

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Chris Scully
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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 is a privately owned children's home registered for three young people with emotional and or behavioural difficulties.

Overall effectiveness

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

Young people live in a safe, caring and supportive home environment that enables them to make excellent progress in all aspects of their lives. Social workers say that the home has enabled young people to turn their lives around due to the excellent emotional support they provide. Young people are doing very well at school and have high aspirations for themselves. They are growing in confidence and maturity and are making positive choices about their lives, such as not going missing.

Young people feel safe and are protected from significant harm. Young people are extremely positive about the quality of care and support they receive from staff. They say 'we're family and its our home,' and that they know they and the staff are outstanding. Staff work in a consistent coordinated way with young people, schools, families and social workers. This ensures young people get the right help and support on a daily basis. Young people's needs and views are integral to the organisation of the home and actively influence how it is run. They are fully involved in the decisions affecting their lives and all aspects of their care. Staff listen to young people and always take their opinions seriously and fully into account.

The home is effectively managed. The Registered Manager places strong emphasis on providing exceptional childcare and to the continuous improvement and development of the home. The manager makes good use of monitoring systems to review the quality of care and make changes to enhance the outcomes for young people. The Registered Manager and staff place a strong emphasis on providing a homely environment, while maintaining a high standard of care to young people. This is evident in the minor issues raised in relation to maintenance and development plans, which are already in the process of being addressed.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure there is a written development plan in place which identifies any planned

changes in the operation or resources of the service (NMS 15.2)

- ensure the home provides a comfortable and homely environment and is well maintained and decorated, in relation to one young person's bedroom, damage to a window handle and mould in the bathroom (NMS 10.3)
- ensure all avoidable hazards are removed, in particular, fire doors are not held open. (NMS 10.3)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people flourish from highly individualised support which enables them to grown in confidence. Young people continue to make excellent progress in developing positive and realistic views of themselves, others and their emotional resilience. They are growing in confidence and maturity. Young people acknowledge how far they have come at the home and say, 'staff really care about us, they want us to do well and help us to do this.' Young people show insight into the problems they face and are able to learn from their mistakes, such as not becoming the 'class clown' as they acknowledge this can lead them into trouble as school.

Young people enjoy healthy lifestyles and are always encouraged to take an active interest and responsibility in looking after their own physical and emotional health appropriate to their ages and understanding. Young people choose to eat healthily and relish the opportunities to eat at various restaurants with staff. They are keen to try different foods, such as game pie and enjoy the opportunities to shop in various specialised shops and markets. Young people are extremely pleased about winning the design competition for the Healthier Homes scheme and thoroughly enjoyed taking staff to a restaurant as their prize.

Young people have an excellent understanding of the health care services available to them in the community and know how to access these. This is because extensive information and individualised support is provided to young people on issues, such as drug and alcohol awareness and smoking cessation. A number of staff are trained to administer smoking cessation patches. As a result, young people and staff are giving up smoking due to the excellent support they provide to one another. Young people are registered with the appropriate health care professionals such as doctors, dentist and opticians.

Young people are making very good progress at school. Their attendance levels have much improved and they are actively engaging with their education. Young people have high aspirations for themselves. They are considering their future employment such as becoming a pilot and are already considering the qualifications they will need to achieve this. Young people have a positive attitude to school and have identified barriers which can prevent further achievement, such as their behaviour. They have reflected upon this and have made constructive decisions about how they will handle various situations when they return to school after the holidays. Young people say that they are, 'doing well at school and enjoy it.' Young people have a secure

understanding of the world around them and current events as they engage in lively discussions with staff.

Young people benefit from appropriate contact with their family, which enables them to sustain positive relationships with them. Staff work really hard to ensure young people enjoy their contact with their family, and provide opportunities for family members to visit the home and have a meal with them. Young people are really pleased that they are able to meet with their friends and spend time with them away from the home. Young people are effectively and sensitively supported as staff are very aware that some may find these situations stressful. Social workers comment upon the support given to young people during what can be a particularly stressful situation. Young people are able to meet with their family and talk through the events due to the excellent support provided by staff.

Young people are being well prepared for adulthood. They are becoming more independent and are making a successful transition to adult life appropriate to their age and level of understanding. Young people routinely take part in the running of the home, preparing menus, shopping cooking and managing money. Young people talk knowledgeably about the cost of certain items and the need to save up for these. They say they enjoy doing things in the home as 'it's our home'.

Quality of care

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

Young people are thriving in a warm, nurturing and supportive environment. This is because they are cared for by a highly committed and motivated staff team who want the very best for young people. Their high aspirations mean young people are consistently striving to do better and have a very positive outlook on life. Young people say, 'the staff really care about us, they take us places we want to go to and are proud of us.' These views are echoed by social workers who are very complimentary about the home. They say 'staff regularly go above and beyond of what is expected of them' and 'staff have enabled young people to turn their lives around.' Young people enjoy extremely positive relationships with staff which are built upon mutual respect and trust. Young people are sensitive to the needs of others, for example, spontaneously writing a letter of apology to staff for their behaviour and acknowledging the staff's feelings at the time.

Young people's views are actively sought, highly valued and acted upon by staff. Their views are intrinsic to the running of the home and activities provided. Young people feel valued and respected as they are at the heart of everything the home does. Young people hold very strong opinions about the home and are keen for others to know that 'we are outstanding because it's great here, everything is just great.' The relationship between staff and young people is inspirational, nothing is too much trouble for them. As a result, young people are able to discuss any concerns and come to an appropriate resolution or just spend time with staff enjoying their company. Young people are aware of how to make a complaint should they feel the need to do so. However young people say, 'why do we need to

complain, we just talk to the staff and they help us to sort it out.'

Staff plan young people's care and accommodation exceedingly well. The objectives for young people's placement at the home are clearly outlined and demonstrate what the staff and young people are working towards. Young people's placement plans provide a comprehensive picture of their personal needs and the support each young person requires. Staff effectively implement these plans, which results in young people's needs being consistently met on a day-to-day basis. Care planning and daily practice actively supports and acknowledges young people's different needs, backgrounds, interests and views. Resulting in young people receiving highly personalised care which is effectively designed to meet their individual needs. This includes their cultural background, personal identity, including faith and disability. Young people are actively encouraged to contribute to the decisions made about them. This is because they are listened to and their comments are valued by staff and others.

Young people live in a healthy environment which actively promotes their physical health and emotional well-being. All young people receive the services and support that they need, for example, access to the child and adolescent mental health team. Staff are trained in first aid which means they are able to respond to any accidents or incidents in the home. Young people say that staff look after them when they are ill. Highly effective systems for the recording and administration of medication results in young people receiving the correct medication at the right time. Young people with specific medical needs receive exceptional support as all staff are fully aware of these and the action to take to support young people.

Staff have consistently high aspirations for young people and are extremely proud of how well they are doing. They are fully committed to enabling young people to overcome any difficulties they may face to enable them to lead happy and fulfilling lives. Young people revel in the praise offered by staff and are eager to show others their awards, such as school certificates. Young people are engaged in a wide range of enjoyable activities. They talk enthusiastically about their football and fishing skills. Young people talk knowledgeably about responsible fishing, for example if they catch a certain type of fish it cannot be returned to the lake and the need to bring your entire rubbish home with you. Young people are thrilled with the support they receive from staff and other young people. They are proud to share their successes with them, such as their karate grading.

Young people live in a comfortable family home in a residential area. The home is clean and decorated to a high standard. The home is generally well maintained. Although some maintenance issues; such as the mould in the shower cubicle, a stained carpet, curtains and a damaged window handle in a young person's bedroom detracts from the homely environment. All areas of the home are highly personalised by the young people. Their presence and interests are evident throughout the home which creates a truly homely environment. Young people say 'its our home and we want it to feel like that.' Social worker's comment that 'young people are very happy here and do not want to leave'.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are safeguarded as staff have an excellent understanding of the safeguarding procedures. Staff are extremely aware of the action to take should they have any concerns about a young person. This combined with their innate understanding of young people's needs means young people are protected from harm. Young people have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. This is because of the excellent advice and support provided by staff. Excellent relationships with placing authorities mean staff are fully informed of any incidents which may affect young people's safety, such as unsupervised access to the internet.

Carefully balanced comprehensive risk assessments help to keep young people safe. This ensures young people are able to be independent and take safe, acceptable risks. Young people are very aware of the time that they need to be home each night and know that staff 'worry about me' if they are not home on time. Young people show increasing maturity and responsibility for these minor occurrences when they have 'just lost track of the time'. Young people do not go missing from care. Social workers comment that there has been a dramatic decline in these incidents due to the support of staff. Clear procedures are in place should a young person go missing. This ensures all appropriate persons are informed and young people are quickly located.

A strength of the setting is the commitment of staff to promote positive behaviour. Staff always view young people positively and are extremely proud of them. Staff effectively help young people to resolve issues by asking open-ended questions, which enable them to think and reflect upon the situation. As a result, young people are developing effective coping and conflict resolution skills. Young people are sensitive to the needs of others and are able to consider the effects of their behaviour upon others. Young people say, 'they are better behaved since coming here.' They are very aware of the house rules and that there maybe consequences to their actions and accept these. Staff are trained to carry out physical interventions, but have never needed to. Young people know they can talk to staff and that they will help them to sort things out.

Young people live in a homely environment which is physically safe. Young people are kept safe due to established systems to maintain safe practices and to fulfil the home's safety obligations. Young people are very aware of the fire evacuation procedures, which mean they are able to evacuate the home quickly in an emergency. However, young people are not fully protected as some fire doors are held open during the day.

Young people are cared for by suitable qualified, experienced and vetted staff because recruitment and vetting procedures are robust. Also there are effective procedures in place to ensure visitors to the home are suitably, checked and supervised to protect 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 effectively meets the aims and objectives of their Statement of Purpose and young people, families and social workers are clear about the service and support the home provides. Social worker's comment that the home goes beyond what is expected of them and as a result young people are making excellent progress in all areas.

The Registered Manager and staff are highly committed and motivated to deliver exceptional childcare tailored to the specific and diverse needs of young people. The effectiveness of this approach is evident in the continued outstanding outcomes for young people with regards to their learning, behaviour, independence skills, emotional maturity and understanding of the needs of others.

The Registered Manager has a clear and realistic understanding of the strengths of the service and evidence for development. However, while there is no written development plan in place for the home, this information is contained within other documentation. Regulations 33 visits are carried out by a representative of the organisation and provide guidance on areas for improvement. The manager's own monitoring systems are secure and identify any shortfalls. The Registered Manager is proactive in rectifying any issues, such as repairing a kitchen unit door to reduce the risk of injury to young people or staff. The home has addressed the recommendations from the previous inspection in relation to young people going missing, documentation on room searches and electrical checks. This has improved the recording systems and has enhanced young people's safety and well-being.

Young people are cared for by a highly competent staff team who have a wide range of skills and experience. Staff say they are well supported by the manager and have regular supervision sessions and opportunities to meet as a team. These meetings enable staff to discuss the young people's progress, the running of the home and to reflect upon current working practices and consider new ways of working to provide any additional support a young people may need. Young people's input is paramount to these discussions and means staff are constantly adapting to meet their ever changing needs. Consequently, the home is able to clearly demonstrate a capacity for sustained improvement and ensure young people receive exceptional care.

The home's records are stored securely and provide a meaningful picture of each young person's individual needs, background, development and progress. Records are very well maintained. Young people are asked to sign and make comment about the entries made about them, where they have declined this is also recorded. Clear systems are in place to ensure the home notifies all appropriate persons of any significant incidents. This promotes young people's well-being and transparency.

Equality and diversity practice is **outstanding**.

