

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Linda Brown
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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

The children's home is run by a private organisation and is registered to provide care and accommodation for two young people of either gender aged from 10 to 17 years old.

Overall effectiveness

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

The home provides good quality of care to the young people accommodated there. Young people's individual needs are very well met and young people achieve outstanding positive outcomes. Young people benefit from positive relationships with staff and are provided with a range of services to meet their individual needs. Education is very well supported.

Young people are encouraged to behave well and achievements are celebrated. The home provides young people with a comfortable and homely environment. Young people who take an active role in decisions being made about the day-to-day living at the home as well as their future plans.

Young people are kept safe from harm by good recruitment practice and staff awareness and understanding of policies and procedures. This is further strengthened by good risk assessments and the positive relationships between staff and young people.

Two requirements and one recommendation are made at this inspection.

Areas for improvementStatutory 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
13 (2001)	ensure that children accommodated at the home are provided with food that is wholesome, nutritious and sufficiently varied (Regulation 13)(1) (a) (ii) & (iv))	21/11/2011
34 (2001)	ensure that the registered person shall establish and maintain a system for monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 at appropriate intervals; and improving the quality of care provided in the children's home (Regulation 34 (1) (a) & (b))	21/11/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure that a learning and development programme is evaluated for effectiveness at least annually, and if necessary, is updated (NMS 18.2)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people have made excellent progress to develop a positive self-view, emotional resilience and knowledge and understanding of their backgrounds. Staff support young people to have a good understanding of their background and developing self-confidence and skills is at the heart of their work. Achievement is encouraged, success is rewarded consistently and young people respond positively to this approach. Young people make exceptional progress in their education. For example, young people who had very poor attendance at school are now achieving 100% attendance and attaining good results.

Young people benefit from having their health needs addressed by attending some of their appointments and seeking advice if they are feeling unwell. The management ensure that links are established with a range of health professionals in order address the individual needs of the young people. Staff continue to encourage young people to attend their medical appointments and are not deterred by any resilience shown by young people. They offer any support and advice required, the result of which has proved to be successful.

Young people have a clear understanding of the contact arrangements in place for family and friends. They state that they are supported to have contact with their families, who are made to feel welcome when they visit the home. Staff work closely with families in line with placement plans and encourage and support young people to maintain contact with their families even when they are not living locally. This practice ensures that young people benefit from appropriate contact with the people in their lives who are important to them.

Young people are fully supported to enable a successful transition into independence and adulthood. Independence tasks are completed by all young people dependant on their age and ability. Once young people are approaching adulthood, pathway plans are completed. Young people speak positively of this process and are keen to continue to develop their skills while living at the home. This practice enables young people to develop the skills required to make a successful transition into adulthood.

Quality of care

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

Young people speak positively of the relationships they have with the staff. They benefit from the positive and constructive relationships between staff and young people. Staff clearly have a good knowledge and understanding of the young people they care for. Young people thrive in this caring and nurturing environment.

Young people confirm that they are actively involved in decisions being made in all aspects of their lives. They gave several examples of the choices they have made with regard to activities and plans being made about their futures, as well as the décor of their bedrooms and the communal rooms. Young people are supported to attend their reviews and meetings and voice their views and wishes about the plans being made for their lives.

Young people state that they are happy at the home and have nothing to complain about. Young people also stated that they are aware of the complaints process but if they are unhappy about anything they 'tell staff and it's sorted'.

Placement plans are child focused and cover all aspects of a child's care to include their gender, cultural, religious and dietary needs. Risk assessments work in conjunction with the placement plans, providing guidance for staff. Pathway plans are currently being completed for young people who are starting to plan their transition into adulthood. Young people speak with enthusiasm about their involvement with these plans and are keen to remain at the home whilst preparing for independence.

Positive links are established with a range of health professionals to ensure that the young people's health needs are identified, addressed and resolved. Medication is safely stored and administered and records are well maintained. Staff who administer the medication are appropriately trained. This practice ensures young people receive the appropriate health care and medication is safely administered.

Young people are active and do enjoy exercise through dance; however menus seen at the home show little evidence to support a healthy balanced diet. Fresh fruit and vegetables are purchased but young people's choices mean that they often eat the same meals, some of which are pre-purchased ready-made meals. This means that young people do not eat a healthy and nutritious diet.

Young people speak with enthusiasm about their educational placements and the plans for their future employment. In conjunction with the education services the management have been creative in adapting the service to meet individual needs of the young people resulting in very positive outcomes. This practice ensures that young people are provided with the opportunity and support to achieve their educational potential.

Young people confirm that they are offered a range of enjoyable activities, such as day trips to London, theme parks and cinemas. Young people also talked about their

individual interests. One young person stated that they had recently performed at a concert in the town hall and staff had attended. Staff speak with pride about the young people's achievements and ensure that all achievements and special events, such as, birthdays and festivities are celebrated. Photograph albums are completed to provide young people with memories of the significant events and achievements in their lives.

Young people benefit from the interventions of a diverse staff team in terms of age, culture and gender. Young people confirm they are provided with opportunities and support to follow any religious or cultural beliefs. Young people state that they recently took a part in celebrating black history month, providing them with a knowledge and understanding of other cultures.

The home is situated in a multi-cultural residential setting and is in keeping with the local community. It provides young people with a clean, comfortable and well-maintained environment within easy access of bus routes and local amenities. Young people are able to take an active role in choosing the décor of the communal rooms as well as personalising their individual bedrooms.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people speak very positively about the relationship they have with staff and are confident that they would tell staff if they were unhappy about anything or any one. Staff are trained and demonstrate an understanding of the process to follow if a safeguarding incident arose. This ensures that staff have the skills to create an environment where young people feel protected and are protected from significant harm.

Young people who go missing are protected by the actions of staff. Staff have formed good working relationships with the vulnerable person's police officer. Staff work closely with the young people to address any concerns they may have. Young people confirm they are happy living at the home and wish to remain there; they state that they have no reason to go missing. This practice ensures that young people are safeguarded.

Young people are encouraged and supported to behave well. Staff have a good understanding of the young people they care for and there is minimal use of sanctions and restraint. Young people state sanctions are fair and they have a good understanding of the rules of the house and the consequences if they break the rules.

Young people are cared for by staff who have received the appropriate checks. There are good recruitment systems in place and visitors are asked to sign in and show identification where appropriate. There is a monitoring of visitors which keeps young people safe. Young people live in an environment is safe and well maintained. For example, all health and safety checks, risk assessments and fire checks are

completed within the appropriate timescales.

Leadership and management

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

Young people benefit from having a manager who is committed to improving the service for young people. Action has been taken to address the two statutory requirements and the two recommendations made at the previous inspection which has improved outcomes for young people.

The Statement of Purpose sets out the aims and objectives for the home and provides young people, families, carers and professionals with detailed information. Young people confirm that they are aware of the rules and the expectations of the home. This is all explained to them as part of the admission process.

Staff state that they feel supported by the manager and have good working relationships with their colleagues. They are confident that managers are available for advice at all times as they operate an open door policy and an out-of-hours emergency on-call service. Staff meetings take place regularly and provide opportunities to discuss any concerns or practice issues. Staff confirm that they feel comfortable with colleagues and are able to challenge them in an open and professional way. They believe that their consistent approach to the young people is key to their success. Rotas identify shift leaders and provide adequate cover in line with young people's risk assessments.

Staff confirm that they complete an in-house induction to the company's policies and procedures before moving on to undertake the Children's Workforce Development Council's Induction Standards. Once completed staff then move on to the Level 3 Children and Young People's Workforce Diploma. The provider ensures that all mandatory training is completed. The majority of staff hold their National Vocational Qualification Level 3 award and the remaining staff are in the process of enrolling for the course. However, there is no development programme in place to further develop staff beyond their mandatory training. Staff state that they are keen to develop their knowledge in other areas, such as, drug and alcohol abuse. The Registered Manager confirms that any training identified to meet young person's individual needs would be sourced. This means that staff have the knowledge and skills to care for the individual young people currently in placement, however, there are no plans to further develop the knowledge and skills of the staff team.

The responsible individual completes independent monthly checks on the quality of care.. Although these reports are completed and sent to Ofsted, they provide basic information and do not identify the strengths or weakness of the home or areas to develop or improve. Likewise the manager has no formal system in place for monitoring. It is evident that some areas, such as restraints and sanctions records are checked but there is no formal way of assessing the shortfalls and the development of the service. The Registered Manager and responsible individual both confirm that they have identified some areas for development, for example,

independence, however, they have not established a system of monitoring to highlight the weaknesses and develop a plan to address them. Although there is some evidence to show that monitoring is taking place, the lack of a robust monitoring process may result in shortfalls to the care being provided and therefore impact on the outcomes for young people.

Equality and diversity practice is **satisfactory**.