

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Mark Kersh
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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 is run by a privately owned company and is registered for a maximum of four young people who have emotional or behavioural difficulties. There is a facility to educate young people onsite if they are unable to maintain their current school placement.

Overall effectiveness

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

Young people are supported with all aspects of care in a positive, nurturing environment. Comprehensive care plans are in place to enable staff to have an excellent understanding of the individual needs of the young people. Young people are cared for by an experienced staff team. Young people say that they feel safe and are happy living at the home. There is excellent communication from staff at the home to schools, health, social workers and parents regarding how young people are progressing and achieving positive outcomes. Young people consider the home is a very good place to be.

Young people have excellent opportunities to influence their care and the routines in the home. Staff consult them over the care provided and support them to prepare for reviews and contact. Practice is focused and meets the needs of individual young people. Independence training in preparation for adult life takes place in a way each young person feels they can manage, which helps them develop their self esteem and confidence.

Staff fully encourage and support the young people in a caring, safe and healthy environment to achieve excellent outcomes in all aspects of their lives. The management team make excellent use of the robust monitoring system in place to continually develop and improve the care provided and the outcomes for the young people. No requirements or recommendations were raised as a result of this inspection.

Areas for improvement

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people benefit greatly from a diverse staff team who provide them with individual support in order to develop confidence and a positive view of themselves. Key workers have an excellent knowledge of the background and individual needs of the young people and actively promote their confidence and understanding.

Specialist services and therapy sessions are available to ensure young people have an understanding of their background and to provide life story work if this is required.

The health of young people is promoted positively. Effective practice ensures young people enjoy positive health and lead healthy lifestyles. There is a nurturing and educative approach to help young people understand the benefits of enjoying good health, for example how diet improves behaviour, skin and hair.

Young people demonstrate good awareness of their health needs and make good progress in key areas of their health plans. Enthusiastic and forward-thinking staff make good use of specialist health services and employ individual therapeutic programmes to support each young person and respond to their changing needs.

Staff actively promote and support young people's education and consequently from their starting point in the home their attendance and progress is excellent. This includes successful reintegration into mainstream schooling, actively choosing to do extra homework, very good exam results in core subjects and a place at college. Young people commented, 'before I came to this home I was not attending school at all and now I am doing really well'.

Young people confirm that they understand the contact plans and arrangements that are in place. These are made at the time of the placement and are reviewed regularly. Staff work closely with families in line with placement plans, likewise, any restrictions are clearly noted. This practice encourages and supports positive relationships for young people with the significant people in their lives.

The outcomes for the young people living at the home are outstanding. They benefit from individualised support and guidance to enable them to develop their skills and experiences within a nurturing environment. This assists to prepare them for moving onto adulthood with a range of skills and experiences. Support is provided following consultations with young people, their family, health, education and placing local authority social workers. This ensures that support provided is promoting the best interests of the young people and is sustainable. This enables young people to achieve well.

Quality of care

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

Young people speak very positively about the strong and constructive relationships they have with staff. The interaction between staff and young people is calm, relaxed and good natured with lots of humour and staff handle difficult and potentially challenging situations calmly and with confidence.

Young people thrive in this nurturing and supportive environment which clearly identifies their individual needs. This includes their cultural, religious and dietary

needs. Any weaknesses identified within the staff knowledge are immediately addressed and staff work in partnership with other professionals to ensure that young people receive an excellent and appropriate support service.

Young people benefit from an outstanding range of opportunities to contribute positively to the day to day running of this home. Regular consultation with them, their families and placing social workers provide the management team and staff with an independent view of the services and care the home provides. As a result young people feel their contribution is important and receive feedback of changes made to the home which they have influenced.

Young people understand how to make a complaint and are provided with both visual and written information. They feel confident that staff will address any concerns they raise about the care they receive in the home.

Young people are consistently involved in the planning and review of their care. Placement plans are individualised and regularly updated, and young people sign to approve any changes made. These plans draw together all available information from a wide variety of sources to clearly identify young people's unique and holistic needs and how their needs will be best met. Needs arising from young people's cultural background and personal identity are clearly recorded, understood by young people and met.

Reviews take place at the required frequencies and young people attend and actively participate. Staff produce progress reports with young people to inform the discussions which are described by independent reviewing officers as 'comprehensive' and they empower young people to voice their opinions about their own futures.

Young people receive the support they need to enable them to be healthy and stay healthy. Young people are registered with doctors, dentists and opticians to ensure their good health is promoted. Staff provide extensive support, to make sure that young people are encouraged and attend their health appointments. Young people are encouraged to eat healthily and are able to recognise the nutritional values of eating a good diet. Whilst no young people currently have specific dietary needs, individual tastes are catered for along with encouragement to try unfamiliar foods. Most young people have an appreciation of different cultures and a range of international cuisine.

Young people are supported to access the local community to take part in a range of activities. Examples of this include swimming, cinema, going for meals out and shopping within the local town. Young people spoke positively about the activities and holidays that they take part in and say that they are supported to try different activities.

The accommodation provided for young people is homely, nicely decorated and furnished to a high standard. Young people are provided with their own bedrooms which are personalised in accordance with their individual needs and wishes. The

home's location, size and design meets young people's needs comprehensively.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people say that they feel safe in the home. The commitment and consistency of the management and staff team enables them to work in partnership and maintain strong relationships with other professionals. This ensures that they are proactive in safeguarding young people. Staff actively encourage young people to keep themselves safe when out in the community and when using the internet. As a result young people have a significant awareness of possible dangers and this helps them to remain safe.

The manager and staff have completed comprehensive information and risk assessments for individual young people. This includes risk assessments that take into account a young person's potential to go missing and their vulnerability should they do so. Young people are protected by the strategies deployed by staff to ensure young people return home safely. Staff have regular contact with the local police and ensure that each young person has a mobile phone when they leave the home, so that regular contact can be maintained.

Staff work well as a team and form positive relationships with the young people who feel well cared for. The atmosphere at the home is relaxed and the emphasis amongst the staff team is to defuse any potentially difficult and challenging situations. Young people respond well to these strategies and instances of inappropriate behaviour is minimal. The need for restraint is rare and this shows the exceptional relationships that exist between young people and staff.

Staff are consistent and clear in their expectations and young people have a good understanding of the rules, consequences and reward systems. Young people and staff say there is no bullying taking place inside or outside of the home.

The home takes health and safety seriously. There are regular fire evacuation drills and young people know how to evacuate the premises safely in the event of fire. Staff who work at the home are stringently vetted to ensure those employed are suitable to work with vulnerable young people.

Leadership and management

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

Young people benefit as the manager has the necessary skills, experience, qualification and understanding to ensure that a clear vision of how the home operates is known and responded to positively by all staff. Staff are supportive of the management team and work closely with them to promote positive outcomes for the young people. Excellent links have been made with parents, placing social workers,

schools and health professionals to ensure that the needs of the young people are consistently supported. Young people enjoy care and accommodation provided by the home in line with its Statement of Purpose.

The manager understands the strengths of the home and areas where it could perform better. A written team plan is in place which charts the areas for improvement. The home has an excellent record in compliance. There were no requirements or recommendations following the previous inspection.

Young people benefit from having a well supported staff team, who receive regular supervision and appraisal in a format that identifies where improvements to staff's knowledge and working practice can be made. Staff actively participate in the core staff training programme, which is ongoing and assists them in maintaining excellent outcomes for young people.

The monitoring of the home is outstanding which fully evaluates the impact the service has in maintaining high outcomes for young people. Young people are consulted during regulation 33 and 34 monitoring visits and feel they are actively listened to.

Professionals involved with the home commented that, 'staff work extremely hard and well to meet young people's individual needs, young people have progressed outstanding in all areas and this is due to dedicated staff. Young people comments, 'I do not know how to begin to thank you all for all that you do for me'. Parents have in the main completed the outstanding section within the consultation feedback forms. None of the questionnaires received by the home recommended any areas for potential improvement. This would indicate that those who use the service are completely satisfied.

Robust systems are in place to ensure that significant events are notified to the appropriate authorities. These systems further protect young people. All records maintained in the home on young people are stored securely for confidentiality reasons and provide clear up-to-date information. This ensures that young people are provided with relevant information about their time spent in the home.

Equality and diversity practice is **outstanding**.