

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Jo Stephenson
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to six young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is owned and operated by a private organisation.

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**.

The home provides a good quality of care for young people because care planning is personalised to reflect their individual needs. Staff support young people to voice their opinions and thoughts on all aspects of their care and the development of the home. Young people thrive in a nurturing environment and this creates a family atmosphere in the home. Staff have high aspirations for young people and promoting positive outcomes is central to the work of the service.

Young people enjoy good relationships with staff and each other. Staff encourage young people to identify their ambitions. Young people have access to a varied range of educational and leisure activities to support these. As a result, young people experience improved self-confidence and self-esteem. Staff have a good understanding of safeguarding and young people say they feel safe and secure in the home. Consistent staff practice promotes clear and distinct boundaries and this supports young people's development and progress.

The Registered Manager ensures that monitoring systems are in place to review outcomes for young people. However, Regulation 34 documents do not effectively record the evaluation of the quality of care provided. Although feedback is sought from young people, their families and placing authorities, this is not included in monitoring reports. This means that areas for development are not clearly defined or recorded.

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
34 (2001)	establish and maintain a systems for improving the quality of care provided in the children's home. (Regulation 34(1)(b))	31/12/2013

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people make substantial progress in all areas of their lives. Personalised internal care plans and behaviour plans allow young people the opportunity to reflect on their backgrounds and make sense of their past experiences. This means they are able to move forward with their lives and celebrate their achievements. As a result, young people experience improved self-confidence and self-esteem. They are able to form and sustain suitable relationships with their peers, staff and other people that are important to them.

Education is central to the daily routine in the home. For young people of compulsory school age, attendance is high, and they receive practical and emotional support to sustain this. Young people who have experienced barriers to learning or disjointed education in the past, are now settled in their placements. Because of this, young people make substantial progress in education in relation to their starting points.

Young people's physical and psychological health needs are addressed through access to general and specialist health services. Professional relationships between the home and health agencies support young people to take responsibility for their own health and consider the impact of some lifestyle decisions on their wellbeing. For example, key work sessions relating to drug and alcohol abuse provide young people with factual information that explains their choices. This means that young people are able to make informed decisions about key health risks and the effect these may have on their emotional development.

Young people have the opportunity to develop independent living skills in a self-contained flat within the home. They are supported to manage their budget, learn cooking and housekeeping skills and adapt to living on their own. This means young people are able to experience independence and receive the emotional support that they need to improve their practical skills and abilities. Subsequently, young people's transition into adulthood is successful because future accommodation options are realistic and appropriate.

The home is a busy and sociable environment with young people at the centre of the daily routines. Young people devise personalised activity and appointment plans with staff. These support family contact, attendance at school and participation in individual and group activities. Young people benefit from the close proximity of a range of community resources, such as a leisure centre, and are encouraged to use these facilities on a regular basis. As a result, young people are able to expand their social circle and develop their social interaction skills. In particular, young people are able to consider the impact of anti-social behaviour on their community and how this may affect local services and facilities.

Quality of care

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

Young people have positive relationships with the staff and each other. One young person said, 'the staff really care about us, even when we get into trouble, we still know they care.' Boundaries in the home are clear and consistently applied by staff. Staff have high aspirations for young people and provide personalised care to promote positive outcomes and support young people to achieve their ambitions.

Staff demonstrate an excellent understanding of the changing needs of young people because support plans are regularly reviewed and updated. Internal care plans include behaviour support plans and risk assessments that identify antecedents to changes in behaviours. This means that strategies in place to manage and de-escalate anti-social behaviours reflect the social skills and abilities of young people. For example, plans detail interventions that are known to help young people to settle their behaviour and those that may escalate behaviours. As a result, young people receive tailored support that encourages them to take responsibility for their actions and manage their own behaviour. Furthermore, all young people have up to date statutory placement plans in place and this means they benefit from an integrated approach to meeting their needs.

Consultation with young people is embedded into the care planning processes in the home. Staff deliver effective key work sessions that cover all aspects of young people's care. Young people actively participate in these sessions and say they enjoy the range of topics that they discuss, such as crime, anti-social behaviour, bullying and activities. Additionally, key work sessions discuss the personal placement plans of young people, set goals and targets for achievement and monitor the progress young people make. Furthermore, young people say that staff explain why it is not always possible to act on their wishes and support them to consider alternatives. This means that young people reflect on their behaviour and celebrate their successes. Young people confirm they know how to make a complaint and are confident that these will be addressed.

Young people of compulsory school age regularly attend their placements. Older young people are supported to access further education, college placements and employment opportunities. Staff work in partnership with schools and colleges to address barriers to education, support attendance and reward achievements. For

example, staff produce certificates for young people to celebrate and praise their achievements. Education records contain up to date personal education plans and statements of special educational needs, where applicable. As a result, young people benefit from integrated education plans that recognise their abilities and ambitions and support them to realise these.

Staff support young people to take responsibility for their own health. The home has developed effective partnerships with specialist and general health practitioners. As a result, young people are provided with a holistic approach to addressing their physical, emotional and psychological health needs and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Medication administration systems are appropriate and this further promotes the wellbeing of young people. Additionally, young people enjoy a healthy and nutritious diet that reflects their personal preferences, culture and ethnicity.

Young people participate in regular young people's meetings to discuss social events and plan activities. Records show that young people talk about issues that may impact on the development of the home, such as bullying. Young people say they are listened to and feel that their thoughts and wishes are given consideration. One young person said, 'when we make suggestions we are listened to, the staff take what we think seriously.' Subsequently, young people influence the running of the home.

Activity plans are personalised and reflect the hobbies and interests of young people. Staff work with young people to source clubs and facilities in the local community and individual pursuits are incorporated in the daily routine of the home. These opportunities help young people to expand their skills, experience success and develop a positive self-image.

The home is maintained to a good standard and is located close to essential amenities such as transport links, shopping centres and sporting facilities. Young people say they are involved in the decoration and furnishing of the home and are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are safe and say they feel safe. Staff receive regular training in safeguarding and child protection and are aware of the varied range of issues that can impact on the safety of young people. Incidents of bullying are rare in the home although staff remain alert to the signs of bullying or intimidation. Young people discuss the impact bullying can have on others and this means they understand the possible physical and emotional outcome of this behaviour.

Allegations and suspicions of harm are effectively recorded, managed and referred to the appropriate agencies. Safeguarding procedures are supported by a multi-agency approach to investigations. This means that the management of allegations provides effective protection and support for young people.

Incidents of young people missing from home have reduced. For some young people, this behaviour has ceased since coming to the home. Young people's risk assessments detail their individual vulnerabilities and consider triggers to this behaviour. Personalised protocols with the local police stipulate how and when these episodes are reported. Staff complete key work sessions with young people to highlight the potential risks of going missing and how to keep themselves safe in these circumstances. As a result, young people benefit from a comprehensive approach to reducing missing from home and their welfare is promoted.

Staff complete regular training in physical intervention and de-escalation techniques although the use of physical restraint is rare. Records of restraint are detailed and include comments from young people regarding their feelings and views about physical restraint. In particular, young people are able to contemplate alternative methods of managing their frustrations. The use of sanctions is rare because staff implement reward and incentive charts to encourage young people to display acceptable behaviours. This means that young people are motivated to make positive changes to their behaviours.

General environmental risk assessments are in place to ensure that young people are safe from known hazards within the home and whilst on activities. Young people take part in regular fire drills; checks and tests of fire safety equipment are also carried out. As a result, young people live in a safe environment.

The Registered Manager adheres to effective organisational recruitment procedures. Staff files are detailed and include all required information to assess the suitability and experience of staff employed in the home. As a result, young people work with suitably vetted and capable staff and this further promotes their welfare and safety.

Leadership and management

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

Young people live in a home that is well managed by an experienced manager who is registered with Ofsted. The Statement of Purpose clearly defines the services provided by the home. This means that young people and placing authorities understand the aims and objectives of the home. Complaints from young people are rare and records show these are appropriately addressed. Young people are provided with a personal guide to the home on admission. This details external agencies young people can contact should they wish to raise any concerns regarding their care and this ensures their well-being is always promoted.

Staff are well supported in their role and receive regular and effective supervision. Staff meetings are held monthly and include discussions about the progress of young people, planned changes to practice and the development of the home. All staff complete mandatory training such as fire safety and food hygiene, and additional training courses are provided to reflect the specific needs of young people. For example, staff undertake training in child sexual exploitation and self-harmful

behaviour. As a result, young people are supported by staff that are competent and skilled.

Placing authorities, families and young people praise the commitment of the staff team. One social worker commented, 'the constant support given to young people is fantastic. This home really makes a difference.' The Registered Manager works closely with other professionals and placing authorities. This ensures that young people experience an integrated and comprehensive approach to meeting their care and welfare needs. Social workers say communication between the home and placing authorities is excellent and commend the high quality of reports the staff provide for statutory reviews as being 'clear, factual and detailed'. Young people are encouraged to participate in their reviews as their views, feelings and wishes are reflected in the reports written by staff.

The Registered Manager monitors outcomes for young people through Regulation 33 reporting systems. Additionally, young people, their families and placing authorities complete feedback questionnaires on the quality of care provided in the home. However, this feedback is not incorporated into Regulation 34 documents. The Registered Manager does not effectively record the evaluation of the quality of care provided. This means that the known strengths and weakness of the service are not documented and action plans to support improvements lack detail. Nevertheless, this recording issue has a minimal impact on the outcomes for young people.

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.