

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Jacqui Gosling
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is part of the provision operated by the local authority. This home provides care for up to two young people who have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

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 **outstanding**.

The staff team fulfil their responsibility to provide care and protection, which ensures young people feel and stay safe. The leadership team is ambitious and motivated to improve provision further. Decision making is extremely child-focused. Rigorous monitoring of the quality of care means the managers have a clear understanding of the strengths and the weaknesses within the home. Proactive support provides young people with every opportunity to develop and achieve physically, emotionally, vocationally and socially.

Young people hold their quality of care in high regard. This extends to viewing the staff as strength of the home. There is an excellent rapport between young people and staff that is trusting and sincere. This means young people are confident to express their views and opinions.

Young people make exceptional progress in relation to their starting point at time of placement across all aspects of their welfare. Care planning and practice are personalised to meet the individual needs of young people. This includes helping young people to be aware of how to stay safe.

There are no breaches of regulations or national minimum standards.

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make exceptionally good progress with their education. This is because staff are proactive in supporting the young people to attend their further education provisions.

Young people's health including physical, emotional, and psychological health is actively supported, for example, they have access to on-going therapeutic services. Healthy eating is actively encouraged and young people know and understand the benefits of a nutritious and varied diet. Young people are working towards independence, therefore, they shop for and cook all their own meals. This gives them independence skills and knowledge of healthy eating. Young people are also encouraged to develop self-awareness about the benefits of good personal hygiene. This helps to increase their self-esteem and self-image.

Staff have in-depth knowledge and understanding of the complex individual needs of young people in their care. They support young people to make exceptionally good progress in developing a positive self-view. This enables young people to form and sustain attachments with the staff and their family members.

Each young person is supported by staff who encourage them to actively participate in making both every day and more complex decisions about their lives, for example, their need to prepare for adulthood and become a fully functioning member of society.

The home promotes a positive ethos that embraces diversity and recognises individuality. As a result, young people begin to truly appreciate the significance of differing values and are actively learning to have respect for each other.

Quality of care

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

Young people clearly benefit from the security and structure that exists within this home. A competent staff team have created a homely, nurturing environment that has well-defined boundaries. These boundaries are consistent and help to give young people a feeling of security without denying each young person's individuality.

Social diversity is demonstrated well through day-to-day care. Young people are provided with role models who explicitly emphasise the equal value of each individual. This helps young people understand the negative impact of stereotypical gender and age-related roles.

Staff maximise every opportunity to help young people engage in their college placements. This supportive approach not only enables young people to build up knowledge and skills, but also helps them to develop the values and attitudes they need to help them stay fully engaged in their education.

The home works proactively and successfully with other partners to help young people gain access to the resources, benefits and training necessary for them to

secure greater independence. A social worker commented 'I have received excellent communication from the staff team, who are all equally aware of her changing circumstances, strengths and difficulties and are keen to work in a multi-agency approach'.

Young people are supported to understand and take responsibility for maintaining their own physical well-being. This includes care staff ensuring young people have access to effective healthcare.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

The arrangements for dealing with medication are safely and effectively managed to ensure young people receive medication important to their health. Health plans are tailored to individual needs. The staff team implement positive behaviour strategies to support young people in developing skills to manage their emotions and to work in partnership with designated practitioners. Risk assessments are comprehensively developed so that the right level of protection is in place. These are regularly reviewed as risk levels change. Young people say they, 'feel safe living here'.

Young people have access to helpline numbers, which they can use independently of staff, if they need to talk to someone outside of the home. The excellent rapport with staff means young people have confidence that any concern will be addressed. There is a comprehensive well-established process for recording incidents and concerns.

Young people experience a safe, positive and encouraging atmosphere which is forged through an excellent relationship between staff and young people. Proactive safeguarding practices are in place and mean young people are safe living here.

Positive ways of managing the behaviour of young people are utilised effectively. Therefore, physical restraint is infrequent. Management and staff promote a culture that ensures young people feel listened to and are always respected as individuals. A professional commented 'I feel that their approach of negotiating with young people while keeping them safe offers young people the opportunity to feel listened to, reflect upon past behaviours and to break potentially harmful cycles of behaviour. This is an extremely positive outcome for young people. There is infrequent use of measures of control. When it is necessary, young people are afforded opportunities to comment in an appropriate log book that links to any imposed measure of control.

The staff team are very aware of their duties to safeguard young people and know of the external agencies they can approach independently of the home. The staff team ensure robust risk assessments are in place for assessing all possible risks faced by young people, especially activities that can involve time spent away from the home. These are comprehensive in their levels of detail and demonstrate how they take all reasonable steps to manage the risk without compromising growth or development. A social worker commented 'during this placement the level of risk has been

significantly reduced. The approach that has been taken with the young person has allowed her care plan to change from managing risk to promoting positive outcomes'.

The careful selection, recruitment and retention of staff ensures young people are safe and secure and have a consistent team of staff that know them well. There is a substantial commitment to working and engaging constructively with internal and external stakeholders to secure the safety of young people.

Although, no young people go missing from care currently, there are effective procedures to safeguard young people from harm that are well established and known by staff. These include the full recognition of specific areas of needs and vulnerabilities young people have.

The premises are kept safe and appropriately secure taking into account the needs and characteristics of young people. This means young people are able to live in an environment that promotes their health and well-being. This includes regular safety checks being carried out. Robust fire precautions are in place and annual checks on electrical and gas safety as required.

Leadership and management

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

The home is effectively and efficiently managed by the Registered Manager. The staff team treats young people with the utmost respect and dignity and supports them in overcoming significant barriers. They tailor their support to respect the individual needs of the young people.

The staff team are provided with robust training that is specific to the needs of the young people. Appropriate supervision, support and resources enable staff to understand the developmental needs of young people. Joint working is commonplace. Multi-agency partnerships are forged with health services, placing authorities and education departments to ensure they all work together in the best interests of young people. A social worker commented 'their approach is adapted to respond to young people's changing needs and this makes them feel they are in control as a young adult'. Young people also confirm they are able to be involved in meetings where key decisions are made about their futures, including contributing to decisions.

Care and pathway plans are drawn up through a multi-disciplinary partnership. This enables young people to gain the right access to resources, benefits and education, necessary for achieving progress during transitional stages. This is managed with realistic levels of what young people can achieve and with the right balance of providing safeguards to meet their diverse needs. All records that are compiled are robust, kept up to date and stored securely. These records contribute to an understanding of the young people's lives, experiences and plans for their future.

The staff have a strong focus on promoting positive outcomes and enhancing the

well-being of young people. The staff work proactively to help young people overcome barriers so that they can succeed, for example, promoting contact with their family where appropriate. Handovers are undertaken for each shift to ensure key messages are passed over.

The management team has a robust system for monitoring and signing records as part of the internal quality assurance. Regular Regulation 33 visits take place to provide additional quality assurance mechanisms and involve consulting with young people wherever possible. The management team clearly has a strong commitment to meeting young people's needs. The level of progress young people have made despite their past history is a testament to the impact the management and staff are having on ensuring young people aspire.

The home has a clear, accessible and comprehensive Statement of Purpose that clearly sets out its aims and objectives. These objectives are being utilised in everyday practice, ensuring young people feel safe, protected and well cared for.

The provider is financial viable. This is clearly shown by the development plans that show dates of further staff training and planned maintenance and decoration to ensure the physical environment is maintained to a high standard.

No concerns or complaints have arisen since the last inspection. One requirements was made during the last inspection that took place in December 2011. This has been fully addressed and the staff now ensure evacuations of the home take place of all occupants at required frequencies.

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.