

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Maria McGranaghan
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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 home is privately run and provides medium to long-term care for up to three children from nine years of age. The organisation specialises in working with children and young people who suffer from an attachment disorder or attachment difficulty.

As well as residential provision, the organisation provides individual therapeutic programmes. All such activity takes place away from the home environment.

Overall effectiveness

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

Young people live in a safe, caring and structured environment that supports them in making excellent progress in all aspects of their lives. Young people are achieving excellent outcomes in education, healthy lifestyles, safety and emotional resilience and making a positive contribution within the community.

Young people benefit from exceptionally well planned and individualised care. Clear and detailed placement plans include essential information that ensures the young people are cared for consistently and line with their individual needs. The committed staff team work well together and with internal and external agencies that help to support and guide young people. Consultation with young people is highly promoted within the home. Staff actively seek young people's views not only about their individual care, but about all aspects of life within the home.

Young people benefit from excellent relationships with staff. The high ratio of staff ensures that young people are afforded the care and attention they need in order to feel safe and secure. The home has a strong and stable staff team who receive excellent supervision and training to assist them in maintaining the already high standards of care. Staff have an excellent understanding of young people's needs and are consistent in offering a nurturing environment for young people to thrive and grow.

The home is effectively managed. The manager places a strong emphasis on providing a high standard of individualised child care practices which promotes continuous improvement and development. Excellent internal and external monitoring systems ensures that all aspects of the home is closely scrutinised and the appropriate action taken to enhance performance. An organisational approach in responding to safety concerns ensures that young people's safety is effectively assessed and managed. This approach has been successful in reducing previous areas for concern.

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make excellent progress in their education, emotional resilience and their trust in staff who work at the home. They receive excellent support through external services such as psychologists and counsellors. This enables them to make sense of their lives and begin to understand their individual circumstances. Weekly individual sessions enable young people and their key worker to come together and review their care needs and make appropriate changes where necessary. This process includes regular consultation with young people about the care they receive. Young people are actively encouraged to comment on their care and make suggestions on what they would like to improve or change. Evidence of excellent communication between young people and staff clearly demonstrates mutual respect and a genuine regard for individuals needs and aspirations.

Young people are appropriately supported to develop skills in areas of personal hygiene, shopping and choosing clothes and personal requisites. Young people enjoy planning the weekly menu and are skilled in their understanding of healthy food and lifestyle. Staff encourage young people to take part in community activities, such as girl guides, cadets, swimming, and youth clubs whilst offering group opportunities like trips to the zoo and seaside, thus promoting healthy and active lifestyles.

Young people are encouraged to make friends in the community in order to develop their social skills. As a result most young people have friends who they regularly invite to play in the gaming room or for tea on a regular basis. Staff have developed good links with friend's parents enhancing a good parenting model of care. When young people are not out socialising they enjoy completing jigsaws and reading books. All young people had a selection of personally chosen books and novels kept safely in their room. This is an excellent example of young people living in a calm and happy environment that enables them to develop skills in self motivation and perseverance.

Young people benefit from effective and consistent health care. The health care plan provides detailed information from birth to the present day and includes a summary of all doctors', dentists and other appointments attended by the young people. Risk assessments and formal monitoring plans are in place where there are concerns about young people's health. This process, coupled with consistent liaison with external agencies ensures that young people receive the right support and care they require. Young people also have access to good health information including an array of books and information leaflets.

Young people achieve excellent educational progress. Through careful assessment and consultation all young people receive full time education at a level sustainable for their individual needs. Increased attendance and young people's enthusiasm about education demonstrates the home's commitment to enabling young people to view education positively. Individual school reports highlight exceptional progress for young people with some now undertaking GCSE examinations and planning for further work placements and college. Staff promote education offering time and commitment enabling young people to make consistent progress and gain the ability to recognise their own achievements.

Young people benefit from planned and supported contact with family and friends. Detailed placement plans ensures that contact only takes place with whom it has been agreed and this is reviewed on a regular basis.

Staff encourage young people to develop independence skills in accordance with their developmental age and abilities and this does not deter from the nurturing environment young people thrive within. Individual tasks are identified for young people such as purchasing their own bus pass and buying food or clothes and this helps them take appropriate steps in recognising their own responsibility and assists them to develop a sense of pride.

Quality of care

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

Young people thrive in a stable, nurturing and supportive environment. Staff demonstrate a clear commitment to young people and this is evident in the excellent relationships that have been established. Young people and staff have appropriate banter and are clearly relaxed in each other's company.

Staff hold high aspirations for the young people. They are fully committed to ensuring young people have the best opportunities and can achieve their full potential. As a result, young people actively engage with staff and external services and want to achieve to their full potential. Young people's exceptional progress is reflected in their achievements within education, social integration and emotional resilience.

Young people have placement plans that are tailored to meet their individual needs. The exceptional plans perfectly encapsulate a picture of individual need and what steps are being taken to address them in a manner which is both consistent and appropriate. Access to internal external support agencies, specialising in attachment difficulties ensure that staff receive the correct guidance to maximise the potential of young people. Young people also receive a high level of support through therapeutic sessions.

Young people's plans are regularly reviewed to ensure the care offered is effective in meeting individual need. Regular consultation with young people and all agencies involved in their care ensures that the plan remains focussed, target lead and progressive recognising the achievements and emotional development of young people. A staff member said 'We all want what is best for the young people and they know that. We work in partnership with them to help them make positive changes in their lives.'

Young people know how to complain. Information is provided in the young people's guide and organisation complaints documents that are developed specifically for young people. Information is available around the home including complaint forms that are also available in young people's bedrooms. Complaints are handled fairly and investigated thoroughly by the manager or external nominated person. Young people who make a complaint are supported through a key work session which also affords young people an opportunity to record if they are satisfied with the outcome. Information within the complaints record highlights that all young people's issues are taken seriously and acted on appropriately. The excellent relationships between staff and young people assist them to discuss any matters of concern. Key worker sessions highlight the support young people are offered in order to work through issues in a safe and caring environment. A member of staff said 'Young people always seek staff out if they are not happy or just need that extra bit of time on a one to one. We recognise this as make sure we can accommodate them as it is a high step for many to be able to open up to staff.'

Young people's heritage is given high priority and is central to the day to day running of the home. Clear and detailed information highlighting young people's individual identity is recorded within their placement plan and is recognised as a central part of their individual care. The staff team and young people reflect a range of cultural and

religious difference and this helps to support all young people to understand their diverse nation. The home encourages and facilitates time for prayer and this is respected by all young people. A staff member said 'The young people are great, they know I am praying and do not disturb me. When they show curiosity I spend time talking to them about my religion and what it means for me.' The excellent relationships within the community benefit young people who have visited a Mosque and spoken to people who attend. The home has a range of books and information packs on the matters of diversity and young people spend time reading and discussing issues as a group. Similarly the home offers an array of international cuisine for the young people to try either in the home or in restaurants as a family activity.

Each young person has a highly individualised behaviour management plan that details specific targets coupled with strategies for managing behaviour. Staff have an excellent knowledge of the young people living in the home and recognise individual triggers for each young person. Staff have developed strategies in order to recognise and manage specific behaviours effectively. In addition clear evidence of key worker sessions addressing specific behaviour complements the team work involved in their care.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Staff undertake child protection training in order that they are able to respond appropriately to allegations or suspicions of abuse. Risk assessments are in place and encapsulate individual risk factors for young people. A monthly review of risk assessments takes place and young people are encouraged to have direct input in developing this. This process enables young people to see where risk is reduced or escalated and assists in evaluating the methods used to reduce any potential risk. This is an excellent tool that assists young people to both understand and begin to appropriately manage personal risk.

Staff confirm that bullying is not tolerated within the home. Young people are assisted to understand the impact of bullying through regular key worker sessions and are offered opportunities to explore situations where they may experience bullying and how to manage this. Staff are vigilant and closely monitor young people promoting positive relationships and appropriate behaviour and as a result records indicate that there have been no episodes of bullying in the home.

There is a distinct reduction in young people going missing from the home. Young people who are reported as missing always return of their own accord before the end of the evening. Staff have developed excellent relationships with external agencies that frequently visit the home and socialise with the young people. This practice assists young people to develop a positive understanding of the work other agencies do in order to safeguard and protect them and helps them to move away from their previous negative views of safeguarding agencies. A staff member said 'All young people have risk assessments and we work with the young people to reduce all risks. Young people don't go missing, they simply come home late, but if we are worried or concerned we follow the protocol and report them as missing, after all we cannot say at that particular time if they are safe and we need to make sure they are'.

Young people are encouraged to demonstrate socially acceptable behaviour. Methods such as daily incentives for young people who follow their daily living plan encourage young people's participation and have proved to be successful. Likewise young people benefit from regular sessions with the organisation's psychologist and this is supported by individual key worker sessions. This work helps young people understand their individual circumstances whilst also assisting Staff to manage behaviour that may be exhibited as a result of revisiting traumatic experiences. As a result, sanctions in the home are minimal.

Young people's behaviour is managed in a caring and supportive way. Behaviour is managed individually and care is taken to recognise the emotional balance of each young person. Staff focus on de-escalation techniques and engage with young people in order to assist them work through their anger and frustration. As a result physical intervention is only used to prevent a young person harming themselves or others. Where a physical intervention has been applied, clear records detail the action taken, the length of time and the de-brief offered to young people. Key worker sessions are used to explore behaviour requiring a physical intervention and assist the young people to detail their feelings about the management of the event. The transparency of this practice ensures young people are both supported to express their feelings in a safe and caring environment where physical restraint is

only ever used as a last resort. Young people are supported to understand the impact of their behaviour on themselves and others and this offers excellent opportunities to make positive changes.

Young people live in an environment which is safe and secure. Staff promote the young people's protection by undertaking regular fire drill, service tests and making sure that all faults are efficiently addressed. Clear evidence highlights stringent monitoring of all systems within the home including the appropriate storage, administration and recording of medication.

Young people are looked after by staff who are vigilant when managing visitors and take appropriate steps to verify visitor's identity to protect the young people. The Statement of Purpose includes a glossary of staff presently employed within the home and who are suitably qualified to work with children. The recruitment and selection of staff working in the home is very thorough ensuring the continued protection of the young people.

Leadership and management

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

Young people live in a home that is effectively and efficiently managed in their best interests. The home meets the aims and objectives of its Statement of Purpose, and young people, families and social workers are clear about the services and support the home provides.

The manager and staff clearly demonstrate a strong commitment to delivering exceptional child care practice tailored to the individual and personal needs of the young people they look after. The effectiveness of this approach is evident in the excellent progress young people have made in recent months in many aspects of their lives, including school attendance and educational achievement, emotional maturity, and keeping themselves safe.

The manager has a clear and realistic understanding of the strengths of the service and areas for further development based on strong evidence. The manager makes very good use of reflective practice ensuring excellent communication and consultation with the young people, staff, social worker and parents where applicable.

The manager provides excellent monitoring of the quality of care to improve the services provided to young people enhancing positive outcomes. The home shows a capacity for sustained improvement based on its performance over the last two years and the progress young people have made since the last inspection.

The external monitoring of the home is thorough. Evidence indicates clear lines of enquiry and focus based reporting. The manager is effective in demonstrating efficient responses to areas for development.

Staff are very well-supported by the manager. They have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, and the high expectations for providing excellent child care practice. They confirm that when they need support and guidance, the manager is always available and helpful and they receive one-to-one supervision consistently. A staff member said 'The manager gives us uninterrupted time to discuss our development, any worries or concerns. She is very approachable and knowledgeable and understands the young people very well. This helps all staff to be consistent in our work.' Team meetings take place every month to allow the whole staff team to discuss the running of the home and to look at ways to improve the service they offer, to reflect on young people's progress and how best to support them.

Young people are looked after by a highly competent staff team who have a wide range of skills and experience. The skills within the team match the needs of young people living in the home very well. The numbers of staff on duty are sufficient to meet the needs of young people in the best possible way. This includes the support they need for activities, visits and attending appointments. Staff have access to a comprehensive training programme that covers the needs of young people and provides staff with the skills and knowledge to effectively do their work.

The home's written records are securely stored and provide a comprehensive picture of individual young people's needs, development and progress. Young people's

records contain up-to-date information about them, including the relevant documents from placing authorities.

Recommendations made at the last inspection have been effectively addressed. Specifically, there is now a range of evidence held in the home supporting the recruitment process for all staff and the development plan for the home has been appropriately updated.

Equality and diversity practice is **outstanding**.