

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Sharon Lewis
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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* (December 2010) 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 setting is a family sized home, which provides accommodation and care for up to two young people who have experienced emotional and behavioural difficulties. A private company owns and operates this setting. The house has, on the ground floor, a lounge, a kitchen and breakfast room, computer room and toilet. Bedrooms, a bathroom and shower room are on the first floor. There is a small garden to the rear of the property.

Overall effectiveness

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

Young people make good progress in relation to their starting points and thrive in a nurturing, supportive environment with consistent boundaries. Young people enjoy being at the home and take an active role in their own care planning. Young people receive support from a stable experienced staff team. The manager understands the strengths and areas of further development for the home. There is a good emphasis on young people developing both socially and educationally. This could be further improved by establishing more positive links with the schools young people attend. Although, staff actively promote safe working practices they need to keep everyone safe from all hazards including fire, very hot water and electrical installations. Recording is generally good but staff need to improve documentation relating to sanctions and when young people leave the home.

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
29 (2001)	record in the admission and discharge register the date each young person ceases to be accommodated (Regulation 29 (1))	01/02/2011
23 (2001)	ensure all parts of the home are free from hazards to young people's safety. This relates to obtaining a certificate that verifies the electrical installations. (Regulation 23 (a))	01/03/2011

*These requirements are subject to a statutory requirement notice.

Recommendations

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

- promote and support educational attainment of young people by liaising regularly with schools (NMS 14.1)
- ensure staff know and understand the safeguarding procedure (NMS 17.3)
- record clearly the effectiveness of sanctions (NMS 22.10)
- take positive steps to keep young people, staff and visitors safe from risks from fire or other hazards. This relates specifically to recording the time it takes to evacuate the building during fire drills and to periodically test the hot water temperature (NMS 26.1)
- ensure electrical installations are checked at least every three years. (NMS 26.4)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people benefit from individualised support which helps them grow in confidence. The key-worker system enables young people to focus on their goals and regular meetings provide an avenue for young people to discuss their feelings. Staff are aware of young people's strengths and help to nurture their talents and interests. Young people make constructive use of their leisure time. They enjoy participating in activities within their community and further afield. Young people visit a range of attractions throughout the country and enjoy regular holidays.

There is a good approach to promoting the physical and emotional well-being of young people. The organisation has their own clinical psychologist, who young people are able to access. Young people regularly visit the doctor, dentist and optician. Their health plans clearly identify their specific needs. There is good preventative work regarding sexual health. Young people lead an active lifestyle, including regular bike rides, swimming, walking and attending the gymnasium.

Young people receive consistent support to develop their independent living skills and are able to prepare their own breakfast, bake and make light meals. Young people assist with grocery shopping and demonstrate good budgeting skills. They undertake household chores, keep their rooms clean and maintain good personal hygiene. Young people benefit from the home's outreach service. This provides ongoing support for a time limited period, helping young people to cope with the transition to independent life.

Young people have an excellent record of school attendance and are making good

progress educationally. Where necessary staff escort young people to school. The organisation recognises that mainstream education may not always be appropriate. In these circumstances the organisation is able to secure a placement at an independent vocational based school. At home, young people are able to practise their writing and spelling, staff assist them with their homework and spend time reading to them. Young people's files contain all the necessary educational information, including a statement of special educational needs. Some staff members are not aware of the young people's educational curriculum and key staff have not spent any meaningful time with teaching staff in the school environment. This means staff cannot fully provide consistent educational support.

Quality of care

The quality of care is **good**.

Young people thrive within a nurturing and supportive environment. The Every Child Matters outcome areas form the basis of the comprehensive care planning system. Young people's care plans clearly identify their individual needs. Consistent monitoring enables staff to evaluate young people's progress on a monthly basis. This process positively contributes to statutory reviews.

Young people's files provide a good record of staff intervention. Staff empower young people through their open and transparent ways of working. Young people regularly have the opportunity to comment on the information written about them. Staff routinely consult with young people. There is a culture of promoting young people's rights. Young people regularly influence decisions relating to their daily lives, such as, goal setting, the reward system and activity planning.

The organisation prides itself on their ability to provide a smooth transition into the home. This can include a two week period in the Scottish Highlands, when a longer assessment is needed. This relaxing atmosphere provides young people with a period of stabilisation, prior to their move. Staff maintain a register of admission and discharges. On one occasion the date of discharge had not been recorded. This oversight does not have an impact on young people or their quality of care. Staff undertake a proactive role in helping young people keep in contact with their family. This involves appropriately supervising meetings and telephone calls.

Young people live in a quiet residential area. The property blends into the neighbourhood and resembles a family home. Young people have their own bedroom, which they are able to personalise. Their bedrooms reflect their interests and contain meaningful photographs, posters and other mementoes. Young people are also able to keep their own pets. Young people have a computer room, which has internet safeguards. They can relax and watch television in the lounge. The kitchen has a dining area, where young people and staff regularly eat together. The home is currently undergoing redecoration and refurbishment. The service development plan addresses maintenance issues. There is a commitment to provide a pleasant living environment.

Staff promote a healthy lifestyle. Young people are learning to understand the nutritional value of eating a good diet. Although, young people decide their own

menus, there is a move away from eating fast food to enjoying home-made meals. Young people also have an appreciation of different cultures and a range of international cuisine.

Relationships between young people and staff are amiable and constructive. There is an awareness of the dynamics of relationships and the need to maintain professional boundaries. Young people state that, 'they get on well with mostly everyone.' They have not had to make a complaint. Young people are making good progress and are generally happy.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

There are adequate arrangements to safeguard young people. Young people are not absent without authority and there are no issues with bullying. Management appropriately respond to allegations or suspicions of harm. Staff receive regular training which focuses on the protection of young people. All staff, however, are not fully aware of the actual safeguarding procedure. In the event of an allegation, staff can refer to the home's written procedure.

Staff actively encourage and promote positive behaviour. Young people learn to take responsibility for their actions. They take an active role in negotiating their individual rewards. The reward system succeeds in helping young people develop and maintain socially acceptable behaviour. Occasionally staff have to sanction young people. Sanctions are fair and generally restorative. The only issue is that staff do not clearly record the effectiveness of sanctions. Staff do, however, record the effectiveness of any restraint.

The home is aware of the need to have a robust risk management system. Risk assessments are available which address the general building and fire safety. Young people's individual guidelines highlight behavioural management issues. Risk assessments are available which compliment this documentation. Staff address the particular vulnerabilities relating to each young person. Staff acknowledge the need to regularly review risk assessments and endeavour to minimise risks and provide a safe environment.

There are regular checks of the fire alarm, smoke detectors and emergency lighting. Staff and young people participate in fire drills. Staff do not, however, record the time it takes to evacuate the building. Therefore, there is no confirmation that the building is promptly evacuated. Staff do not regularly check hot water temperatures. Staff state this is not an issue as the new shower has a fixed thermostat. Engineers routinely test fire safety equipment and the gas supply. A certificate was not available for the electrical installations.

Young people benefit from a stable staff team. There have been no new appointments since the last inspection. The home has a robust recruitment policy. This outlines the need to employ suitable staff, who compliment the existing staff

team. Staff appropriately monitor any visitors to the home and maintain a visitors book.

Leadership and management

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

The provider meets the aims and objectives in their Statement of Purpose. Staff succeed in providing a stable and structured environment for young people. Care practices help young people to develop self-discipline and contribute towards their personal growth. Young people benefit from high staffing ratios enabling them to have the necessary individual attention.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Staff understand young people's individual strengths and needs. There are consistent working practices which focus on enhancing young people's quality of life. Young people receive encouragement to fulfil their potential. Young people receive support to take pride in themselves and develop a positive identity. The Statement of Purpose comprehensively addresses equality and diversity. There is a commitment to anti-discriminatory practice. The home has a history of supporting young people's cultural needs and any concerns they have relating to their sexuality.

Young people receive care from a well-supported staff team. The organisation demonstrates a commitment to national vocational qualification training. Staff also undertake training on a variety of topics which address the diverse needs of young people. The clinical psychology service delivers workshops on young people's specific needs. This ensures staff possess the competence needed to undertake their role, have the required individual skills and are up-to-date with professional and legal developments. This is a learning organisation, where staff develop areas of expertise enabling them to share their knowledge and cascade training to others.

Young people benefit from effective management. There are various systems to monitor the quality of care. This includes monthly visits by a designated person, in accordance with the regulations. These reports focus on the home's strengths and highlights areas for improvement. The manager understands the strengths and weaknesses of the home and has a development plan in place. There is good compliance. A requirement from the previous inspection, requiring the organisation to submit an application to register a manager, has been acted on.

Young people live in a home which has good management arrangements. The current manager is an experienced and well-respected director of the company. Young people have a particularly strong, trusting relationship with the manager. The management structure is strengthened by two senior team leaders which provides clear accountability and leadership.