

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Chris Scully
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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

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.

Overall effectiveness

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

This is a good service with many outstanding features. The main strength of the setting is the homes commitment to providing excellent care and support to young people. The Registered Manager and staff are enthusiastic, trained to a good standard and have an exceptional understanding of the young people's diverse and complex needs. Personalised care means these needs are exceptionally well met in practice and provide many positive outcomes. For example, young people demonstrate an increasing maturity regarding their behaviour. Staff understand that young people need a stable, secure, caring environment in which to thrive and develop to their full potential.

The home is effectively managed and most records and documentation are generally well maintained. However, there are some gaps within the recording of restraints, fire drills, accidents and young people's medical history. The home has not notified Ofsted of one significant event. Staff feel well supported by the manager and have regular opportunities to meet as a team. Although on some occasions formal supervisions for new staff is not taking place on a regular basis. This has resulted in two statutory requirements and four recommendations being raised at this inspection.

Young people are regularly consulted on all aspects of the home and are pleased that staff listen to their requests, such as including different meals to the menu. Young people say they are happy here and feel safe. They enjoy positive relationships with staff which are built upon honesty, trust and respect. Young people are confident to approach staff with any concerns they may have and know that they will be listened to and supported. Young people are developing positive attitudes to others and the world around them. They are sensitive to the needs of other people and demonstrate increasing maturity in the way they behave and their attitudes towards education.

Areas for improvement

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
30 (2001)	ensure if any of the events listed in column 1 of the table in schedule 5 takes place, the registered person shall without delay notify the persons indicated in respect of the event in column 2 of the table (Regulation 30 (1))	28/11/2011
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, restraint or discipline a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose and includes the name of the person using the measure, and any person present, a description of any injury to the child or any other person and any medical treatment and the duration of the restraint. (Regulation 17 (3) (e) (g) (4)(a))	28/11/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure young people's health is promoted in accordance with their placement plan in particular, sufficient information is held in respect of young people's health needs (NMS 6.5)
- ensure there is a written record all treatment and first aid given to young people in particular following an accident (NMS 6.15)
- ensure young people are familiar with the emergency evacuation and have opportunities to practise this, in particular at different times during the month (NMS 10.9)
- ensure suitable arrangements are in place for the regular supervision of staff. (19.4)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people benefit from highly personalised support which helps them to grow in confidence. Young people develop positive self-images of themselves and other people around them. They acknowledge racial, religious, gender and other differences through discussions with staff and visits to Buddhist temples and mosques. Young people enjoy strong trusting relationships with staff as a result

young people feel valued and respected as individuals.

Young people enjoy healthy lifestyles. They are very aware of the importance of having five portions of fruit and vegetables each day. They are keen to try different foods and enjoy the opportunities to eat out in various restaurants. This enables young people to explore different cultures and foods and develop an understanding of the wider world. Young people eagerly explain how they plan their own menus. They say staff listen to their requests and they are really pleased that they are having salmon risotto tonight.

Young people on pathway plans are making very good progress. They are developing effective budgeting and money management skills as they shop for food and other household items. Excellent support from staff means young people are able to make sense of managing their weekly budget. For example, staff have broken down their monies into more manageable amounts for the young person.

Young people are all registered with the appropriate health care practitioner. This means young people receive good care with regards to their individual health issues. Young people are keen to point out that staff are very supportive of their needs and ensure they see a doctor when they need to. Young people's emotional health is exceptionally well supported. Young people are able to talk to other professional and therapists, such as child and adolescent mental health teams (CAHMS). This enables them to work through their individual issues and come to some resolutions around how they are feeling.

Young people are making excellent progress at school. They are keen to explain how well they are doing at college and how they value the opportunities to attend school and their outdoor education. They are happy to try out new experiences and eagerly volunteer to help to repair a desk as this will support their college coursework. Their attendance at school and college is excellent and young people are pleased to have been again chosen to be mentors to other young people. This has significantly enhanced their confidence and self-esteem.

Young people benefit from suitable contact with their family. Staff are very aware of the individual needs, vulnerabilities and potential risks to young people when on contact. Staff effectively facilitate contact to ensure young people are able to maintain positive relationships with those people who are important to them. Young people are pleased that their family are able to visit them at home and share Sunday lunch with them, 'its nice'. They say staff always ensure that contact visits take place and they are taken there on time.

Young people are being well-prepared for adult life. They achieve this by undertaking tasks for themselves such as doing their own laundry, preparing meals and undertaking a range of household chores such as tidying their bedrooms. Young people feel very positive about the future and are confident in their own skills.

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy extremely positive relationships with staff and say that the staff care about them. Staff are creative in finding ways to encourage young people to make progress in all aspects of their lives such as encouraging their involvement with cadets. Young people are generally respectful and courteous to staff and other young people. Young people know that they are listened to and that their wishes are taken into careful consideration during decision making processes.

Young people know they can have a say in their reviews and know that staff will support them during this time. Young people understand that due consideration will be given to their requests such as an increase in free time. Staff are proactive in giving clear explanations as to why these request may not be possible at this time. They sensitively explain to young people that they have to earn their trust and demonstrate increasing maturity. Young people tell me they accept this and say, 'I have to trust the staff and they need to be able to trust me.' They feel proud that they are earning this trust and enjoy the responsibility for paying the paper bill each week and are confident that they will soon be able to come home alone from cadets.

Young people know how to make a complaint and confidently explain how they can contact others outside of the home such as the children's rights office for additional support. They feel the 'moans and groans' book is a positive addition to the home as it helps them to air their views in a constructive manner. Young people say that staff listen to them and they have a say in how the home is decorated and organised.

Young people's care and accommodation is planned effectively and clearly demonstrates the uniqueness of each young person. All required information is in place with the exception of some information relating to one young person's medical history, which may impact upon the care provided. However staff have discussed this with the relevant parties and are actively chasing this missing information. Staff clearly demonstrate an understanding of each young person's health care needs. Young people are able to lead happy, fulfilling lives as staff are committed to helping young people overcome any difficulties they may have. Staff have an exceptional understanding of each young person's needs, their vulnerabilities, potential risks to them and the support they require.

Young people live in a very healthy environment where their physical and emotional well-being is exceptionally well supported. Young people's emotional, physical and mental health is of paramount importance, is identified on admission and is very well supported. Highly effective links with therapists, CAHMS and other agencies means young people receive the right support when they need it. Young people say staff look after them when they are feeling unwell.

Young people are making very good progress in relation to their educational starting points. Their attendance at school and college is excellent. Staff are very proud of young people's educational achievements and have high aspirations for them. They ensure they are up on time and are fully prepared for their day in school. Staff provide good support within the home, for example, helping young people with their

homework. Reports from school demonstrate young people's progress and increasing maturity. Young people are proud that they have been selected as a mentor for the second year running. Young people appear enthusiastic about some elements of school such as their outdoor education and eagerly describe how they have been 'bouldering' that day. They happily regale staff with tales of their adventures and physical stamina.

Young people enjoy a wide range of self-chosen enjoyable activities. They are extremely proud of their progress at cadets and always ensure their uniform is in pristine condition. Staff are very aware of the limitations for some young people to join in community groups due to the level of supervision required. However they continue to ensure that all young people are able to take part in a wide range of activities such as kayaking, fishing, the gym, and film nights.

Young people live in a comfortable family house in semi-rural location. The home is clean and is decorated to a good standard. Young people's bedrooms are highly personalised. young people are keen to show visitors around and explain how they have organised their room and talk confidently about their posters and art work. Evidence of young people's personalities are interwoven through out the home. Young people say they feel at home.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people live in a safe environment where they are effectively protected from harm. Staff are respectful of young people's privacy while ensuring their safety and well-being. All staff are trained in safeguarding and are knowledgeable about safeguarding policy and procedures. This means they are able to identify the signs of abuse or neglect and take swift action to support young people. Staff have an innate understanding of young people which enables them to act in their best interests. Young people say they feel safe here and would talk to the staff if they had any concerns.

Staff are extremely aware of the young people's vulnerability and risks they face in the community. They work hard to ensure that risks are effectively managed. The home has detailed risk assessments and plans for what staff should do if a young person was missing. This is not an issue for these young people.

Young people's behaviour is generally very good. Staff are good at encouraging young people to develop socially acceptable behaviour such as resolving conflicts in a positive manner. For example, young people politely and confidently tell others that they have not cleaned the bathroom properly and can they please do so. As a result the other young person, although grudgingly stops what they are doing and cleans the bathroom. Staff provide clear consistent boundaries to young people, which enables them to grow in maturity and consider their actions upon others in the home.

Bullying is not an issue for young people in the home. They feel the sanctions are fair and understand that there may be times when staff need to physically restrain them for their own safety. Records of restraint are in place and demonstrate that they are carried out appropriately, by trained staff. However, on a small number of occasions the record does not contain all of the required information. For example; which member of staff carried out the restraint; timescales, or any injuries to staff or young people as a result of the restraint. The use of positive sanctions continues to have a beneficial impact upon young people's behaviour.

Young people live in a physically safe environment. They are protected by a comprehensive range of safety checks which are carried out on a regular basis. However, the practice of holding a fire drill on the same day each month may lead to complacency and impact upon young people's response times. The recently appointed health and safety officer for the home ensures all staff are up-to-date with their relevant health and safety training such as fire safety. Clear contingency plans for the home means staff are able to provide safe suitable accommodation to young people in an emergency. A new maintenance reporting system is in place which means that repairs are carried out more effectively. Young people are also aware of the new system. They say that they have reported the damp patch in their bedroom to staff and this has been forwarded to the handy person who is going to rectify this problem.

Robust recruitment and vetting procedures mean young people are cared for by suitably qualified and experienced staff. Young people are protected from harm as all visitors to the home are required to sign in and are appropriately supervised within the home. The home is appropriately secure, which prevents unauthorised persons gaining access to the home.

Leadership and management

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

Young people live in a home that is well managed in their best interests. The home meets the objectives of the Statement of Purpose and young people their families and placing authorities are clear about the services and support provided. Young people are very aware of the contents of their young people's guide. They confidently explain to visitors where they can obtain additional information, such as the contact details for the independent person for the home.

Young people enjoy outstanding outcomes because of the Registered Manager and staff commitment to delivering very good care to young people, which is tailored to their specific and individual needs. They have created a warm and supportive environment where young people are valued and feel valued. Monitoring systems for the home are generally robust. However, they have not identified some of the shortfalls from this inspection. The homes development plan identifies the homes objectives for the next 12 months and how this will be achieved.

Records and documentation are generally well maintained. They are stored securely

to maintain confidentiality. There are clear systems in place to ensure the home informs Ofsted of all significant events. Although, on one occasion the home did not notify Ofsted of a significant event when police were called to the home. However, this was an oversight and all other relevant parties were informed of the incident.

Staff are clear about their roles, responsibilities and the expectation for providing exceptional childcare. Staff say they feel well supported by the Registered Manager and feel they can talk to them at any time. Opportunities are created for staff to have formal professional supervision. However, on a few occasions staff new to the home do not appear to have had a formal supervision. Although they have received support through mentoring sessions as part of their induction.

Staff work well together as a team and rotas demonstrate that there are sufficient staff on duty at all times to meet the diverse needs of young people. All staff have good opportunities for training and staff who do not yet hold a childcare qualification at level 3 are attending appropriate courses to achieve this. Staff meetings are held on a regular basis and provide opportunities to discuss young people's progress and new ways of working. This means staff are continually evaluating and reflecting upon the outcomes for young people. As a result young people continue to make very good progress in all areas.

Equality and diversity practice is **outstanding**.