

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC065189
Inspection date	30/05/2013
Inspector	Jacqueline Malcolm
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	20/12/2012
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2013

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Service information

Brief description of the service

This is one of a number of children's homes operated by a private company. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to two young people with 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**.

Young people's life chances are significantly enhanced by the excellent quality of care and support that they receive at this children's home. Young people's safety and welfare is central to childcare practices and they are happy, thriving and feel safe. Young people's needs are highly personalised and positive outcomes have substantially improved in a number of areas, such as their behaviour, education, health, safeguarding, contact and independence. Young people are involved in their care planning and their views are listened to and respected.

Young people benefit from exceptionally good relationships with staff. They understand the routines and boundaries and enjoy the rewards attributed to their good behaviour. One young person said that the home is the best place that they have lived. Parents and professionals comment positively about the service and raise no concerns.

Leadership and management of the home is efficient and effective. The Registered Manager is committed to high standards of service delivery, which drives improvement. This motivates the staff team and ensures that young people receive a service that makes a positive difference to their lives.

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **outstanding**.

Young people make exceptionally good progress as a direct result of the care that

they receive at the home. They feel settled and stable. Positive attachments with staff enable young people to understand their histories and improve their emotional resilience and self-esteem. One young person said about staff, 'they just do things that are in young people's best interests.' This demonstrates that young people have confidence in the staff team and they know that staff care about them.

Young people benefit from excellent school attendance. They understand the importance of a good education and their attainment and progress is exceptional from their starting points. One professional involved with a young person said, 'the school have done an excellent job in helping the young person to improve their academic achievements and to encourage their motivation to learn.' Young people who have left formal education are actively supported to find work placements and engage in training courses. Young people's life chances are significantly enhanced by these positive and proactive interventions.

Young understand the significance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle and attend health appointments. They have access to a range of health information in the home, which raises their awareness. Young people also access specialist health services, such as alcohol, drugs and sexual health services. Young people who smoke are making informed decisions to stop. They have sought advice and treatment with smoking cessation services. This improves young people's health outcomes over time and their risk taking behaviour is significantly reduced.

Young people enjoy positive contact with family, friends and significant people in their life. This promotes their identity needs and helps them to maintain good links. One professional said, 'the complex contact arrangements were handled impeccably and a potentially risky scenario was managed without incident.' This demonstrates that staff are committed to facilitating contact despite the challenges.

Young people are effectively prepared to develop independence skills appropriate to their age and ability. They are actively involved in budgeting, cooking, cleaning, self-care skills and learning to form appropriate relationships. Young people feel supported to live independent lives. One young person said that staff, 'helped me learn how to cook.' Young people's self-confidence is enhanced by these positive interventions and helps them to positively move into independence.

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy excellent relationships with staff, which is based on a strong sense of trust and mutual respect. Young people live together with minimal conflict, which promotes a settled home environment. Young people respond well to the routines and boundaries and say that staff are 'firm but fair'. One young person said, 'here you know that they actually care.' Young people know how to complain and feel listened to even when their wishes cannot be met.

Young people's individual placement plans are highly personalised and they are

specific to their needs. Young people are familiar with their plans and they are involved in decisions about their future. Young people's needs arising from their cultural background and personal identity are positively identified, supported and celebrated. This ensures that young people feel pride in their identity and heritage and can openly share their experiences without feeling embarrassed or marginalised.

Young people live in a healthy environment. They are actively supported to access a range of health and specialist healthcare professionals. This ensures they receive the appropriate care and treatment to meet their physical, emotional and psychological health needs. Young people are encouraged to enjoy a healthy diet and exercise and are discouraged from smoking, drinking and taking drugs. Young people's engagement with smoking cessation and drug and alcohol services improves their health over time. Risky behaviours are also significantly reduced.

Young people are cared for by staff who place a high value on their educational attendance and attainment. They are encouraged to aspire and their achievements are celebrated and positively rewarded. Professionals strongly agree that young people's learning has improved by the care they receive. This demonstrates that young people are given every opportunity to reach their potential and achieve.

Young people actively participate in a range of fun hobbies and activities both in the home and community. Examples include day trips, theatre, sports, video games, pampering events, cinema and visits to the local animal sanctuary. Young people's confidence, self-esteem, personal achievement and sense of enjoyment are intensified by the range of activities accessed by them.

Young people live in a homely, comfortable and well-maintained home that is suitably located. They have their own bedrooms and personalise them to suit their tastes. Young people are encouraged by staff to keep their room tidy, which teaches them independence skills that will benefit them in the future. Young people have good access to local transport routes. This enables them to visit a range of local and community facilities that promote their social and emotional development.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people's safety and welfare is highly prioritised and promoted with exceptionally good outcomes. Staff are trained to safeguard young people from all types of harm. They work collaboratively with other safeguarding agencies to ensure this objective is successfully met. Young people say that they feel safe and assured that staff will protect them. Staff understand the risks that young people present because they follow young people's comprehensive and detailed risk assessments. This ensures that young people's vulnerabilities are well managed. Risk taking behaviours and activities specifically in relation to child sexual exploitation concerns and bullying behaviour has significantly reduced over time.

Young people have not gone missing from the home for a long time. One young person said that they feel settled at the home, which is why going missing is not an option for them. This demonstrates the positive impact that young people's relationships with staff have on their sense of stability. In the event that young people go missing from home, staff follow the correct procedures to ensure young people's safe return.

Young people's positive relationships with staff effectively reduces incidents of challenging behaviour and conflict. Young people's anti-social behaviour is appropriately addressed in conjunction with the home and youth offending services. Positive behaviour is praised and rewarded. Young respond well to this approach, which has led to no sanctions or restraints for several months. This is excellent.

Young people are protected by robust staff recruitment systems. This ensures that they are not exposed to adults who may pose risks to their safety and welfare.

Young people live in a safe environment. Up to date and regular health and safety risk assessments, gas and electricity appliance checks and fire drills promote young people's physical safety and welfare.

Leadership and management

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

Young people benefit from strong and effective leadership and management in the home. The Registered Manager communicates high expectations about sustaining improvement. This is adopted by the staff team who successfully implement these values. The Registered Manager is competently supported by her deputy and staff team who are child focused and invest in the young people. This means that young people benefit from exceptional outcomes and quality of care from their starting points.

The home operates within its Statement of Purpose and it is made available to professionals. This ensures that stakeholders know what services young people can expect to receive. Professionals comment positively about the home and they say that they would recommend the home to other professionals.

Young people are cared for by an adequate number of enthusiastic and motivated staff. Staff have experienced some changes to the team. However, there is a core group of staff who have provided continuity of care during this time. One young person said that the home has made a difference to their life. This demonstrates that the impact on outcomes for young people has been minimal. Staff say they have good management support and they are regularly supervised, appraised and trained. A number of staff are studying towards a recognised childcare qualification. This promotes and enhances their credibility as fully trained residential childcare professionals.

The Registered Manager is aware about the home strengths and weaknesses. They

have a development plan in place, which is regularly reviewed. The requirement and recommendation raised at the last inspection have been successfully addressed. Robust internal and external quality assurance systems drive improvement in the home. Young people and stakeholders are consulted and their views add value to advancements in the home. One professional said, 'The Registered Manager consistently seeks feedback from me after visits.' Most staff say that managers listen to what they say about improving the service. This has resulted in staff championing projects, such as raising cultural awareness in the home. Staff feel appreciated and part of the team as a result of being listened to.

Young people's records provide a good insight into their development and progress. This will help them understand the events in their lives now and in the future.

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.