

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Elizabeth Tanner
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is registered for up to six young people with emotional and 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**.

This home provides good-quality and supportive care for young people. Young people make progress because of the well-planned and individualised care that is given.

Young people engage in education, and their social skills and behaviour significantly improve in this placement. Relationships between staff and young people are positive and staff have high aspirations for all young people in their care. Young people say that the best thing about the home is, 'the staff.'

Young people like living at the home and are kept safe and feel safe in the home. Behaviour is well managed and continues to improve. This leads to positive outcomes for young people. Young people recognise their achievements in this home and because of this their self-esteem improves.

The Registered Manager and management team work hard to ensure the home is managed effectively. Two recommendations have been made to improve practice; these relate to the detail of Criminal Record Bureau checks and staff rotas.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the home's record of the Criminal Records Bureau Disclosures checks shows the level of the disclosure (NMS 16.3)
- ensure that staff rotas have time scheduled to ensure handovers are held and that they include the planning of spending time with individual children.(NMS 17.6)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people benefit from the good levels of support and guidance given to them by the staff. A young person said about living in this home, 'It is all good. Staff are alright. Keyworkers talk with us.' Young people are proud of the progress they have made in this home and this helps them to develop a positive self-view. A relative said that a young person, 'has made a lot of progress-all staff really supportive. Very good to him. He was really bad and had a good turn around.'

Most of the young people are successfully attending school or other educational placements and are making progress. Staff are active in pursuing educational opportunities or placements for young people. Young people are supported to learn and develop skills in a variety of ways. For example, they can grow their own vegetables or assist with the cooking of meals. This helps to develop the practical skills they will need in later life. Young people are encouraged to engage in a variety of activities in the local community, such as joining a football team, attending cadets or helping in a local dog's home. These activities benefit their emotional and physical health.

Staff try hard to help young people understand the importance of having a healthy lifestyle. Healthy eating is encouraged and young people say, 'they try and convince us not to smoke-book GP appointments and we don't go. Tried everything to stop us smoking.' Young people have access to a counsellor to help them understand their personal situation and one young person said this support has taught him how to, 'walk away when angry.'

Young people benefit from appropriate contact with family which is encouraged and valued by staff. Staff provide practical support, such as transport and supervision, when needed. A relative said, 'I can visit anytime. They bring him to me every couple of weeks.'

Quality of care

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

Young people are cared for by a motivated and skilled staff group who are consistently concerned with the welfare of the young people in their care. Because of this young people feel confident to voice their opinions and views and begin to feel valued. Staff provide firm and consistent boundaries and, because of this, young

people learn to behave appropriately. Behaviour strategies are individual for each young person. One young person spoke about improvements in his behaviour and said, 'If it wasn't for my keyworker and the managers I would still be like a nightmare.'

Young people are involved in their care planning. Excellent care plans indicate how a young person is cared for, their behaviours, individual needs and how to minimise risk. Issues of diversity are clearly identified in the care plans. Young people are consulted about changes to both their individual plans and to generic behaviour plans. Young people confirmed they were encouraged to read their case files but said they usually chose not to.

Young people confirmed they knew how to make a complaint but said they had never felt the need to do this. They participate in regular house meetings. At these meetings they help plan menus and also raise any concerns they may have. As a result, the young people are actively involved in the home and its operation.

The home provides well for young people's health because staff are effective in organising appointments as needed. Young people have access to various medical professionals, including drug and alcohol workers, counsellors and advocates, and are supported in attending these appointments by staff. This support means that the physical and emotional health of young people is promoted.

The home has an education worker who ensures the educational needs of young people are promoted. Links with local educational providers are maintained and the home works hard to ensure that those young people not in mainstream education are supported to access alternative forms of learning. When not in full-time education, a daily timetable of activities is drawn up. This ensures a learning environment is provided in the home and young people have the opportunity to benefit from a structure to their day.

The home is well maintained and has been recently decorated. Young people have space to be on their own as well as using the comfortable communal areas. Young people are involved in choosing the decoration and furnishings and, because of this, learn to value their environment.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people and staff enjoy good relationships in this home and this provides a firm foundation for the development and promotion of positive behaviour. Appropriate behaviour is reinforced by the use of incentives and rewards. Restraint is rarely used, although all staff have training in this area. As a result, young people are improving their behaviour.

Young people feel safe and are safe in this home. Young people do not identify bullying as a problem in this home. One young person said, 'It is safe. I was bullied

but staff acted straight away.' Staff are knowledgeable about, and trained in, safeguarding issues. The home has a broad range of policies and procedures for safeguarding practices in respect of child protection, handling allegations and young people missing or absent without authority. This helps to protect young people.

The frequency with which young people go missing is significantly reduced from the start of placements. There is good recording in respect of efforts made by staff to locate a young person when they are missing. Young people confirmed they are offered key work sessions to discuss why they had gone missing and where they go when absent. They know staff care about their welfare. This means young people feel able to return to the home and that work is undertaken to prevent further absence.

Young people are protected from unsuitable care givers by a robust recruitment process. The required information about requirement checks is available in the home. This means young people are cared for by suitable people. However, the records of vetting do not include the level of the Criminal Records Bureau checks. This does not impact directly on the safety of young people as vetting is undertaken robustly, but evidence of staff suitability is compromised.

The home is physically safe with appropriate risk assessments in place to ensure young people are protected from accident or injury. There is a comprehensive fire risk assessment. Regular maintenance checks are performed. This means the building is safe and secure.

Leadership and management

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

The home is effectively and efficiently managed. The Registered Manager and her team monitor the progress that young people make and can demonstrate the impact that the home has made in relation to the outcomes for young people. The Registered Manager says, 'we want to see them all achieve,' and these expectations are communicated to the staff and young people.

The Registered Manager and staff receive regular supervision and guidance. A member of staff said, 'Managers are good-we can go to them with anything. We have supervision once a month.' Staff commented on the good quality of the training they receive. This support allows for staff's personal development and ensures young people receive appropriate care to enable them to make good progress.

Regular staff meetings are held and there is a sufficient level of staffing. This allows for effective communication. Staff say that team meetings are effective and they feel able to express their views in that setting. However, the lack of time scheduled for handovers between shifts means that day-to-day communication and planning may not be as effective as it could be. Therefore, a recommendation has been raised about this.

The home's Statement of Purpose provides clear and accessible information about its operation. This means placing authorities and families can be clear about the service they expect to receive.

The quality of care is monitored by the Registered Manager through the reports prepared on a monthly basis by an independent person. The Registered Manager also monitors the home's records and this monitoring is submitted to Ofsted.

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.