

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Jacqui Gosling
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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 one of a group of four homes that have been set up to provide intake and assessment services for a local council. It provides short-term care and accommodation for up to three young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Overall effectiveness

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

The staff team fully fulfil their responsibility to provide care and protection, which in turn helps young people to feel and stay safe. The leadership team is ambitious and motivated to improve, and decision making is always child focused. Close rigorous monitoring of the quality of care means the managers have a clear understanding of the strengths and the weaknesses within the home. Proactive and imaginative support provides young people with every opportunity to develop and achieve physically, emotionally, vocationally and spiritually.

Young people hold their quality of care in high regard. This extends to viewing the staff as a major strength of the home. There is an excellent rapport between young people and staff that is trusting and sincere. This warmth means young people are confident to express their views and opinions.

Young people make progress in relation to their starting point of the placement across all aspects of welfare. Care planning and practice are highly personalised to meet the individual needs of young people. This includes helping young people to be aware of how to stay safe.

There are no breaches of regulations or national minimum standards.

Areas for improvement

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people are making outstanding progress educationally, socially and emotionally because they receive individualised assistance through robust assessments and care plans. For example, young people are fully supported to access social activities both on site and in the local community, and independence skills are developed and valued.

Young people achieve positive outcomes and are provided with high quality care

within a warm, caring, nurturing environment with firm and consistent boundaries. Young people are supported to develop their knowledge, skills and independence through practical and meaningful activities, for example, Scouts group.

Young people make significant progress with their school attendance, although all are at different stages. This is because staff work unwaveringly to support young people to attend their education provisions.

Young people's health including physical, emotional, and psychological health is actively supported. Healthy eating is actively encouraged and young people know and understand the benefits of eating vegetables and fruit. Young people are encouraged to help staff prepare meals, as part of the work being completed around healthy eating. Young people enjoy working with staff making meals and baking various items. Young people are encouraged to develop self-awareness about the benefits of good personal hygiene. This helps to increase young people's self-esteem and self-image.

Staff have in-depth knowledge and understanding of the complex individual needs of young people in their care. They support young people to make outstanding progress based on their assessed abilities and needs. Each young person is supported by a key worker who supports them from initial assessment through to preparation for adulthood. One young person said: 'I love cooking, I always help staff prepare meals'. The home promotes a positive ethos that fully embraces diversity and difference. As a result, young people begin to truly appreciate the significance of differing values and are actively learning to have respect for each other.

Quality of care

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

Young people clearly benefit from the security and structure that exists within this home. The extremely competent staff team has created a homely nurturing environment that has well-defined boundaries. These boundaries are consistent and help to give young people a feeling of security without denying each young person's individuality. Social diversity is demonstrated well through day-to-day care. Young people are provided with role models who explicitly emphasise the equal value of each individual. This helps young people understand the negative impact of stereotypical gender and age-related roles.

Staff maximise every opportunity to help young people engage in education. This supportive approach not only enables young people to build up knowledge and skills, but also helps to develop values and attitudes they need to help them to stay fully engaged in their education.

The home works tirelessly with other partners to help ensure young people have the right level of access to all resources, benefits and training necessary to secure greater independence. Young people are supported to understand and take responsibility for maintaining their own physical well-being. This includes care staff

ensuring young people are able to access effective healthcare. Young people are able to learn about healthy eating, including having opportunities to prepare their own meals. Equally, young people are being actively encouraged to participate in a wide range of physical activities to help them sustain a healthy lifestyle.

The arrangements for dealing with medication are safely and effectively managed to ensure young people receive medication important to their health. Health plans are tailored to individual needs. The staff team implement positive behaviour strategies to support young people in developing skills to manage their emotions and to work in partnership with designated practitioners. Risk assessments are comprehensively developed so that the right level of protection is in place. These are regularly reviewed as risk levels change.

Young people have access to helpline numbers which they can use independently of staff if they need to talk to someone outside of the home. The excellent rapport with staff means young people are confident any concern will be addressed. There is a comprehensive well-established process for recording incidents, concerns and for making required safeguarding referrals. This clear process ensures there is always prompt response made to address concerns about the safety or welfare of young people.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people experience a safe, positive and encouraging atmosphere which is forged through an excellent relationship between staff and young people. Proactive and creative safeguarding practices are in place and mean young people feel safe. Positive ways of managing the behaviour of young people are utilised highly effectively and therefore physical restraint is infrequent. When physical interventions take place, they are for the shortest period of time and at the lowest levels of physical intervention thresholds. Young people are encouraged to openly talk about the event in order to debrief with the staff and this is fully documented. Management and staff promote an exceptional culture that ensures young people feel listened to and always respected as individuals. The staff team do not use sanctions very often with young people. When a sanction is necessary, young people are afforded opportunities to comment in an appropriate log book that links to any imposed sanction.

The staff team are very aware of their duties to safeguard young people and know of the external agencies they can approach independently of the home. The staff team ensure risk assessments are in place for assessing all possible risks faced by young people, especially activities that can involve time spent away from the home. These are comprehensive in their levels of detail and demonstrate how the staff take all reasonable steps to manage the risk without compromising growth or development. Concise guidelines exist for the appropriate use of information technology, such as email and websites, which young people sign to say they understand. This makes

sure young people are not put in danger or exposed to exploitation.

The careful selection, recruitment and retention of staff helps young people feel secure and have a consistent team of staff that know them well. There is a substantial commitment to working and engaging constructively with internal and external stakeholders to secure the safety of young people.

When young people go missing from care, effective procedures that safeguard young people from further harm are well established and known by staff. These include the full recognition of specific areas of needs and vulnerabilities young people have.

The premises are kept safe and appropriate to take into account the needs and characteristics of young people. This means young people are able to live in an environment that promotes their health and well-being. This includes regular safety checks being carried out on fire precautions, and annual checks on electrical and gas safety.

Leadership and management

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

The leadership provides a strong sense of commitment to openness and fairness of opportunity. The staff team treats young people with the utmost respect and dignity and supports them in overcoming significant barriers. The staff team tailor their support to respect the cultural, ethnic and religious needs of individuals.

The staff team are provided with quality training, support and resources to enable them to understand the developmental needs of young people. Joint working is commonplace. Multi-agency partnerships are forged with health services, placing authorities and services such as the looked after children in education service, to ensure all work together in the best interests of young people. Young people confirm they are able to be involved in meetings where key decisions are made about their futures, including contributing to decisions.

Care and pathway plans are drawn up through a multidisciplinary partnership. This enables young people to gain the right access to resources, benefits and education, necessary for achieving progress during transition stages. This is managed with realistic levels of what young people can achieve and with the right balance of providing safeguards to meet their diverse needs. All records that are compiled are robust, kept up to date and stored securely.

The staff have a strong focus on promoting positive outcomes and enhancing the well-being of young people. The staff work proactively to help young people overcome barriers so that they can succeed, for example, re-integrating back into education. Handovers are undertaken for each shift to ensure key messages are passed over.

The management team has an excellent robust system for monitoring and signing

records as part of the internal quality assurance. Regular Regulation 33 visits take place to provide additional quality assurance mechanisms and involve consulting with young people wherever possible. The management team clearly has a strong commitment to meeting young people's needs. The level of progress young people have made despite their history is a testament to the impact the management and staff are having on ensuring young people aspire, irrespective of their ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or faith.

The home has a clear, accessible and comprehensive Statement of Purpose that clearly sets out its aims and objectives. These objectives are being utilised in everyday practice, ensuring young people feel safe, protected and well cared for.

No requirements or recommendations were made during the last inspection that took place in March 2011.

Equality and diversity practice is **outstanding**.