

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Amanda Ellis
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This service offers long-term therapeutic placements for up to two young people who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. It is one of several homes owned and managed by a limited company.

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 living at this home experience an overall good standard of care delivered by effective management and staff teams. The home provides clear, individualised, well-planned care, taking into account the specific needs of young people and promoting positive outcomes.

Young people are valued and develop within this home, making good progress from their starting points. Young people have positive views about their care, the staff and the home. They are able to reflect on how they have benefited from their placement and support at this home. Young people are safe and report that they feel safe.

Young people are generally encouraged to be involved in planning and reviewing their care. They participate in the running of the home and contributing to their care plans and reviews. Young people receive practical support and encouragement to attend school. They are encouraged to participate in a range of activities. Young people have their health promoted and are taught how to keep themselves healthy. Relationships between young people and staff are excellent.

Shortfalls identified within this inspection are in relation to inconsistencies in the monitoring and quality of auditing records; the recording of young people's views in some records and minor maintenance issues. However, these shortfalls do not impact on the outcomes for children.

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 manager regularly monitors, in line with regulations, all records kept by the home to ensure compliance with the home's policies, to identify any concerns about specific incidences and to identify patterns and trends. Immediate action is taken to address any issues raised by this monitoring, with specific regard to omissions in records (NMS 21.2)
- ensure all children communicate their views on all aspects of their care and support. This is with regard to ensuring it is recorded accurately (NMS 1.3)
- ensure the home provides a comfortable and homely environment and is well maintained and decorated. Avoidable hazards are removed as is consistent with a domestic setting. (NMS 10.3)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people thrive because of a service provision which values them as young people with diverse individual needs. They benefit from significantly improved emotional resilience and learn to develop a positive self-view. Young people develop trusting and positive attachments and relationships with carers. As a result their behaviour becomes more positive and productive. Young people benefit from consistency in care and clear boundaries. This results in planned placement endings and positive transitions for young people to future and permanent placements.

One social worker commented 'They are excellent! He has had a lot of placements before this. They have stuck with him, where others have given up. The friendships and role modelling with staff is amazing. He has come such a long way - he has a future now.'

A significant strength of the home is enabling young people to pursue positive pursuits in place of risk taking behaviours or offending. The development of positive behaviours greatly enhances outcomes for young people.

Young people receive health care appropriate to their individual needs to ensure they achieve good health outcomes. Their physical, psychological and emotional needs are met because the home provides an environment with integrated social, education and therapeutic professionals. Young people benefit from a healthy lifestyle promoted by a skilled and knowledgeable staff team.

Young people make exceptional progress in education in relation to their starting points. They have excellent school attendance and make considerable progress in their academic achievements. They make positive transitions to college with plans for vocational training. Staff ensure that attendance is supported and consistent.

Effective daily communication between home and education staff ensures young people enjoy cohesive care.

Young people benefit from appropriate contact with their families, friends and other people who are important to them. The staff team have excellent knowledge of individual circumstances. They work sensitively to promote positive contact in line with arrangements agreed in individual care plans.

Young people receive support and encouragement to develop independence skills to prepare them for adult life. Young people undertake a range of activities, according to the age and ability, to prepare them for independent living. The acquisition of such life skills provides young people with improved outcomes to live independently.

Quality of care

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

Young people live in a home environment which is nurturing and responsive to their individual needs. The positive relationships and effective day-to-day organisation of the home demonstrate consistent concern with the welfare, education and progress of young people. This means that young people feel cared for and valued.

Young people are regularly and routinely involved in the running of the home. This means that young people's views are central to how the home operates. Young people are very clear in identifying it as 'their home' and are able to express their likes and dislikes. Young people meet regularly to contribute ideas to improve care provision. This inclusion builds their confidence and increases their participation in their own care.

Young people receive a comprehensive guide to the home. A young person wrote the guide which has excellent content and use of language and photographs. This ensures that all young people are aware of what the home offers. Young people express that they know how to make a complaint to staff and external agencies. The complaints procedure is on the notice board in an appropriate format. Young people have access to their own telephone which ensures they are able to express any concerns they may have independently of the staff team. This ensures that young people are kept safe.

Care planning, risk assessments and behaviour management plans are individualised and comprehensive. Young people receive consistent care because their care planning is clear and detailed. This provides staff with clarity to enable effective support to young people.

Young people are actively involved in their care planning, with regular keyworker sessions; attendance at statutory meetings and review of their placement plans. This means that young people are able to make choices and contribute to their care plans. However, there are some inconsistencies in recording young people's personal statements on some records.

Young people receive a service which focuses on their holistic health needs. Young people receive prompt medical attention when they are ill and routine appointments ensure their medical, optical and dentistry needs are met. Young people's individual emotional and psychological health is supported through the providers own therapeutic professionals, in addition to external agencies. This means young people benefit from comprehensive health care which promotes good health.

Staff actively promote education and ensure that all young people attend and are supported within school. Effective collaboration with the school means consistent involvement in educational goals. Achievement is celebrated, progression monitored and rewarded. Young people learn to engage and enjoy

Young people engage with an extensive range of impressive social activities both within and outside of the home. They enjoy outdoor sports, such as kayaking, fishing and horse riding. They become accomplished in activities and enjoy regular holidays and trips away. Young people are encouraged to identify activities and staff participate with young people to achieve their goals. One young person who has made significant achievements stated, 'I want to be here, I have changed and I don't get in trouble any more. I want to put my energy into activities.'

Young people are encouraged to develop friendships within the local community, clubs and within school. This means that young people develop a range of social skills, including sustaining friendships and developing appropriate attachments.

The maintenance and the décor of the home is of a generally good standard. There are some areas of improvement which need attention, largely superficial staining and marking on internal and external decoration. Young people's bedrooms are individualised and young people have choice in their decoration preferences, although they require some maintenance. The home is comfortable and provides a homely and non-institutionalised environment. The home offers opportunity for both privacy and social engagement. This is consistent with family living which means that young people feel relaxed and value their surroundings.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are safe and say without hesitation that they feel safe. Young people are kept safe through excellent working practices and comprehensive risk assessments which are regularly updated. Staff have a robust understanding of safeguarding issues and consistently review safe working practices to ensure they meet individual young people's needs. Staffing levels throughout the night and day demonstrate that the safety and welfare of the young people are paramount. Occasionally, other staff are used to provide additional cover. These staff members are well-known to the young people and are employees of the care company.

There have been no reported incidents of young people going missing from the home since the last inspection. The home has clear procedures in place to notify the relevant bodies in the event of a child going missing. Staff have a thorough understanding of the relevant policies and procedures and implement them when necessary.

Staff actively promote positive behaviour for young people at all times. Young people benefit from individualised and innovative reward and incentive schemes and are encouraged to take responsibility for their behaviour. Young people state that the rules of the home are fair, and records demonstrate that positive behaviour is recognised and rewarded.

Young people benefit from detailed and appropriate risk assessment, which is individualised and effectively managed. Young people's changing behaviours are reviewed and risk assessments changed to meet their current needs. This means they are able to take age-appropriate risks in line with agreed care plans.

There has been no use of physical restraint in the home since the last inspection. Physical interventions are used as a last resort when a young person is placing themselves or others at risk. All staff who implement any restraint are suitably trained. Young people learn to improve in their interaction with staff and each other because of effective behaviour management practices.

Staff employed to work in the home experience a rigorous selection process prior to taking up their positions. There have been no newly recruited staff members since the last inspection. There have been changes within the home, with several staff members and the current manager moving from another of the provider's homes. There has been no negative impact on the young people from these changes as the staff are well known to the young people.

There have been no allegations, no complaints and no reported incidents of bullying within the home since the last inspection.

The home is physically safe for the children. Health and safety is prioritised with rigorous maintenance procedures in place. Robust monitoring of visitors to the home further ensure the protection of young people from potential harm.

Leadership and management

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

The home has an experienced manager in place who recently moved to the home and has applied to be the registered manager. The manager is a highly experienced and knowledgeable professional who has direct experience in working with young people with challenging behaviours.

Young people benefit from a home that has maintained good standards since the last inspection. There were no requirements or recommendations made at the last

inspection. The manager demonstrates a commitment for continual improvement. The development plan reflects practical proposals for continued improvement, with plans for staff development, training and emphasis on child-centred practice. The manager understands the strengths and weaknesses of the home and takes action to tackle weakness and make improvements.

A key strength of the home is the commitment and dedication of the staff team. They are cohesive, enthusiastic and have vast experience within young people's residential care. This means that young people receive sound and safe care.

Young people benefit from effective management and monitoring of the home. However there are some inconsistencies in the monitoring and quality of auditing records, with some records lacking signatures of staff and young people. The Registered Manager undertakes routine monitoring activities, in addition to the comprehensive independent monitoring visits by an independent person. These systems ensure that young people receive a consistently good quality of care.

Staffing levels ensure good levels of support which meet the needs of the home and the young people in placement. The management team provide a reliable presence, offering support on shifts and an on-call service. Staff participate in a training programme which is relevant to the young people's needs. Supervision is regular and staff are positive about the manager and the quality and consistency of the support they receive.

Young people and staff records are generally good. Records are clear, up to date and stored securely. All notifications are carried out as required and appropriate action is taken to follow procedures and protect young people.

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.