

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. This home provides care and accommodation for up to five young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service of high quality 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 is a good service that provides positive outcomes for young people. The effectiveness with which the home provides personalised, well-planned care is a result of good placement planning. The staff team are the key strength in delivering an exceptional quality of care. They are passionate and committed to meeting the individual needs of young people.

Young people say they are safe and feel safe. This is emphasised by the robust behaviour management plans and firm boundaries of the home. Young people's risk taking behaviour has reduced and positive relationships are formed. Despite the difficulties young people face they remain protected from harm.

The home strives for improvement and continues to develop and evaluate strengths and weaknesses. However, some areas of monitoring the home impact on the effectiveness of the leadership and management and as a result, two requirements and one recommendation has 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
34 (2001)	ensure the registered manager monitors the matters set out in Schedule 6 at appropriate intervals; and ensure they are kept up to date in relation to the home's risk assessments and the deposit and issue of young people's money (Regulation 34(1)(a) Schedule 6 (2)(13))	30/09/2012
31 (2001)	ensure all parts of the children's home used by children are of sound construction and kept in good structural repair externally; in relation to the roof. (Regulation 31 2(d))	30/09/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure that staff are equipped with the skills required to meet the needs of the children and purpose of the setting, and training keeps them up-to-date with professional, legal and practice developments and reflects the policies, legal obligations and business needs of the home; in relation to casual staff. (NMS 18.1)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make significant improvement in their confidence and self-esteem that is reflected in the care they take of themselves. Staff say, 'exceptional progress has been made, some young people were lost but now are able to recognise how to respect each other and have formed positive attachments with staff. Young people are confident and know what they want to do.' This means young people are resilient and better able to form and sustain attachments.

Young people make exceptional improvements in relation to their education because they have developed aspirations about what they wish to achieve. Staff work closely to ensure young people benefit from external support to maximise further education or employment opportunities. A visitor to the home providing educational support commented, 'young people are now looking for jobs and are involved in regular meetings.' As a result, young people improve life chances to achieve further learning or practical skills to enhance their job prospects.

The health needs of young people are met because they understand the importance of healthy living. Young people attend routine appointments and eat a well-balanced diet that reflects their individual cultural needs. Young people benefit from external agencies that promote their emotional health and as a result, young people say, 'staff help me to arrange my health appointments; I did used to see agencies but do not feel I need them now as I can deal with issues myself.' Young people are proud of their appearance which influences their decisions in relation to giving up smoking. One young person said, 'I am having support from the orthodontist to have a brace and also want to give up smoking and have my teeth whitened.' As a result, young people's health improves.

Young people experience valuable contact with those significant in their lives. The home welcomes the friends and family of young people into the environment and creates a place that makes contact a relaxed and pleasant experience. Some young people now benefit from unsupervised contact that ensures strong bonds and valuable experiences with family are maximised. This means relationships and attachments form positively.

Young people take pride in the home they live in and contribute to the daily running of the home by helping with house chores. Young people receive a weekly allowance to spend as they choose and records are held to show monies given and spent. However, although young people say they receive pocket money the records are not clear. This means young people may not receive what they are rightfully due or money requested may be delayed.

Young people are successfully supported towards skills for independent living. Some young people placed at the home have positively moved on as a result of robust planning and sensitive support for leaving care. Other young people in the home work well to engage with their independent support plans that provide skills for life and enhance self-esteem.

Quality of care

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

Young people have excellent relationships with the staff that are honest and trustful. There is a warm and welcoming atmosphere between staff and young people that confirms the respect between them. Young people say, 'I have exceptionally good relationships with staff and they talk to me at my own level and see things from my point of view.' As a result, young people behave appropriately and constructively. The culture of the home ensures that staff provide firm rules and boundaries that further promote positive relationships and staff say, 'young people who are rude towards staff do recognise their behaviour is unacceptable and do apologise.'

Young people comment that they take part in weekly residents' meetings and feel they do influence the running of the home. Their views are respected and staff encourage their decision making. For example, young people wanted the hallway decorated, this was noted and action taken to meet their requests. This means

young people significantly influence the running of the home.

Young people confirm they know how to make a complaint, and confidence within the staff team ensures young people receive support when raising concerns. Where requests made by young people are unable to be met staff are innovative in providing positive ways to compromise and offer resolution. The home provides access to independent advocacy services for young people and the external professional visits the home regularly. This means young people's rights are promoted.

Staff are passionate and motivated and drive forward the educational attainment and achievement of young people. The home has strong links with external agencies that work in partnership to secure the maximum potential of young people in all aspects of their care. As a result, young people's aspirations are achieved and their confidence increases.

Staff ensure young people receive high quality care because they work tirelessly in partnership with external agencies. Young people thrive from the additional services provided that enhance both their physical and emotional health. Young people remain in stable and safe placements because they know how much they are cared for and recognise the milestones they have achieved. This is because staff do not give up and young people remain the focus in the delivery of care.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Staff make safety a high priority. Young people benefit from robust behaviour management plans and individualised risk assessments. Staff are vigilant and monitor and evaluate young people's safety and take prompt action during times of exploitation or risk of harm. Episodes of young people being missing significantly decrease because of the robust management of individual's risk. This means young people who take part in risk taking behaviour are protected as much as possible given their individual circumstances. Staff say, 'regular meetings take place to address issues of bullying, we speak to young people about bullying and if we see any incidents they are nipped in the bud.' Young people feel safe and get on well with staff and each other; this means the risk of bullying is significantly reduced.

Young people benefit from a stable and committed staff team who are familiar with their needs; this ensures a consistent continuity of care. The home has a robust recruitment procedure to further protect young people from the risk of any unsuitable candidates having access to them. Young people comment they can make calls in private and staff respect their privacy and knock on their bedroom doors before entering. This keeps young people safe.

Young people say they love the home and the staff working there. They say they are safe and feel safe. Although some young people face difficulties managing their

behaviour staff provide excellent support without the need to use physical intervention. This is because staff are skilled and knowledgeable in how to appropriately deal with each individual's needs. As a result, placements remain stable and young people develop self-coping strategies that reduce conflict.

The home provides a welcoming environment that undertakes regular checks in line with health and safety monitoring. Young people take part in fire drills and understand their responsibility in keeping the home free from hazardous risk. The arrangements for medication are robust and ensure young people are free from medication error.

Leadership and management

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

The home benefits from a Registered Manager who is supported by a stable and committed staff team. Staff are a key strength in the delivery of the excellent quality of care and in young people achieving positive outcomes. Some staff from sister homes have been redeployed to assist with staffing shortages and casual staff are used to assist further shortages. However, it is not clear what skills or training these staff have or whether training has been updated. This has the potential to impact on the quality of care.

The home is maintained and health and safety matters are monitored regularly. The fire risk assessment is updated in a timely manner by a designated officer; however the home contingency plan has not been reviewed annually. The general risk assessments for the home are not updated regularly in line with the home's guidance. There is no evidence recorded on the risk assessments to demonstrate that the Registered Manager or the person responsible for health and safety has reviewed them. Most have significantly missed the annual review timescale. Additionally, the weekly health and safety monitoring identifies risks both inside and outside the home, staff record potential hazards, however, there is no evidence that anyone has visited the home to assess or reduce the risks identified. For example, missing roof tiles. As a result, risks in the home are not adequately monitored or reviewed, this has potential to impact on the health and safety of all those working and residing in or visiting the premises.

The home benefits from Regulation 33 monitoring visits and the manager undertakes the Schedule 6 monitoring. Although the Schedule 6 monitoring takes place the monitoring is not effective because where some records are inaccurate and unclear this has not been identified or addressed. For example, records of young people's pocket money shows gaps, inaccurate entries of receipts and gift cards of a monetary value are not included as part of the record. This affects the records of young people and may have a potential impact on them financially.

The home can demonstrate the impact and value that living in the home has had on young people's lives and how their life chances have improved because of the positive outcomes achieved from when they moved into the home. Young people

thrive and placements remain stable, this confirms the value the service has to the young people living there.

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.