

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Paul Taylor
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This privately owned children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for one young person who has emotional and /or 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 **good**.

This is a well- managed home which works very hard and conscientiously to improve outcomes for young people. Clear, consistent and well- planned care packages enable young people to feel safe and respected.

Young people benefit from meaningful relationships with staff, which helps them to improve their self-esteem and develop a positive view. Young people confirm that they feel their views are respected. 'I would give this home nine and a half out of ten' is a comment made by one young person.

The staff team work extremely hard to encourage young people to attend education and to take advantage of the support and guidance they have been offered in this area. Unfortunately, this has not always been taken up by the young people and therefore attendance at their educational settings is not as consistent as it should be. On- going efforts and various strategies are being tried by the staff team to encourage and enable the young people to succeed in this area.

Two recommendations have been made as a result of this inspection. These relate to ensuring that young people's views are always included in the record of any sanction imposed and the need to consistently include staff comments in their supervision notes. These are minor shortfalls that have not impinged upon the well- being or safety of the young people.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure that where any sanctions, disciplinary measures or restraint are used, children are encouraged to have their views recorded in the records kept by the home. (NMS 3.19)
- ensure that a written or electronic record is kept by the home detailing the time and date and length of each supervision held for each member of staff. including the registered person. The record is signed by the supervisor and the member of staff at the end of the supervision. (NMS 19.5)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **adequate**.

Young people benefit from making respectful and trusting relationships. They have numerous opportunities to reflect upon their histories and behaviours and this enables them to develop positive strategies and coping skills.

Young people have all their health needs identified and met. In particular, their emotional well- being is promoted to a very good standard. This is due to the support they receive from both members of staff as well as advice and support from the psychologist who works with the home.

Young people have every opportunity combined with good levels of support in order for them to attend educational placements. They are offered flexible, supportive bespoke packages in order to facilitate this. At the time of the inspection this offer has not been taken up by young people and attendance at educational placements is not consistent. This means that educational achievements of the young people are not as good as they could be.

Young people are encouraged to take part in positive and enriching activities in the community in order to feel a better sense of belonging and to build their confidence and self- esteem. They have their individual preferences and interests known and are then offered activities which meet these. Interesting activities have included working at a farm and helping to look after livestock as well as trips to a facility run by the organisation in Scotland for short breaks.

All young people have their independence and life skills assessed so that areas to be developed can be identified and put in place. This enables them to grow in their confidence in practical ways such as budgeting, cooking and applying for jobs and college placements.

Quality of care

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

Consistent, good quality care ensures that young people can develop positive and trusting relationships. Clear boundaries and numerous opportunities for the young people to voice their opinions enable them to feel safe and valued. 'They respect me' is a comment made by a young person.

Young people are aware of how to make a complaint if they wish to. This is explained in literature around the home and is also explained to them when they are admitted and as part of their induction process. This approach underpins the culture in the home that young people's views are important.

Comprehensive care planning ensures that each individual has their needs identified and strategies put in place on how to meet these. Additionally, these plans of care are regularly reviewed to ensure that they are up to date and relevant. The staff team meets regularly to discuss the effectiveness of care plans and a psychologist also gives guidance to the staff team, as well as young people, so that progress can be promoted.

All health care needs for the young people are identified and met. Routine health appointments such as optician and dentist are arranged together with specialist appointments if that is needed. For example, the home will liaise with agencies to arrange advice around substance misuse or will arrange appointments with the home's psychologist. This ensures that each young person is the centre of a thorough bespoke package of care.

The value of education is promoted in the home. Staff actively liaise with young people's educational placements in order to promote progress and achievement. In the event of young people having difficulties attending education the staff are flexible and inventive in working with them to encourage engagement. For example, they will review strategies with placements as well as the young people regularly to see what will work and what will encourage better attendance.

A good range of purposeful and enriching activities are offered to the young people. Each young person's likes are known and nurtured so that they can experience success and build their confidence. Examples of activities include cooking, outings to places of interest, working at a farm as well as trips to the cinema, gymnasium and bowling.

Young people live in a home that offers them a good standard of accommodation. They are encouraged to personalise their rooms and do so with posters and pictures. The home is well maintained with a very good standard of furnishings and fittings in place throughout.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people report feeling safe living at the home. The staff approach and systems operated in the home ensure that the young people's safety is seen as paramount.

Each young person has an individual protocol in place for the staff to follow in the event that they go missing. These protocols are made clear to the young people and are agreed with placing social workers and other professionals, such as police officers and staff from Youth Offending Teams. Young people are supported on their return to the home and the approach has led to a decrease in incidents of them going missing.

Behaviour in the home is seen to be good. Positive behaviour is celebrated and rewarded. The use of sanctions is rare, the home preferring to give young people space to reflect upon negative behaviour and addressing it by the use of restorative justice, for example allowing young people to apologise to staff if they have been rude and offensive. If a sanction is imposed, the views of the young people are not consistently recorded. This means that the home is missing on an opportunity to fully evaluate the incident and gain or record the young person's views.

All members of staff have been trained in the use of physical intervention used in the home. Incidents of restraint are highly unusual, the last one being seven months ago.

All new members of staff have comprehensive checks carried out on them prior to commencing work in the home. This ensures that only adults with acceptable backgrounds work with the young people.

Very good liaison with appropriate agencies such as the police and local children's safeguarding board ensures that any incidents of concern with regards to young people's safety are promptly reported. This enables plans to be put in place so that the young people's well-being is protected and promoted.

Health and safety is taken seriously ensuring the safety of young people and staff. Regular checks and tests are completed, including fire drills and fire alarm checks. Routine servicing ensures all areas of the home are maintained appropriately including the testing of electrical installations and portable equipment.

Leadership and management

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

The home has an established management structure which ensures that all members of staff are supported and guided to a good standard.

Performance of the home is subject to regular review so that practice is reflected upon and any shortfalls are addressed. For example, since the last inspection improvements have included establishing a core team of staff working in the home thereby ensuring that young people have a consistent group of adults caring for them. The manager has increased the hours he spends at the home and staff report he is readily available to both work shifts and to offer good support and advice. Robust checking of records by the manager and the deputy manager now ensures

that all relevant paperwork and information is available to all members of staff.

The home has good monitoring systems which ensure that all key records and the quality of the care of young people is scrutinised. There is a development plan in place for the home which includes plans for staff training and for the development of facilities, such as refurbishment. Monthly monitoring reports are detailed and outline any shortfalls identified. The manager, in turn, evidences how he has addressed these in action plans.

The staff at the home receive a good range of training which ensures they have the skills and competencies to offer good levels of care and support. Additionally they receive regular supervision so that they can reflect upon their practice and improve on their performance. Records of supervision are not consistently signed by the supervisees to show that they agree with all the points discussed in each session.

Records are checked by senior members of the staff team to ensure they are accurate and up to date. Each young person's record is well organised and gives a good historical picture of their time in the home and how they have progressed.

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.