

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Maria McGranaghan
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home can provide care and accommodation for up to 5 children or young people from the ages of 10 years to 17 years, with emotional or behavioural difficulties.

The home is owned 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**.

Young people thrive in a safe, nurturing and child centred environment that supports sustained progress in all aspects of their lives. Good outcomes are seen in education, emotional resilience and particularly the significant reduction in risk taking behaviours.

Young people enjoy learning and attend appropriate educational provisions. Progress is good. Young people are achieving higher grades and are enthusiastic about their personal progress.

Young people are safe and feel protected from significant harm. They have formed excellent relationships with staff and are extremely positive about their placement and the care they receive in the home.

Young people's care is very well planned. Placement plans clearly encapsulate young people's needs and the services required to suitably meet them. Young people are supported by a highly committed and stable staff team who offer a high level of guidance for young people to make positive and productive change in their lives.

The home is effectively managed with a strong emphasis on providing a safe, caring and stable home for young people. Monitoring systems are in place and provide suitable scrutiny in order to both maintain and enhance the performance in the home.

Despite these strengths there are weaknesses. Although it is clear that young people are central to the development and review of their care, they do not routinely record their comments and opinions on records about them. Likewise, medication records do not include a description of potential side effects or the reason for the prescription. As a result, two recommendations are made at this inspection.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure information about young people is recorded clearly and in a way which will be helpful to the young person when they access their files now or in the future. Specifically that young people are encouraged to correct errors and add personal statements to their records particularly with regard to complaints and sanctions (NMS 22.5)
- ensure prescribed medication is given in accordance with the prescription and specifically that written records include why it has been prescribed and any possible contraindications (NMS 6.14)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make good progress in their education, emotional resilience and their trust in staff and professionals who offer structured support both inside and outside of the home.

Well planned and focused residential care plans work together with consistent keywork sessions and assist young people to begin to understand their lives. Consequently, young people engage well with staff and are settled and happy in the home. Young people say 'We really enjoy our keywork sessions they really help to keep us on track.'

Young people's health needs are suitably assessed in the home. Health care plans are in place and work together with keyworker and external consultation sessions to address a range of health matters. Therefore, young people are given valuable information to assist them in making informed decisions and choices. There are sound monitoring arrangements for young people's health care including the appropriate storage and administration of medication. However, medical records do not always capture information such as the reason for the medication and potential side effects. This information is helpful in ensuring young people's health care needs are rigorously monitored at all times.

Young people's views and opinions are encouraged and respected in the home.

Young people say, 'Our young people's meetings are great. We talk about everything and make decisions about what is happening in our home.' It is clear that mutual respect for one another is a priority in the home. This practice enables young people to feel safe in order to discuss matters openly with staff or as a group.

Young people attend appropriate educational provision. School reports highlight significant progress particularly in attendance and attainment. 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. Staff maintain close links with families and involve them where appropriate in the overall planning of the young people's care. Detailed placement plans ensure 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 age and ability. Young people are assisted to cook, plan menu's and shop enabling them to develop good budgeting skills. Young people demonstrate ownership of their home and have developed a sense of pride in the consistent achievements they make.

Planned and unplanned activities take place on a regular basis. Young people say, 'If we want to try something we just ask, the staff are great and will come with us to try anything.' Consequently, individual interests are both encouraged and supported in the home.

Quality of care

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

Young people thrive in an environment dedicated to enabling young people 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. This process enables staff to identify triggers for negative behaviour and effective strategies for positive behaviour management. Methods such as the instant reward system enable young people to recognise positive and helpful attitudes and this has proved to be successful. Likewise, young people are supported by a range of external services. This helps young people to understand their individual circumstances and take positive steps to make necessary changes in their lives. Although overall communication between staff and young people is very good young people's views and comments are not routinely captured on their individual sanction record. Comments from young people assist in the overall monitoring of

sanctions and the effectiveness with young people.

Young people know how to complain. Information is provided in the young people's guide and organisational complaints documents. Procedures for managing complaints ensure they are handled fairly and investigated thoroughly by the manager or external nominated person. Staff work hard to ensure young people have opportunities to express their opinions; however, records do not consistently include young people's comments about the outcome of the complaint. Consequently, important information is missing should a young person wish to review their files now or in the future.

Young people's placement plans are good and provide a clear picture of individual need. External services work in partnership with the home and ensure that 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.

Staff effectively address young people's educational needs through proactive relationships with partner agencies. As a result, young people have good attendance and individual grades are significantly improved. Young people's accomplishment demonstrates the commitment and effort of a focused 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 the home.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Staff undertake child protection training in order that they are able to respond to suspicions or allegations of abuse. Clear and focused risk assessments are in place and encapsulate individual risk factors for young people. Risk assessments are regularly reviewed with young people and are central to the work undertaken in the home. As a result, young people are afforded the opportunity to understand where risks have reduced or indeed escalated. Together with their keyworker young people offer an overall evaluation of successful strategies used to reduce risk and identify where further support is required. This process assists young people to develop ownership of their behaviour and supports them to understand how to make positive change in their lives.

The staff apply a zero tolerance approach to bullying in the home. Young people are provided with good information and guidance to ensure their safety if maintained at all times. Young people feel confident that should a concern arise, staff will respond

quickly and effectively. Young people confirm that bullying does not take place in the home and if matters arise they feel satisfied that this would be managed appropriately and in their best interest.

Young people live in a home where their safety and well-being is protected. Detailed individual 'missing from home' plans are in place and this ensures 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. Since the last inspection, there is a distinct reduction in young people being missing.

Young people's risk taking behaviours are extremely well managed. Clear and coordinated risk management combined with external specialist support enables young people to understand specific issues regarding personal safety. Consequently young people make positive changes to their behaviour.

Staff receive appropriate training in order to appropriately manage physical intervention within the home. Staff are clear that physical intervention is only used to prevent a young person harming themselves or others. Appropriate procedures are in place that supports the home's minimal intervention strategy. Consequently, de-escalation techniques used in the home are successful. There are no incidents where physical intervention has been required in the 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. Clear evidence highlights stringent monitoring of health and safety systems that assist in maintaining a safe environment for young people to live in.

Recruitment and selection of staff is thorough and ensures young people are only looked after by staff that are appropriately checked in order to work in the home. Young people's views and opinions are central to the recruitment process. Young people receive training in interviewing skills and this assists them to fully participate in the recruitment procedure. This process enables young people to feel valued while promoting their self-esteem and confidence.

Leadership and management

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

The home is efficiently managed meeting the aims of the Statement of Purpose. The Registered Manager and deputy manager work closely with young people to monitor their overall welfare thus ensuring continuity of safe practice within the home. There is a clear development plan in place in order to secure future improvements. This highlights the strengths and weaknesses of the home.

Internal and external monitoring systems mainly provide the home with a suitable approach to the overall monitoring of care. The manager makes good use of reflective practice ensuring the views of external services and families are taken into

account and are reflective in the care young people receive.

The home has made good progress in addressing the previous two recommendations made at the last inspection. Specifically, the home has been redecorated and all staff have either completed or are near completion of the required qualification.

The home employs a strong committed staff team who are suitably qualified. Staff receive appropriate support from the manager. Supervision takes place regularly and serves to identify training needs and personal development targets. Staff receive good quality training and this ensures that young people are looked after by the most suitable staff.

The manager and staff demonstrate a commitment to delivering good child care practice tailored to the individual needs of the young people they look after. The effectiveness of this approach is measurable in the progress young people make.

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 children's homes.