

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Elizabeth Barrett
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to two young people of either gender with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is privately owned and the organisation operates other children's homes in the area.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service 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 make good progress from their starting points, at the time of their admission. They receive comprehensive therapeutic support around all aspects of attachment, and in turn, strive to fulfil their individual potentials, both educationally and personally. Young people receive holistic support, and opportunities to experience new activities and learn new skills. They are encouraged to challenge previously held attitudes, enabling them to grow as individuals and develop their self-esteem and identity.

A good standard of care is delivered in this home by a competent and committed staff team. There is a positive atmosphere in the home, where care arrangements and planning take into account the individual and diverse needs of young people. It is through these effective systems and relationships with stakeholders, that young people's needs are well met in practice. Young people feel safe and hold a very positive view of the service. They are able to reflect on how they have benefitted from their placement and support at this home.

Leadership and management of this home are evolving, with significant improvement made since the last full inspection. The home's manager and external managers recognise that further improvements are required, to ensure compliance with all aspects of the services policies and procedures.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the registered person has a written development plan for the future of the home that includes all planned growth and improvements to the operation of the service (NMS 15.2)
- ensure the registered provider consistently follows the home's own procedures and good practice guidance in maintaining current Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks, and all staff responsible for these checks are trained in, understand and operate these good practices. (NMS 16.2)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people living in this home benefit from a good level of personalised care and support. Young people make good progress from the point of their admission, and are actively encouraged to make positive choices to reach their individual potential. Young people, who had previously experienced multiple placements, have achieved significant outcomes in education and employment, health and well-being, and independence. Comments from one young person includes, 'Positive progress for me has been feeling safe, doing activities, attending courses, and learning to look after myself.'

A key strength of this service is the holistic work undertaken with young people, including building attachments, developing identity, communication skills, and emotional resilience. Young people who were initially unable to trust and sustain attachments, develop what are felt to be very good relationships with staff and significant others. These attachments have enabled young people to self-regulate behaviours, and to be actively involved in all areas of their care planning and future needs.

There is a good approach to promoting the physical, emotional, and psychological health of young people. Staff are actively involved in engaging with young people about a range of health-related issues, which results in consistent improvements to health and well-being. Each young person has a health care plan that includes all of the required information as part of their wider placement plan. Young people are encouraged to take appropriate responsibility for their own health needs, such as making and attending appointments. Consultation records at this visit comment on excellent discussions held with young people on sexual health, and sexuality.

Young people are encouraged and fully supported to engage in a range of learning and education, through school and alternative educational and employment placements. This means young people have opportunities to achieve educationally that best fit their individual needs. Close working partnerships with other agencies ensure young people achieve and attain qualifications on leaving school, and through education programmes and courses. Such attainments include GCSE'S, and studying

towards other accreditations through colleges and training providers. All achievements are praised and rewarded, for example, one young person receiving a certificate of participation from a training provider for excellent attendance, teamwork, and work ethic.

Young people are being enabled to make and sustain relationships with their peers within the community. All leisure pursuits are risk assessed, and young people have benefited from closer links with their communities through attending youth clubs, boxing activities, libraries, and other social events. Some young people prior to coming to the home have had little or no contact with those of significance in their lives. Where appropriate, young people have been helped and encouraged to re-establish and maintain these relationships.

Young people confirm that promotion and preparation for independence is an integral part of their individual care plans. Young people are supported to gain experience in cooking, shopping, budgeting, and other essential skills. Comments from one social worker stated, 'The home have worked very well in assisting the move to independence.'

Quality of care

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

A good quality of care is provided to the young people living at this home. They benefit from a competent and motivated staff team who genuinely care about them. Young people build successful relationships with staff enabling them to feel safe and secure, and to achieve positive outcomes across all areas of their social and personal development.

Good placement planning and assessment identifies young people's individual needs. Young people's contribution to the planning process is valued and their input supported and encouraged. Individualised care planning focuses interventions on attachment and dissociative issues. One-to-one therapy sessions with young people address areas such as aggression, trust, safety, and communication. Support for young people is creative and identified to meet individual placement needs such as education, leisure, and health care. A comment from one stakeholder confirms, 'Staff are very nurturing and caring, and they believe very much in their model of care.'

The home consistently promotes a culture which recognises and respects the rights of the individual, and everyone has the opportunity to learn and develop. Young people speak positively about the care and support they receive from staff, and how this makes them feel valued and respected. Young people are encouraged to make a positive contribution to the running of the home. Staff actively seeks their views at both an individual and group level, and respond in a way that makes the young people believe that their opinions are valued. Regular consultations with young people, comment on how specific feedback has influenced operational and care practices.

Effective behaviour management strategies are in place in the home. Positive behavioural rewards and well-organised additional measures of control enable staff to follow individualised practices with young people. Young people confirm that the rules of the home are fair, and that staff are consistent with boundary setting, and consequences are appropriate. The service has complaints procedures which are known and understood by staff and young people. Complaints are fully investigated with appropriate responses. Young people say that they are confident that any complaint they may raise will be addressed.

Young people are supported to maintain contact with family members and to develop social friendships within the community through leisure activities. Leisure activities are planned on an individual basis, with young people pursuing activities best suited to their age and care plan. Young people's safety and well-being is consistently well organised and monitored by staff when they are away from the home. Education is seen as important. Staff talk proudly of the impressive steps forward made by young people in relation to their educational attendance and personal achievements. Young people, who have reached school-leaving age, receive staff support to obtain college placements and to seek appropriate part-time work.

There are good arrangements in place to support young people develop their sense of responsibility and appropriate independent living skills. The provider organisation uses a well-developed programme in conjunction with individual pathway planning, with one-to-one time spent looking at areas identified for development, and providing opportunities to learn new skills. Observations made at this visit of a young person's move from the home, were seen as being managed sensitively and competently by all staff.

The home provides warm and homely accommodation. Furnishings and décor are of a satisfactory standard, with some redecoration and refurbishment-taking place. Young people personalise their rooms, and confirm that their privacy is well respected. The atmosphere within the home is very relaxed and young people say that they enjoy living there.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

The systems in place to promote the safety and welfare of young people are very good. Well-organised and clear individualised risk assessments and staff procedures help to keep young people safe, whilst enabling them to take appropriate and reasonable risks. This enables young people to develop confidence, decision-making and independence skills. Staff receive regular training in safeguarding, and demonstrate a sound understanding of the actions to take, should they have any concerns about a young person's safety or well-being.

Young people say that they feel safe and secure living at this home. There are good arrangements in place to safeguard young people who are absent without authority or missing from care. Young people rarely go missing from this service, and staff

spoken to are clear about how to respond to a young person missing from the home, by following the local police and multi-agency procedures.

There have been no incidents of physical restraint since the last inspection, with the home adopting strategies to manage individual behaviours through, robust planning, and therapeutic intervention sessions. Staff effectively risk assess and monitor the activities of young people who spend time alone in the community. Staff talk to young people about protective behaviours and offer guidance about social relationships.

The home provides a safe environment for young people to live in. Established systems and structures to maintain safe practices and fulfil health and safety requirements are routinely undertaken and maintained. Environmental risk assessments are in place informing the home of potential hazards in order to reduce risks. Staff undertake regular fire drills and evacuations, with all staff and young people routinely taking part in these tests.

Leadership and management

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

The leadership provided by the home's manager and deputy manager ensure that all care and support services in this home, appropriately fulfil the requirements of the provider's Statement of Purpose. Young people are provided with a good quality guide summarising the care provided by the service. As a result they understand what to expect during their residential placement.

The quality of care that young people receive is monitored by the Registered Manager and by external managers who visit the home on a monthly basis. Monthly monitoring findings tend to be process-led, with limited information on measuring outcomes for young people. A development plan is in place for this home; however it is lacking sufficient detail as to how the service is evaluated and improved upon against the home's Statement of Purpose.

Managers and staff are qualified to the required levels, and there is a comprehensive and well-organised training and development programme in place. Experienced and knowledgeable staff are committed to promoting good outcomes for the young people in their care. Staff attend regular staff meetings and receive one-to-one supervision and appraisals. As a result, staff feel supported in their role and are confident in their approach to care arrangements. One staff member spoken to during this visit commented, 'I love working for the company, the managers are supportive, I can talk openly to them about all aspects of working in the home. I cannot fault the support given to the young people by the managers and staff.'

Placement paperwork is current and on file, with good quality records of the young people's therapy and care planning needs and objectives. Equality and diversity is good at this home with lots of individualised care planning, taking into account the young person's background and identity. Well-informed and recorded discussions

with young people around identity, sexuality, health, and racial issues inform on-going placement and therapeutic objectives. Feedback during this visit from one stakeholder stated that there is good professional communication with the home through regular updates, and well-written weekly reports.

While recognising the improvements made by the management of this home in addressing monitoring and recording processes, some shortfalls are identified at this visit. This service has not followed their own procedures for effectively monitoring and ensuring, that all staff Criminal Records Bureau checks are line with good practice. The services external managers recognise that staff training and understanding, in operating these procedures is required to ensure the continuous safeguarding of 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.