

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Linda Brown / Jo Stephenson
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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

The home provides an assessment service for one particular local authority and cares for children and young people between the ages of eight and 16 years who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. Following the assessment period, young people move to other placements such as their families; other longer term residential placements or independence.

Overall effectiveness

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

This home provides an outstanding quality of care to the young people it accommodates. Young people benefit from living in a home that is well managed and with staff who are motivated, experienced, supported and well trained.

The home provides a time-limited service with the specific role of assessing the needs of the young people and identifying appropriate future placements. This it does to a very high standard. Excellent plans and assessments are completed to encompass all aspects of a young person's needs, for example, cultural and sexual identity, education and health. Young people are encouraged to take an active role in decisions being made about all aspects of their lives.

The ratio of staff to young people is good and this enables staff to provide a service tailored to the individual needs of the young person. Staff form excellent relationships with young people and encourage and support them to engage with staff and behave well. The safety and well-being of the young people is central to the outstanding level of care being provided. Robust and detailed monitoring systems identify patterns and trends and the management use this monitoring to actively address shortfalls and develop the service. Young people move on to a range of different services. Therefore, staff work in partnership with families and other professionals to ensure that positive outcomes are achieved and young people have a smooth and successful transition from the home into a more permanent placement.

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people are making exceptional progress when taking into account their starting point at the time of admission. Achievement is encouraged and success is consistently rewarded. Young people are responding positively to this approach. Young people speak highly of the relationships they have formed with staff. Young people have been helped to develop a positive self view, emotional resilience and knowledge and understanding of their backgrounds.

Young people benefit from being cared for by an enthusiastic and committed staff team who work in partnership with other health professionals to ensure that young people enjoy good health. Young people are fully involved in this process resulting in them having a clear and concise understanding of their own medical needs. This means that young people are supported to understand and address their conditions to enable them to live a full and healthy lifestyle.

Young people make exceptional progress in their education. They live at this home on a time-limited basis. However, staff do not allow young people to 'drift' if they have come to the home with problematic or failed educational placements. Staff work closely with education providers to ensure immediate action is taken and appropriate education or work placements are found. The outcome of this practice has shown that young people who had very poor attendance at the time of their placement now attend education on a regular basis and are achieving positive results.

Young people are well-aware of the arrangements in place for maintaining contact with family and friends. Staff work closely with families in line with placement plans with any restrictions on contact clearly noted. These arrangements ensure that young people benefit from appropriate contact with those people who are important to them.

Young people are fully supported to make a successful transition into adulthood. Staff are able to adapt care to cater for the individual needs of the young people who live there. This involves preparing young people for moving on to a range of different places, for example, a rehabilitation home, fostering, other residential provisions or independent living. Young people who are moving on to independent living speak positively of the skills they are being taught by staff and are confident that when the time comes to move out they will have the skills to make a smooth transition into adulthood.

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy excellent relationships with staff which enables them to engage positively and feel supported. Staff are consistent in their approach to working with young people and are skilled in their knowledge and understanding of the diverse needs of individuals. As a result young people appreciate and value staff efforts and engage positively in their placement. Young people have developed appropriate relationships with each other and this contributes to the homely feel of the setting.

Young people are confident about participating in meetings; they state that staff listen to them and take their concerns seriously. Staff actively seek young people's views about the running of the home. They are provided with timely feedback when they raise issues or concerns. Subsequently young people feel involved in their placement and understand why it is not always possible to act upon their wishes.

The home promotes robust complaints procedures which young people are aware of and understand how to use. The young person's guide to the home details information on children's rights and advocacy services. Notice boards contain stamped addressed envelopes and consequently young people can make complaints to other agencies in private and without alerting staff. Complaints are taken seriously and dealt with promptly.

Young people have comprehensive placement plans that staff review and update daily. Young people are encouraged and supported to contribute to their plans and consequently have an extensive knowledge of the aims and objectives of their placement. Staff are able to determine young people's progress and identify any shortfalls or concerns. They work hard at engaging with young people to ensure that they receive the appropriate support and guidance, which promotes improved outcomes for young people. Behaviour plans and reward programmes are individualised and detail proactive and imaginative methods of supporting young people. Young people engage in these plans which results in positive outcomes.

The home has clear policies and procedures on promoting a healthy life style and staff receive suitable training to support health and well-being. Young people benefit from collaborative links between the home and health professionals that ensure a holistic approach to their care. This means that young people are provided with effective guidance and support when they most need it. Medication is stored safely and administered correctly. Staff support young people to attend their health appointments and demonstrate a detailed knowledge of the health needs of individuals. Young people understand the importance of regular exercise and healthy diet and contribute to the completion of weekly menus.

Staff are dedicated to promoting educational achievements for young people and support their school attendance through effective working relationships with schools. Staff are professional and effective in challenging barriers to young people's access of education. Young people benefit from consistent engagement which enhances their skills and educational development. Young people benefit from staff who support their attendance and encourage them to improve. A computer and suitable space is available for young people to complete homework.

Young people are provided with an extensive range of organised activities that enhance learning opportunities and develop independence skills and self-confidence. Staff provide individual plans for young people which reflect their interests and support their aspirations. The home also encourages group activities for young people which subsequently helps them to build sustainable relationships with others.

Equality and diversity are well established within the culture and ethos of the home and staff demonstrate that they are committed to continuing to promote this. Staff recognise individual needs and placement plans reflect the personal identity and cultural background of young people. As a result young people feel respected and confident.

Young people benefit from living in an environment which is homely, comfortable and is decorated and furnished to a suitable standard. The lounge furniture has recently been replaced. Maintenance repairs are addressed promptly with minimal impact on the young people. Bedrooms are individually decorated to reflect the personal tastes of the young people.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Staff are able to demonstrate an excellent knowledge and understanding of the need to protect young people. Staff speak positively about the regular training they receive with particular regard to protecting young people. Staff at all levels are fully aware and confident about the reporting process and the action they would take if they have any concerns. Robust risk management plans are constantly monitored to reduce any identified risk and provide staff with excellent guidance and strategies for managing and identifying concerns. For example, staff are fully aware of the indications of bullying and monitor closely any situation that raises concern. Young people state that they feel safe at the home. They are confident they would tell staff if they are unhappy about anything or anyone and that any concern would be taken seriously and dealt with by staff.

Young people who go missing are protected by the actions of staff. Robust procedures are in place and staff play a significant role in searching for young people if they do go missing. Staff form positive relationships with young people. This enables them to engage with young people and significantly reduce the incidents of young people going missing. Strong links are also established with the police who visits the home and spend time with staff and young people. Where appropriate, staff also engage with friends and families. This holistic approach has proved to be highly successful. Young people with previous histories of regularly going missing speak positively about their placement at the home and have not felt the need to run away. One young person said, 'it's like home here'.

Young people are encouraged and supported to behave well. Positive behaviour is promoted through reward systems which are tailored to address individual behaviours. Young people are fully aware of the rules of the home and the consequences if they are broken. Likewise they are praised and rewarded for positive behaviour. Physical interventions are used as a last resort. Staff are skilled and trained in de-escalation and physical intervention, with an emphasis on de-escalation. However, in the event of a physical intervention taking place, robust systems are implemented to monitor this and support the individual young person. One young person spoke positively about the changes to their behaviour since they came to the home and felt that they wanted to continue to change. Young people feel confident that staff are there to encourage them and help them to succeed.

Young people are protected and cared for by staff that are appropriately vetted and checked. Robust recruitment systems are followed in line with the provider's

recruitment and selection process. The Registered Manager takes an active role in the recruitment of staff and is able to fully explain the process involved. Visitors sign in and are checked on arrival and briefed on fire evacuation procedures. Risk assessments, fire and equipment checks are maintained and up-to-date. This practice means that young people live in a safe and well maintained environment.

Leadership and management

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

Young people live in a home which is effectively and efficiently managed and meets the aims and objectives of the Statement of Purpose. The young people, staff and placing authority are clear about the facilities and services the home provides and subsequently the young people understand the purpose of their placement.

The home benefits from the robust monitoring systems which are in place. There is clear evidence to show that effective consultation with young people, their families and placing authorities is extensive; this has a positive impact upon the quality of care provided. Significant events and incidents are well managed and evaluated to ensure that young people are protected from harm.

The recommendation at the previous inspection regarding night time fire drills has been met. The Registered Manager and staff are committed to improving outcomes for young people, providing a bespoke service of individualised care and development. As a result the young people make significant progress during their placement.

Young people are supported by a sufficient number of staff who are motivated and committed to providing a consistent and tailored service to meet their individual needs. Staff receive high quality training which exceeds national minimum standards and reflects the aims of the service. This enhances their understanding of the needs of young people and subsequently ensures that staff meet individual welfare needs. Staff are supported through regular and effectual supervision which addresses their training needs and learning styles, giving them opportunities for self-development. Staff state that they feel well supported in the home. New staff are provided with a thorough induction programme before commencing employment which results in continuity of care for young people.

The home has a detailed development plan in place which demonstrates the capacity for improvement. Recent changes to placement plans for young people mean that a definitive document is in place to assist staff in their role and ensure that young people receive consistent and quality care. The Registered Manager and staff recognise the strengths and weaknesses of the home. Challenging targets and realistic objectives means that improvements focus on outcomes for young people. Regular team meetings allow the staff to reflect on young people's progress and improve ways of supporting them. It also affords the team the opportunity to look at ways of improving the service they provide.

Young people's written records provide a comprehensive picture of individual progress and significantly contribute to young people's understanding of their life. Placement plans detail considerable consultation with young people and encompass their personal growth in all areas of their development. Records are up-to-date and stored securely.

Equality and diversity practice is **outstanding**.