

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Angela Whiteley
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This private home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to two young people who may have emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is also registered to provide education.

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**.

Young people live in a caring and supportive environment and confirm they feel safe at the home. They comment positively on the quality of care they receive and their relationships with staff. One young person said, 'Staff make me feel special.'

The staff provide opportunities for young people to succeed and encourage them to make positive choices in preparation for their adult lives. Young people are consulted about all aspect of their care and their views and wishes carry weight. This ensures their needs are central to the running of the home; as a result, changes occur for their benefit. They also benefit from personalised and well-planned care with detailed individual risk assessments and behaviour management plans tailored to meet individual needs.

Most young people make progress from their starting point, across all aspects of their welfare and development. However, some compromise their progress; they make poor choices and take unacceptable risks in some key areas of their lives. For example, some young people do not fully engage with education and independence programmes; this restricts future opportunities. Some do not routinely attend health appointments and refuse prescribed medication, which compromises physical and emotional well-being. Staff work tirelessly to help young people understand and manage their behaviour differently. They take appropriate action and implement safeguarding measures, which help to keep young people safe, for instance, when they go missing from the home.

The manager is effective in securing improvement in practice and has good

monitoring and oversight of the standard of care. However, some areas for development are identified within this inspection in respect of staff recruitment procedures and clarification of information in the home's Statement of Purpose. These are administrative shortfalls and do not negatively impact on the outcomes for 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 the aims and objectives of the Statement of Purpose are child focused and show how the service will meet outcomes for children in particular include the expectation that a review is initiated no more than 72 hours after an emergency admission (NMS 13.2)
- ensure all personnel responsible for recruitment and selection of staff consistently follow good recruitment practice. In particular ensure, thorough checking and recording of the reasons for gaps in employment history (NMS 16.2)
- ensure where the home uses staff of one gender only, the Statement of Purpose provides clear guidance on how young people are able to maintain relationships with members of the opposite gender. (NMS 17.10)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **adequate**.

Young people are safe at the home and say they are well cared for and respected. This helps them feel valued and increases their self-esteem and confidence. Some young people have been at the home only a short while and require time to settle. They continue to display the same behaviours they were presenting prior to their admission. Staff take appropriate action in response to any incidents and are committed to helping young people achieve stability and permanence.

Despite their short time in placement, young people have made some progress in some aspects of their lives. They enjoy relatively good health and begin to understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Young people receive good information and advice about the risks of smoking but choose not to take this advice at this time. Additionally, some young people do not attend their health appointments; which compromises their health and well-being. Staff recognise the importance of continuing to support young people to make positive lifestyle choices.

Independence is promoted well within the home and young people make positive progress with basic skills, which is helpful to adult life. Individual independence programmes take account of young people's skills and abilities. However, some young people are unwilling to positively engage in the work, which restricts their

future opportunities.

Staff promote and support young people with their education. However, some young people struggle to sustain regular attendance. This is mainly due to their previous placement history, lack of stability and history of poor attendance, which means they struggle to achieve their full educational potential. Tutors come to the home daily. They speak positively about young people's potential to learn and their ability to succeed once engaged in study. Some young people are taking Key Stage 4 examinations and are preparing for further education courses. They are predicted to achieve C grades in five subject areas, which is in line with their peers.

Young people benefit from regular contact with family and friends. Staff facilitate and support travel arrangements, which are often considerable distances. This helps young people to develop a positive self- image and understand their family origin.

Quality of care

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

Young people receive good quality care from a committed and motivated female staff team. They develop positive relationships with staff and approach them for open and honest discussions if they have worries or concerns. They confirm they know how to make a complaint if they are unhappy or have concerns about any aspect of their care.

The staff have a broad range of experiences and knowledge and are able to demonstrate a good understanding of young peoples' needs. There is good communication between young people, staff and other professionals who have an interest in securing positive progress for young people. A therapeutic practitioner, confirms that communication, planning and working together are very good at this home.

Staff promote and support young people's educational achievements to help them achieve economic well-being. Incentives and rewards are used to good effect when young people are reluctant to engage in learning. Young people complete recognised qualifications and have achievements displayed around the home; which promotes self-esteem and confidence.

Young people have good access to a range of health support services such as, therapists, sexual health services, alcohol and smoking cessation support. Some young people participate in a range of activities and social events, such as, swimming, gym, cinema, shopping and pamper sessions. However, some young people choose not to take advantage of the opportunities presented and make their own social and leisure arrangements with family and friends.

Young people have well written individualised care plans, which are reviewed regularly and promote stability and permanence. Those young people placed long term by their placing authorities have achieved placement stability and made good

progress from their starting points on admission to the home. Young people are encouraged to participate in all aspects of care planning, which means they know what progress they are making.

Young people live in a comfortable, homely farmhouse in a rural location. There are some neighbouring properties. The home has its own transport, which allows young people access to local facilities and public transport. The home is well- furnished and decorated and young people are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms. It provides young people with a safe environment, which promotes their welfare.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people feel safe, secure and well cared for in the home. There are no issues of bullying. The staff team is confident in implementing safeguarding policies and procedures if they have concerns about young people's welfare. Staff receive regular, appropriate safeguarding training.

Staff recognise the particular vulnerabilities relating to the diverse needs of young people and take appropriate actions to address them. Despite their efforts, some young people continue to make poor choices and go missing from the home, which places them at risk of harm. The home acts in accordance with the placing authority care plan and the legal status of the placement. There are clear practices and agreements in place with the local police that staff understand and are able to demonstrate good awareness of the local protocols. Staff are proactive in communicating with placing authorities to highlight the safeguarding issues and contribute well to strategies that help improve outcomes for young people. As young people settle in their placement, records show there has been a reduction in young people going missing from the home.

The consistent, individualised approach to risk assessment and behaviour management ensures that young people learn appropriate boundaries. For example, they come back home at an agreed time. Staff are trained in the appropriate use of physical restraint but rarely need to use this, preferring to use humour and de-escalation strategies. These are effective measures, as physical intervention has not been used for several months and extremely few sanctions are required.

The manager ensures staff are carefully selected and vetted before they start work in the home. However, some employment history checks are not sufficiently robust, which potentially places young people at risk of harm. The manager has dealt with this discrepancy confirming gaps in employment with staff. This has no negative impact on the outcomes for young people.

Young people enjoy a safe and secure environment. There are good health and safety systems in place. Young people are involved in regular fire evacuation practices so they know how to leave the home safely in the event of an emergency.

Leadership and management

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

The home benefits from strong leadership. It is managed effectively by a suitably qualified and experienced Registered Manager who also manages another home within the same company. The Registered Manager divides her time well between the two homes and maintains a regular presence and good oversight of both homes. She has strong support from a competent deputy manager and a motivated and skilled newly formed, female staff team.

The home is well resourced. The staff say they are well supported, through regular supervision, training and team meetings. This ensures they have frequent opportunities to develop their practices to meet young people's needs.

There have been two complaints from young people. The Registered Manager is dealing with these sensitively and effectively and young people are kept fully informed of the progress.

The home has a comprehensive Statement of Purpose, which is reviewed regularly. It outlines the home's aims and objectives. However, information describing the home's emergency admission process and how young people will maintain relationships with members of the opposite gender to the staff group, is not clear. This has no impact on young people as these are administrative oversights and staff practice is sound in relation to these matters.

Young people's records are well structured, stored securely and of a good standard. They have regular opportunity to access their care file to receive an accurate description of their time spent at the home and decisions made about them.

The Registered Manager has effective monitoring systems in place, which ensure young people enjoy good standards of care and protection. Some recent improvements in practice include, a new monitoring report format, which better captures data and provides in-depth analysis of information. A review of the home's development plan is taking place to drive forward further improvement. There are no outstanding requirements or recommendations from previous inspections showing the service is committed to the continual improvement of their provision.

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.