

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Chris Scully
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for two young people between the ages of 11 to 17 years. They can also provide transitional care for young people entering into adulthood for a specified period of time.

The home is owned by a private organisation.

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 is making a positive difference to young people's lives and provides them with the tools and opportunities to achieve positive outcomes. Young people are thriving as they live in a supportive, caring and nurturing environment which enables them to make excellent progress. Young people enjoy extremely positive relationships with staff which are built upon honesty and trust. The home provides a warm, welcoming and homely environment, although there are some minor maintenance issues.

Young people are making excellent progress with regards to their education. They are positive about their future and want to do well. Young people's views, wishes and feelings are central to the running of the home. Young people are fully included in aspects of their care planning; as a result, care planning and practice is highly personalised and tailored to the individual young person's needs. This enables young people to continue making excellent progress. Social workers report staff are, 'strong advocates', who effectively prioritise young people's safety and well-being.

The home is well managed by an extremely committed Registered Manager and staff team. The Statement of Purpose and young people's guide provide clear insight into the type of care and support each young person can expect to receive. Records and documentation are well maintained. However, on one occasion Ofsted was not informed of a significant event within the prescribed timescales. This did not impact upon the care provided.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure there is a system in place to notify within 24 hours the persons and appropriate authorities of the occurrence of significant events in particular Ofsted (NMS 24.1)
- ensure the home is well maintained in particular the flooring in the kitchen and bathroom. (NMS 10.3)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make very good progress in all areas of their lives. They make continuous significant progress with regards to their emotional resilience, safety, personal relationships and education. Social workers say, they are very pleased with the progress young people are making and can see how their life opportunities have improved since residing here. A young person wrote, 'From the first day I came I didn't want to stay, but now I don't want to leave, the staff are amazing, supporting me and helping me through the good and bad times and my education too!'

Young people benefit from individualised support, which helps them to grow in confidence. They are making excellent progress in developing positive and realistic views of themselves and their emotional resilience. Young people have strong, trusting relationships with staff, because staff value their opinions and treat them as individuals. Young people say staff help them to deal with difficult situations and to look at things in a different way. Consequently, young people are more able to deal positively with the issues going on around them.

Young people are aware of their own health care needs. They confidently take responsibility for the administration of some medication, such as creams and emollients. Extensive information and individual support is provided to them on issues such as smoking and sexual health. As a result, young people make informed choices about their lifestyle and understand the possible implications to their health and well-being. Young people have an excellent understanding of the health care services available to them within the community and how to access these.

Young people are making very good progress with their education. They talk confidently about their achievements and how they are enjoying their courses. They talk enthusiastically about moving on to college and undertaking university courses so that they can secure the job of their dreams. Young people are provided with very good support from tutors within the home who tailor the lessons to the individual

needs of the young person. This means young people are able to achieve their individual goals and secure good examination results.

Young people benefit from extensive contact with their family and friends. This enables them to develop and sustain positive relationships. Contact visits are effectively facilitated by staff as they value the importance of young people keeping in contact with those people who are important to them. Consequently, they are able to maintain very positive relationships with those people who are important to them.

Young people are effectively prepared to become more independent and make a successful transition into adult life, appropriate to their abilities, age and level of understanding. They establish positive and appropriate social relationships, are able to succeed in education and develop a range of practical skills. Social workers are very complimentary about the support and guidance provided to young people on pathway plans. They say the support offered has empowered young people and has enabled them to make successful transitions into independent living. They also comment upon the highly effective aftercare provided, which is sensitively tailored to the young person needs. For example, inviting them for meals and activities and ensuring they have everything they need in their new home.

Quality of care

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

Young people thrive because they live in a stable, nurturing and supportive environment. They have a strong sense of belonging and say, 'It's like family'. This view is echoed by many of the professionals working with the home. They say that staff are very family orientated; 'this is a family home' and that young people receive very good support. Young people feel valued because staff listen to them, have regard for their opinions and respect them as individuals. They say, the staff are great.'

Young people receive exceptional individualised support, which stems from staffs' intuitive understanding of each young person's needs. This means they are able to provide effective guidance and reassurance to young people to help reduce any anxieties or worries they may have. Young people say 'I like it here, it is fun, full of activities, I am hardly ever bored and all of the staff and young people are lovely.' Social workers say staff are very good advocates for young people and are positive parental role models.

Care planning systems ensure young people receive support and services, which specifically meet their needs, taking into account their individual and diverse interests and views. Young people are fully included in the creation of the plans and confidently make their feelings and wishes known by recording their comments on the documents.

Young people's achievements are actively celebrated. This includes attending award ceremonies for the work a young person did around knife crime; this resulted in

them being awarded citizen of the year. The young person was extremely proud of this and staff are having the photographs framed for them as a keepsake. Young people enjoy an extensive range of activities. They say they really enjoy going horse riding and often spend their money on mints for the horses.

Young people's attendance at school is excellent. Staff have consistently high aspirations for all young people. They are fully committed to enabling young people to overcome any difficulties they may face and to lead happy, fulfilling lives. Young people are at the centre of the home and their needs are exceptionally well met by staff. Staff are very aware of their individual needs and behaviours and work consistently with them to help them achieve their individual goals.

The home enjoys positive and constructive relationships with schools. Staff are very well informed about young people's progress and any barriers to their participation. This means staff are able to challenge any inequalities to ensure young people achieve to their full potential in regards to their starting points.

The home works extremely well in partnerships with families, placing authorities, schools and health care professionals to promote young people's welfare. Young people live in a healthy environment that actively promotes their physical health and emotional well-being. Young people's health care needs are identified and are very well supported. Staff monitor young people closely to ensure they remain fit and well and take effective action to ensure they receive the right help at the right time

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people live in a safe environment where they are effectively protected from harm. Young people say they feel very safe at the home and have a strong sense of well-being. Staff give young people's safety the highest priority. Staff are extremely aware of the action to take should they have a concern regarding a young person's safety or well-being. As a result swift action is taken to protect young people from harm. Young people are provided with excellent advice regarding their own personal safety both in the home and when in the community.

Staffs' innate understanding of the young people's individual needs and circumstances enable them to keep young people safe. Social workers say, they are very, very pleased with the support provided to young people which has seen a reduction in the incidents of them being missing. Comprehensive risk assessments are carefully balanced with the need to protect young people and for them to be independent and develop an understanding of acceptable risks.

Young people do occasionally go missing from the home. When they do, they always return quickly and are warmly welcomed home by staff. Staff clearly understand the reasoning behind these episodes and respond positively to the young people. They provide the space for young people to think through their actions and give them the

opportunity to discuss their feelings with staff about their need to go missing. A young person said 'I realise I don't need to go missing. Staff look for me and make sure I'm safe.' Staff are proactive in minimising the risks of young people going missing, for example, using accident and emergency units outside of the young person's home area.

Young people are very clear about the house rules and say they are 'ok' and know the potential consequences for their actions. Staff are extremely good at emphasising the positives of young people's behaviour and work closely with young people to establish appropriate rewards and incentives with them. Consequently the rewards are meaningful to young people and means they are more able to achieve the desired outcome. As a result, rewards far outweigh any sanctions imposed upon them. Restraints are a very, very rare occurrence as staff believe there are more appropriate ways of handling difficult situations.

Young people are safe because staff carry out regular health and safety checks of the premises and obtain certifications for gas, electrical and fire safety checks. They ensure all visitors to the home are fully aware of the fire evacuation procedure and how to evacuate in an emergency. Young people are protected by a comprehensive range of health and safety procedures and risk assessments that are consistently implemented in practice.

The recruitment and selection of people working at the home is thorough and protects young people from having contact with unsuitable people. Young people are also protected by the effective arrangements for vetting and supervising visitors. This is evident from a recent event whereby staff refused a professional access to the home as they did not have a satisfactory form of identification on their person. The professional said, 'This was excellent and showed that they were effective in keeping young people safe.'

Leadership and management

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

The home is led by a committed and competent Registered Manager. Staff demonstrate a strong commitment to delivering exceptional childcare practice, tailored to the specific and diverse needs of the young people. Staff are held accountable for their performance and their individual development needs are identified through regular professional supervisions. This means they are able to reflect upon their performance and consider ways of further enhancing this.

Staff say 'We work well together as this is more of a family home than a children's home.' They comment on the support they get from the manager and the opportunities to undertake additional training which helps build upon their existing skills and expertise. Recent training includes: safeguarding, first aid, missing from care and sexual exploitation as well as monthly training with the home's therapists.

Regular opportunities to meet as a team mean that staff are able to consider young

people's progress and modify any plans to ensure they remain current. The skills within the staff team effectively match the needs of the young people. The numbers of staff on duty are sufficient to meet the needs of the young people. Training assessors are very positive about the home. They say the Registered Manager is committed to improving outcomes for staff as well as the young people; this has resulted in improved induction systems which link directly to the NVQ level three.

The home demonstrates a strong capacity for continued improvement based upon its performance and development of positive outcomes for young people. The Registered Manager has a realistic understanding of the strengths of the service and the areas for further development. The home has effectively addressed the two recommendations from the last inspection which related to the monitoring of the home. Reports by the independent person for the company are more detailed and contain the views of the young people, staff, parents and/or carers of the young people. Copies of the manager's monitoring are now sent to Ofsted at least twice a year. This has improved upon the monitoring and organisation of the home.

There are appropriate systems in place for notifying the appropriate persons of any significant events. However on one occasion Ofsted was not notified within the prescribed timescales. This was an oversight on behalf of the home and did not impact upon the care and support provided to the young person.

The well written Statement of Purpose and young person's guide are shared with young people, their families and placing authorities. This means they are well aware of the care and support young people can expect to receive. Social workers and independent reviewing officers are complimentary about the home and the excellent progress young people are making. They say the home is a supportive environment for young people and staff are highly committed to them.

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 children's homes.