedures to follow in the event of any abuse or neglect of young people and reporting poor practice.

There have been very few restraints used since the time of the last full inspection. Young people's behaviour is managed effectively by highly skilled, well-trained and experienced staff. Sanctions used by staff to discourage negative behaviour are both fair and effective in practice and young people's views about the sanctions used are routinely recorded. They do have the opportunity to comment on the fairness and types of sanctions used.

Staff who work with young people are selected and vetted carefully. Safe recruitment practices are followed stringently to ensure young people are actively protected from unsuitable people; however there are some gaps in employment histories for staff. Young people benefit from continuity of care and they receive a high level of consistency to ensure their needs are comprehensively met on a day-to-day basis.

Health and safety systems are managed very effectively. Regular safety checks are undertaken to ensure the premises are kept free from potential hazards. Fire, gas and electrical equipment is all contractually serviced to promote environmental safety. Sufficient fire drills take place to ensure young people know how to evacuate the premises safely.

Leadership and management

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

The home is efficiently managed and effective in meeting its Statement of Purpose. A clear vision of child-centred practice is prevalent within the home's ethos. The Registered Manager works with young people and staff to rigorously monitor young people's welfare, which ensures the high standards of care and the safety of young

people. The Registered Manager provides effective leadership and accountability, therefore, staff fully understand the roles and responsibilities delegated to them.

Young people's care is examined through quality assurance systems, which include monthly management monitoring and associated checks in line with regulations. However, this monitoring has not identified the shortfall in staff files in terms of some gaps in employment histories. Independent visits are conducted on behalf of the responsible individual and these have steadily improved but the reports do not show that the visitor has consulted young people at each visit. All significant events are notified to the relevant authorities and appropriate action is taken to protect young people. The Registered Manager is well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the home and developmental plans are currently under review to ensure continual improvement.

Staff are very well supported by a Registered Manager who communicates high standards of care through regular team meetings, supervision and training. Staff are suitably qualified and the team remains stable, which provides consistency and predictability for young people. Young people are also involved in the performance assessment of staff to ensure their views count. Staff confirm that the Registered Manager is available to them and that they enjoy the work they do.

Recording of information is generally good and provides a picture of young people's daily lives. Information is securely stored and shared confidentially to protect their safety and privacy.

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.