

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Robert Curr
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The registered provider is a limited company. This children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for three young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties or mental disorders excluding learning 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**.

The home provides highly personalised care and makes great effort to include the young people in their care planning and to reflect upon their own actions. The views of placing authorities and other stakeholders are frequently sought to contribute towards the placement plan. The staff team provide a good quality of care and make every effort to engage the young people in discussions about their behaviour and needs with great success.

Young people have only recently moved into the home and have not yet had the opportunity to engage fully in all aspects of their life. Because of this, outcomes for young people are judged as adequate.

Young people have made adequate progress in their educational achievement and are building good relationships. Young people participate in a healthy lifestyle and do not involve themselves in criminal activity. Feedback from outside agencies on the young people's placement is extremely positive and parents consider the staff team have succeeded in getting their children to engage in meaningful activities, such as trying out local women's football teams and army cadets. Young people manage their negative behaviour better as a response to a staff team that is non-judgemental and shows a consistent concern for the welfare of the young people.

Leadership and safeguarding are good at the home and a realistic approach has been taken to managing the risks presented by the young people. Collective efforts by the home, health professionals and the placing authority have improved the welfare and

safety of young people. The home is well presented and provides a homely and spacious environment for the young people to live in.

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **adequate**.

Young people are making adequate progress to improve their life chances. They are beginning to develop confidence, emotional resilience, specific skills and coping mechanisms that will help to sustain them in the future.

Young people's health needs are met to a satisfactory standard. They are actively encouraged to live a healthy lifestyle, including healthy eating and exercise. Good access to specialist health care professionals provides young people with information and guidance about living a healthy life. Although staff provide appropriate support, young people are choosing not to fully recognise the immediate and long-term risks of a poor diet. However, they attend their health appointments with their doctors, dentists and opticians. Young people who need specific emotional and psychological support engage with, and benefit from, these services. They make informed choices through good advice and support from staff and professionals.

Since the start of placements, young people have had limited opportunity to fully engage in education, training or employment. However, they are demonstrating motivation and a determination to succeed. Where young people have expressed a desire to continue their learning, this has been accessed. It has not been possible to measure educational progress from their starting points at the beginning of this placement. Their achievements are recognised, highly praised and celebrated.

Young people benefit from appropriate contact with their families, friends and people who are important to them. Staff facilitate contact and these relationships promote young people's identity and sense of belonging.

Current pathway planning arrangements have not been fully formalised due to young people only just reaching an eligible age. Social workers confirm that 'Planning meetings have taken place, and the formal plans are nearing completion.' Young people are not fully engaging in the support offered to budget, shop, cook and launder their clothes.

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy some excellent relationships with staff, promoting mutual respect, trust and appropriate attachments. Staff are child-focused. They are familiar with young people's personalities and work to their strengths. Young people discuss a range of matters with staff, particularly issues of concern. Staff act on any concerns. They represent positive adult role models and engage well with young people, providing support and guidance on issues that will enable them to make

informed decisions. These relationships encourage appropriate, socially acceptable behaviours. One young person said that the staff are 'good to them'.

Young people's views, wishes and feelings are actively sought and influence the running of the home. Young people contribute to their own meetings by arranging the agenda. These forums enable young people to have their say. Agenda items include holidays and trips away, management arrangements and purchasing items for the home. The manager responds to the young people's meetings and makes herself accessible to them. Young people are involved in their statutory reviews and contribute to them. This promotes young people's confidence and self-determination. Key workers are compatible with the young people and take their role seriously, ensuring they support and monitor young people's progress.

No complaints have been made for some time, although young people clearly know how to complain. However, they will usually resolve issues through discussion and negotiation.

Young people are cared for in line with their placement plans, which are regularly reviewed and monitored. One social worker says that a young person at the home is making 'significant progress in such a short time' and is 'improving in many areas'. Staff promote young people's personal identity and cultural needs very well. Young people are cared for in a manner which enables them to celebrate their individuality.

Good behaviour management strategies and child-focused practices support and reward positive behaviour.

Staff endeavour to meet the physical, emotional and psychological health needs of young people. Young people have good individual health plans in place. They attend their health appointments with staff support. Their health needs are monitored and reviewed. Young people who may have experienced trauma have good access to mental health services. The outcomes for young people engaged in these services have positively enhanced their lives.

Staff have high aspirations for the young people. They continually work with other agencies and the local authority to ensure that young people are not disadvantaged.

Young people live in a homely environment which provides suitable accommodation for those who are preparing for independence. The home is furnished, decorated and maintained to a good standard, particularly the communal areas. Young people have keys to their rooms so that they can keep their belongings safe and be responsible for their possessions. Young people personalise their rooms to suit their individuality.

The home provides a good base for young people to engage in activities and enables accessible travel to neighbouring towns and cities.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people say they feel safe. All aspects of staff practice promote young people's safety and well-being. For example, staff talk to young people about keeping themselves safe and maintain contact with young people on their mobile phones when they are away from home. They monitor friendships to ensure that they are genuine. Staff are good at monitoring safety without being overly intrusive. Positive relationships between young people, staff and people outside the home ensure that young people can express their concerns to an appropriate adult.

All safeguarding policies and protocols provide robust and sufficient protection to young people who continue to take risk. Involving agencies, such as child and adolescent mental health and psychiatric services in safeguarding decisions is routinely considered so young people always benefit from a multi-professional approach to safeguarding concerns. Key professionals are promptly informed about changes to safeguarding agreements, so they can make timely representation, if concerned. This is good practice. It informs young people that their concerns are taken seriously and builds their self-esteem.

Young people do not report bullying to be an issue at the home. Young people are supported to behave appropriately. Their behaviour rarely warrants the need for restraint or physical intervention. Although staff say that young people can present behaviour management issues, they comment fondly about young people and demonstrate practices which show that young people are valued. The young people present as well-mannered, pleasant individuals who know how to behave in a range of social settings.

Visitors to the home are checked to ensure their positive identity, so that young people are protected from people who may pose a risk to them.

Although no young people have been reported missing from the home, there is an up-to-date agreed protocol to promote the safety and welfare of young people who go missing from care. Comments from parents state that 'wonderful staff support results in my child being safe, she loves it there.'

Regular health and safety checks on fire prevention equipment, gas, electricity checks, and regular health and safety audits promote a physically safe environment for young people to live in. Up-to-date risk assessments reflect young people's behaviour and the measures in place to minimise risk.

Leadership and management

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

The home is efficiently and conscientiously managed. A variety of arrangements exist for monitoring the quality of care by the new management team. The experienced Registered Manager has positive relationships with the young people in her care. The manager maintains a close day-to-day overview of each young person individually, alongside the general running of the home. Any shortfalls are promptly identified and

addressed. As a result, young people's progress is monitored and the demonstrable differences the home has, or has not made to young people's outcomes are identified and recorded. This supports care planning, while contributing to young people's experience of being valued.

A Statement of Purpose clearly outlines the aims and objectives of the home. In addition, young people receive information in their individual welcome booklet. This clearly informs them about the home and the care that is to be provided. As a result, young people are appropriately placed thereby enhancing their life experience.

Effective communication between the home, parents and social workers ensures that they feel confident that their concerns will be heard and acted upon. Young people's welfare, well-being and safety are promoted by this practice.

The manager actively monitors the quality of care provided and uses the information gathered positively to further benefit young people in the home. Young people are protected by multi-agency decision making as the manager communicates with and notifies agencies, including Ofsted, of any significant incidents. Records are securely kept and diligently maintained.

Young people benefit from good staffing levels and the care and attention they receive from the well-supported and committed staff team.

All staff members either hold or are enrolled on the National Vocational Qualification at level 3, diploma course. Staff members report that they receive strong peer and management support and benefit from a good, formal supervision process. Social workers report that the key worker system ensures that young people receive, 'consistent continuity of care'.

The manager's motivation is driving forward the continuous improvement. The recommendation from the previous inspection has been acted upon as all staff have received training in attachment patterns and disorders. This level of motivation ensures young people are provided with a safe, caring and stimulating environment.

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.