

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Louise Redfern
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for two young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is privately owned.

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 high levels of individualised support. They enjoy varied opportunities to engage in activities. As a result, young people improve their social skills and increase in confidence. Young people are supported to maintain links with family members and people important to them.

The home strongly promotes positive outcomes for all young people. The Registered Manager and staff team are particularly proactive and successful engaging young people in the placement and reducing their individual risk taking behaviour. As a result, young people over the time of their placements make good progress in relation to their individual starting points.

Young people report that they are safe, listened to and staff care about their welfare. There is a small shortfall in the monitoring of measures of control for effectiveness. The impact of this is minimal because of the low level of sanctions imposed.

Young people who are settled in the home have good school attendance but those new to the home have not yet achieved this despite encouragement and support from staff. Minor shortfalls in the supervision of a minority of casual staff have no apparent impact on young people but are being addressed.

The statutory placement plan is not available for one young person but the home has established very effective and detailed internal placement plans. Some young people do not routinely sign their placement plans to show their involvement and

understanding of their individual plans. However, they engage well in one-to-one direct work which addresses their individual needs.

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
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, a written record is made including the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure (Regulation 17B (3)(f))	05/06/2013
28 (2001)	ensure that the registered person maintains in respect of each child who is accommodated in a children's home a record in permanent form which includes the documents specified in schedule 3 relating to that child. (Regulation 28 schedule 3(1)(18))	05/06/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure that children are supported to attend school, college or alternative provision regularly (NMS 8.3)
- ensure that all staff, including casual staff, are provided with regular supervision (NMS 19.4)
- ensure that children understand the purpose and content of their plan and the reasoning behind any decisions about their care. (NMS 25.1)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **adequate**.

Young people are making progress in the home, because of individualised support from the staff team. As a result, they are starting to form attachments with staff and making some progress in developing emotional resilience. One young person commented, 'I don't really want to be here but for now it's good I am not getting into trouble and the staff are generally fair.' Staff accept young people for who they are and are non-judgemental in their practice. This acceptance promotes an

understanding of individual heritage, culture and identity.

Young people benefit from good levels of contact with family members and individuals who are important to them, despite long distances in some circumstances. Young people comment that family members are made welcome at the home. This means that support networks are maintained in preparation for them living independently or returning home.

Young people take pride in their appearance and look forward to clothes shopping. As a result, their self-esteem is developing. Young people benefit from routine health appointments to maintain their general health. Young people are engaged with specialist services. This means that they are getting the appropriate support to meet their individual needs.

Young people benefit from engaging in activities away from the home, for example, going to the local youth centre and swimming. This means that they are broadening their horizons, developing relationships and building self-esteem.

Young people when established in the home, make progress in their levels of attendance and educational attainment. However, young people recently placed at the home are not yet engaged in education and as such are not making progress in their educational attainment. However, staff continue to implement routines to prepare young people to be ready for school.

Quality of care

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

Young people benefit from highly individualised support that helps them to build self-esteem, grow in confidence and address challenging behaviour over time. Staff implement clearly structured and firm boundaries to encourage young people to achieve their potential. For example, recently two young people reduced their levels of risk in the community, re-engaged in education and successfully returned home to live with their families.

Young people are cared for in line with their individual residential placement plan. Plans for young people identify their ever changing needs. However, the plans do not show how young people have an understanding and content of their plans as they are not regularly signed by young people. Comprehensive risk management plans and individual planned placement sessions enable young people to take managed risks and develop their life skills.

Young people's views are routinely sought through young people's meetings and consultation sessions. Young people are the driving force in planning weekly menus and activities. The Registered Manager has regular informal discussions with young people regarding the day-to-day running of the home. There are low levels of complaints. Young people demonstrate a clear understanding of the complaints

procedures in place and have confidence in the complaints procedure. They have the opportunity to evaluate the complaints procedure at the end of the process. This means that they are empowered to share their views and have confidence in the procedure. One young person commented, 'I am happy with the way complaints are dealt with.'

Staff consistently and effectively challenges barriers to support young people to attend education. This means, for example, staff may attend school with some young people during their re-integration into educational placements. As a result the confidence of those young people improves and they become re-engaged in education.

The home provides a healthy environment where children and young people are able to access the services and support they need to meet their physical, emotional and psychological health needs. Young people benefit from engaging with a number of support services, for example, a drug and alcohol agency. This means that they are better informed in learning how to lead healthy lifestyles. One young person commented, 'Before I came here I wasn't looking after myself now I feel loads better.'

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people benefit from high levels of support in the home and in the community. As a result they report that they feel safe. Parents and professionals comment that the staff work hard to keep young people safe. One parent commented, 'My son is a lot safer at the home than at home with me.'

There has been a significant reduction in the number of episodes of young people going missing, given their individual starting points. One professional commented 'I have seen a big change in X since being here. Previously X was more missing than not. However, since X has been placed at the home there has been a significant reduction in the number of X's missings'. On the rare occasions young people do go missing, staff comprehensively search for them and actively encourage their quick return home. Staff follow the procedures in place for reporting individual young people as missing and respond positively to them on their return.

Young people are encouraged to behave positively in the home. As a result, no incidents of young people being physically restrained have occurred. When they do engage in negative behaviour, measures of control are imposed and young people are encouraged to reflect on their behaviour. One young person commented, 'I think the consequences are fair and I totally understand why the staff have to give them.' However, the Registered Manager does not routinely comment on the effectiveness of the sanctions, in order to evaluate if the consequence remains appropriate. This is a missed opportunity to review behaviour management strategies and support young people to manage their own behaviour.

Staff ensure that detailed risk management plans and behaviour management plans are in place to protect young people from harm and promote their well-being and safety in the home and in the local area. The Registered Manager has developed strong networks with support agencies such as local police, to work together to safeguard young people in the placement. The Registered Manager ensures that all investigations into allegations are handled fairly.

All staff are selected and checked through the organisation's robust recruitment procedures. The Registered Manager takes an active role in recruitment, ensuring the safe recruitment of staff who are able to meet the young people's needs. The home is physically safe and appropriately secure to take into account the needs and characteristics of the young people cared for. Staff pay excellent attention to health and safety management. They use comprehensive risk assessments around the home and in the local community. Young people have regular opportunities to participate in fire evacuation drills during the day and night.

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Leadership and management

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

The home is managed by a committed and experienced Registered Manager. He has a good approach to identifying young people's individual needs. Effective individual placement plans are established to enable young people to make progress and achieve their full potential. The Registered Manager can clearly demonstrate the impact and value that living at the home has had on young people's lives and how their life chances have improved over time. For example, young people return to live in their family home and continue their education.

The Registered Manager ensures that the staffing levels are sufficient in the home and adapts the rota in order to meet the individual needs of the young people. The home has a diverse staff group who use their own individual experiences to develop young people's knowledge. They are supported to meet the needs of young people through regular team meetings, a comprehensive training plan, appraisals and supervisions. However, a minority of casual staff do not receive regular formal supervision in line with the company policy. This currently has no impact on the care received by the young people.

The Registered Manager routinely monitors the quality of care in the home. He undertakes monthly progress reviews on the development of the home and the quality of the care. Young people's views are routinely heard in the home through daily conversations with staff and the Registered Manager, planned placement sessions, young people's meetings and during the organisation's monitoring visit.

Records are well maintained in the home and stored appropriately. One young person's statutory care plan has not been provided to the home. However, the home has up to date historical and health information and a good internal placement plan. This ensures the young person's needs are clearly identified and being addressed.

Records contribute to an understanding of young people's lives and show the progress made by the young people. Notifications are well managed and appropriate parties are notified of significant events.

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.