

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Jo Stephenson
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home provides an intake and assessment service. It provides short-term care and accommodation for up to three young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home operates on behalf of a local authority.

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 home provides an exceptionally supportive environment in which young people say they are extremely happy. Young people enjoy positive relationships with staff who are experienced, well trained and able to recognise and assess individual needs. Placement plans and assessment records are exceedingly detailed and regularly reviewed. Staff work in close partnership with the placing authority and other professional agencies to support and develop young people. As a result, positive outcomes for young people are consistently and continually promoted.

Young people say they are safe and feel safe at the home and that their views are reflected in all aspects of their care. Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding. They are able to evaluate specific triggers and risk factors in regard to this. These are considered in impact risk assessments prior to admission. Young people benefit from the consistent application of clear boundaries. Staff are very effective at encouraging the development of positive behaviours as part of the assessment process. This means that young people understand the aims and objectives of their placement.

The home ensures internal placement plans; assessment plans and risk management plans are developed to promote education, welfare and health. Staff continually and actively consult with young people on all aspects of their care and plans are regularly reviewed to monitor progress. Staff effectively source support agencies to further enhance the development of young people and reflect their individual needs. Subsequently, young people experience an integrated approach to their care.

Staff are successfully supported in their role by a passionate management team. Monitoring systems are in place to continually review outcomes for young people and the quality of care provided by the service. Managers seek regular feedback from young people, their families and the placing authority to shape the development of the home.

Outcomes for children and young people

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

There are many exceptional examples where young people receive and benefit from personalised care that meets their individual needs. Staff continually encourage young people's views and development. This means that young people have a positive sense of self-esteem and well-being. One young person said that they liked living at the home because the staff made them 'feel important, like I really matter'. Staff support young people to reflect on their behaviour using detailed, meaningful and thoughtful placement plan sessions. Relationships between staff and young people are constructive and progressive. Young people say they understand why they are living at the home and the plans in place for their future, which helps them to understand their background and early lives.

Young people's general health needs are met and they access all primary healthcare services, such as regular doctor's, dentist's and optician's appointments. Staff have established and maintained effective working relationships with specialist health services for young people who require additional support. Staff approach health professionals to assess the emotional and psychological health needs of individuals, and participate in supplementary training to ensure they can meet the identified needs. As a result, young people benefit from a holistic and bespoke health care service that recognises their needs and promotes their development.

Education is central to the ethos of the home and staff encourage young people to regularly attend their school provisions. Attendance is high for all young people and the home continually celebrates the educational achievements of individuals. Staff have establishing links with education providers. This means that young people are able to remain in their school placements while residing at the home. Young people say they recognise and appreciate the support they receive to continue their education. Staff assist young people to improve their academic skills and provide activities that complements their national curriculum stage. As a result, young people profit from an integrated approach to their education and stability for their learning. Records show that individual attainment for young people correlates to their peer group.

Young people attend regular young people's meetings. They say their views are consistently sought on menu choices, activity plans and the development of the home and they discuss a range of topics such as bullying. Young people say they feel consulted in the daily running of the home and have recently suggested changes that have improved the internal decoration. Staff identify a range of community based activities for young people and participation is regular and enthusiastic. This means

that young people have the opportunity to learn a range of new skills and decide on interests they would like to pursue.

Managers and staff are proactive at encouraging young people to sustain and progress relationships with their families. Staff attend family contact visits when necessary, respecting the young people's need for privacy while ensuring appropriate interactions. Young people are encouraged to socialise with their family and friends and remain in contact during holiday periods. Subsequently, young people are not isolated from their peer group.

Young people undertake general independence skills as part of their placement assessment to help prepare them for their transition to future placements or adulthood. Plans reflect the ages and abilities of young people and monitor their progress. Staff are able to identify areas that will require additional effort and support and report on this in end of placement evaluation documents. As a result, young people acquire some necessary practical skills before leaving the home.

Quality of care

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

Young people have very positive relationships with staff. They say that staff make them feel important and listened to, and respect their views. Staff consistently and continually promote acceptable behaviour, respect and consideration for others. Behaviour management strategies are personalised and enable young people to build relationships with others and develop skills to manage conflict. The home provides an extremely nurturing environment that accentuates praise and celebrates individual and group achievements. One young person said that living at the home makes them 'feel like part of a family'. As a result, young people benefit from improved self-confidence.

The home operates a very detailed and robust complaints procedure and young people confirm that they understand how to raise a concern. Independent advocacy is provided to further support the young people to express their wishes and feelings. Young people are able to make a complaint and say they feel confident that this will be appropriately resolved. Young people are provided with written and verbal feedback on complaints and asked to complete evaluation sheets to comment on the complaints process. Consequently, young people feel their concerns are taken seriously and are able to impact on future practice.

Staff compose exceptionally detailed internal placement plans and risk assessments for young people that reflect individual needs, progress and abilities. Plans are continually reviewed and incorporate all aspects of care, including health, behaviour issues and contact arrangements. Young people are encouraged to comment on these plans during placement plan sessions. Staff provide placing authorities with opportune feedback on young people's progress and development. This is assimilated into statutory care plans, final placement assessments and highlighted during case reviews. As a result, young people experience an integrated and

inclusive approach to assessing their future care requirements.

Young people are encouraged to attend their education placements and staff provide practical assistance to enable this. Staff have high aspiration for young people and liaise with education providers to identify any additional support requirements. Young people are inspired to reach their full potential and say they are working towards achieving their career aims. Education is pivotal to the structure of the home and embedded in daily tasks. Consequently, young people benefit from a consistent approach to their education.

Staff liaise with external health services that provide specialist interventions to meet the individual needs of young people. Young people are assisted to access these services and acknowledge the benefits to their health. Staff ensure that the emotional and psychological health needs of young people are assessed by 'complex care' health professionals and include identified welfare needs in placement plans and assessment evaluations. As a result, young people benefit from an encompassing attitude to addressing their health needs.

Young people participate in a range of activities that reflect their personal interests. Staff actively engage with, and stimulate young people to vary their activities to develop new skills and share new experiences. Subsequently, young people develop a greater sense of self-confidence. The home is proactive in addressing equality and diversity considerations. Young people are encouraged to celebrate their individualism and culture and embrace this in others. This means that young people are afforded an understanding of their backgrounds.

The home is suitably located and maintained to a good standard. Improvements have been made to the communal areas of the home and young people have been involved in choosing colour schemes and furnishings. As a result, young people live in a comfortable and suitably decorated home.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people say they feel very safe and that issues of bullying are rare and appropriately addressed by staff. Staff are alert to the signs of bullying and intimidation both inside and outside of the home. The manager operates a detailed monitoring system to review incidents of bullying and consider the impact of interventions. Robust and individualised risk management strategies are in place to keep young people safe and reflect on all potential vulnerabilities. Consequently, young people feel protected from risks and exploitation, and are able to raise concerns.

Incidents of young people missing from the home have significantly reduced and staff ensure rigorous missing from home risk assessments are in place. These are supported by protocols with police and are regularly reviewed and updated. Risk

assessments identify potential triggers to missing from home episodes and include individualised action plans. Young people are involved in the formulation of their risk assessments. Staff work in partnership with other agencies to ensure, as far as possible, that young people are protected from significant harm. Subsequently, young people benefit from an inclusive and bespoke approach to maintaining their safety and well-being.

Staff complete training in physical intervention and de-escalation techniques although the use of physical restraint is rare. Records of restraint are detailed and appropriate and case files show this information is dissimilated across all areas of care planning. Young people are encouraged to comment on the reason for this intervention being used and how they feel about being restrained. Staff participate in de-brief sessions following incidents of restraint to ascertain the effectiveness of the intervention. The home implements behaviour management strategies that encourage young people to display socially acceptable behaviour. Young people receive continual positive praise that recognises both small and significant achievements and developments. Staff use continual placement plan sessions to encourage young people to consider the impact of their behaviour. This means that young people develop an understanding of the possible consequences of their actions and the effect these may have on others.

Staff compile and review general risk assessments to ensure that young people are kept safe from known hazards. Young people take part in regular fire drills; checks and tests of fire safety equipment are also carried out. As a result, young people live in a physically safe environment. Policies and procedures support and promote safe work practices. Staff have a good understanding of safeguarding procedures and receive regular training to support their knowledge. Allegations and suspicions of harm are effectively managed through liaison with local safeguarding teams and appropriate time scales are adhered to.

Recruitment records are held centrally. The home adheres to robust organisation recruitment procedures to safeguard young people. Safety checks are carried out in full on all new starters. This means that young people are cared for by suitably vetted and selected staff.

Leadership and management

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

The home has a permanent manager who is registered with Ofsted. All concerns and complaints raised since the last inspection have been effectively and efficiently addressed. The manager leads a suitably experienced and well trained staff team that is able to understand the needs of young people. Staff say they feel empowered and involved in the development of the home and praise the commitment of the manager. They say they receive regular and effective supervision and participate in staff meetings. The manager is proactive in the procurement of training opportunities that reflect the specific needs of young people. For example, supplementary training has been implemented to focus on the emotional and mental health needs of some

young people.

Young people are provided with a copy of the children's guide to the home on admission. This is well presented and appropriate to their understanding. Young people and placing authorities understand the purpose of the home and the outcomes it aspires to achieve. The Statement of Purpose details the aims and objectives of the home and gives clear guidance on the facilities and services provided.

Staff and managers work with the placing authority to ensure that statutory requirements pertaining to reviews, visits and placement plans are met. The home is proactive and dynamic in chasing any shortfalls in this area. The manager regularly disseminates a comprehensive review of the progress made by young people, to other professionals. In addition, the final assessment document is detailed and personalised. This assessment process shapes future plans for young people. Staff encourage young people to participate in their review meetings and as a result, young people are able to express their wishes and views.

The Registered Manager's review of the quality of care provided by the service is robust and any shortfalls are detected and immediately addressed. The home has a development plan in place. However, this plan lacks recognition of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. Managers ensure that significant events are recorded and the appropriate authorities notified. The home operates central systems to record incidents and monitor actions taken. Records are cross referenced to case files and detailed accounts of incidents are completed. Young people have individual documents to record their activities and behaviours when using the service. Therefore, records contribute to the understanding of a young person's life. Subsequently, the value and impact of the service on young people is clearly apparent.

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.