

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Michelle Spruce
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is one of a group of homes operated by the same organisation as part of a tendering contract with a local council. Accommodation is provided for up to four children with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

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**.

This good service provides positive outcomes for young people. The strong leadership and passionate staff team are the key strength in delivering good quality care. They are motivated about meeting young people's needs. The effectiveness, with which the home provides personalised, well-planned care along with good behaviour management strategies, is a result of quality placement planning.

Safeguarding is a high priority in all aspects of young people's care. There is a strong focus on behaviour management that significantly enhances positive behaviour. Staff work hard to provide a safe environment in which young people feel safe.

Young people are generally happy with the quality of care they receive. This is reflected in the good relationships with staff, demonstrated through the trust, respect and care they have for each other. The views wishes and feelings of young people promote the running of the service.

There are some shortfalls to the service and as a result, one requirement and one recommendation have been made.

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)	ensure the registered person maintains in the children's home the records specified in Schedule 4 and ensure they are kept up to date; in relation to accident records. (Regulation 29 (1))	30/06/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the home provides a comfortable and homely environment and is well maintained and decorated. (NMS 10.3)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make good progress in educational attainment and achievement despite the difficulties they face, taking account of their individual starting point. Young people say, 'I am in education part time and attend the Key Team they help me with my maths and English. I am most proud to improve my last unit in the subjects. I can then look for an apprenticeship in plumbing or mechanics.' Young people have an understanding of their background and the reasons why they are in care. As a result, young people recognise their individuality and attachments between themselves and others develop.

Young people benefit from attending routine health appointments. Some young people take responsibility for arranging their own health appointments. This enables young people to recognise the importance of maintaining good well-being. Young people benefit from good partnership working between agencies. For example, bereavement counselling provided by alternative health professionals means young people continue to receive crucial support from professionals they engage and respond to.

Some young people who are involved in offending behaviour have reduced re-offending incidents. This is because young people recognise the consequences. As a result, some anti-social behaviour has reduced.

Young people eat a well-balanced diet and are encouraged to take part in planning, preparing and cooking meals. Some young people who are working towards independence have money to purchase their own food. This helps young people prepare for independent living and equips them with necessary life skills. Staff comment, 'we have team meetings to identify how young people are coping with the healthy eating as part of the independence plan. Where there are difficulties we

make changes to ensure the health of young people is not being impacted'.

All young people benefit from appropriate contact with family, friends and other people who are important to them. This ensures relationships continue to develop and strengthen.

Quality of care

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

Young people say they get on with most staff and generally, the relationships are good. Young people know staff have their best interest at heart and staff continually strive to put them central to the care they provide. Staff say: 'We provide good quality of care by being good role models by not smoking and giving examples of how to be the best for the future. Inappropriate behaviour is discouraged.' Other professionals involved in the care of young people say about the home, 'It is extremely child centred, the staff really have tried'.

Young people behave appropriately with staff support. Young people receive support to assess their offending behaviour that affects the community by accessing additional services such as the youth offending team. Staff provide robust individualised behaviour management plans and as a result, incidents of physical intervention are minimal.

Staff support young people in understanding how to make a complaint. Staff provide stamped addressed envelopes along with complaint forms for young people to complete privately. Young people raise complaints and receive the outcome in writing following investigation.

Staff encourage young people to take part in the planning of their care through 1:1 discussion and weekly residents meetings. Young people say they feel listened to. As a result, young people influence the running of the home. Staff have a clear understanding of each young person's personality; this means young people benefit from fair and equal opportunities regardless of their differences.

Young people's health and well-being are a primary focus to the delivery of care for young people. Young people who smoke are encouraged by staff to quit or cut down. Staff promote good role modelling to discourage taking drugs or drinking alcohol. Staff provide a good balance of healthy eating by giving young people the opportunity to plan, shop and prepare their own meals. Where additional support is necessary, the staff liaise with external partners to maximise the best outcome for young people. Staff ensure that young people take their medication necessary for their health. Staff safely receive, administer and dispose of medication. As a result, young people maintain good health and well-being.

Staff continually strive to improve educational attainment and achievement with constant encouragement. However, young people often choose not to attend. Staff support young people who find it difficult to attend education and provide alternative

measures. Staff offer incentives to motivate attendance. Some young people demonstrate improvement in attainment and achievement. Educational professionals say, 'good progress is made and as a result, qualifications are accomplished'. This means life chances improve.

Young people live in a nurturing environment. However due to some significant changes to the dynamics of young people placed the home has suffered some damage from recent behaviour. As a result, there are many windows in communal areas that have been without curtains or blinds for some time. This affects how young people feel about the home they live in.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people say they feel safe and protected from harm. Staff say: 'We protect young people from those who may be a risk to them. We check visitor's identification. Regular checks are done to establish young people's whereabouts when off site and if they are not home on time we follow the procedure to ensure their safety.'

Staff say they address issues of bullying directly with young people and support them to recognise what bullying is and how to report it. Young people say they do not experience bullying in the home and know how to report their concerns if this were a problem.

Staff recognise behaviour and trigger factors that may be behind young people going missing. Staff say, 'If young people go missing staff search the local area and contact people that they may be with and share information with the police if necessary'. However, missing incidents have reduced and young people say staff treat them kindly on return to the home. Staff say, 'Triggers of behaviour is learnt overtime by working closely with each individual young person'. This reduces some episode of missing and helps to keep young people safe.

Staff are pro-active in implementing positive behaviour and some staff say they have not used any physical restraint since working at the home. Where physical restraint is required staff ensure it is in strict accordance with the legislative framework, and records are clear in recording the reason for its use. However, on occasion injuries sustained by staff during physical intervention are not recorded in the accident book.

Safe recruitment practice ensures only suitable candidates work with young people. The home has recently employed some new staff and thorough recruitment checks take place. This prevents unsuitable applicants from employment and keeps young people safe.

Staff say they receive safeguarding and child protection training and they are refreshed as and when necessary. Staff know and understand the procedures to refer any concerns. As a result, young people are appropriately safeguarded.

The environment is physically safe and appropriately secure. Staff say regular fire drills take place along with health and safety monitoring. Young people say they take part in fire drills and understand what to do in the event of a fire. This means the home provides a safe place of residency.

Leadership and management

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

The home is effectively and efficiently managed by a workforce that are child centred in their approach. Young people benefit from an assistant manager and a committed, experienced and child-centred staff team who provide support while the Registered Manager is on maternity leave. External professionals comment about the management being 'first class'.

Staff and young people regularly share their input into the running of the home through team meetings and supervision. This ensures the aims and objectives of the service continue to be met and reassessed.

The manager gains feedback from staff and stakeholders by using a quality assurance questionnaire. This information helps to shape the home's development plan and highlights the strengths and weaknesses. This tracks and enhances performance. Regulation 33 visits take place as required and the assistant manager undertakes the Schedule 6 monitoring. Staff are well trained and skilled in understanding the needs of young people and benefit from regular supervision and appraisal. This ensures staff are kept up-to-date with legislation and practice developments. As a result, young people continue to receive good quality care.

Records are clear, up-to-date, stored correctly and contribute to an understanding of the child's life. However, some records are missing and not recorded in full. All significant events relating the protection of young people are promptly notified to the required authorities. Appropriate action is taken following any incident.

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.