

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Roy Bega
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Service information

Brief description of the service

A private company owns and operates this children's home. The setting accommodates a maximum of two young people who have complex emotional, behavioural and educational difficulties. If young people are not able to attend mainstream schooling, they can attend the company's specialist education unit. The company's working livestock and arable farm provides opportunities for young people to learn new skills. Young people can also access the organisation's therapeutic resources.

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 **outstanding**.

Staff have extremely high aspirations for the young people in their care. Highly effective relationships with parents, carers, education and mental health professionals ensures a holistic approach in providing bespoke placements for young people.

Young people enjoy living in the home and thrive as a result of the consistent support from the highly effective and enthusiastic staff team. They say they have excellent relationships with staff and feel supported and encouraged to flourish.

Young people feel that staff listen to them and invest in their progress. They benefit from an unwavering consistency of approach from staff. This provides stability through the application of clearly stated boundaries in a caring and nurturing environment.

Staff are constantly mindful of ways to improve the living experience. They actively consult young people about service development through questionnaires, house meetings and daily informal discussions.

The management team are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the home and work continually and creatively for improvement. As a result staff are highly

motivated and well trained, which is evidenced in the commitment and quality of care experienced by young people.

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **outstanding**.

The setting is welcoming and provides young people with a stable, secure and fun loving environment which they are proud to call their home.

Young people make substantial progress in all aspects of their lives. They have improved confidence, self-esteem and a positive understanding of their own abilities as a result of the highly individualised support they receive. Each young person is unreservedly valued and respected as an individual. The unconditional positive regard of staff encourages positive attachments. As a result young people have greater confidence and are more able to sustain relationships in the community.

Young people enjoy good health, being motivated in taking responsibility for their own medical and health needs. The development of self-esteem and understanding about emotional and mental well-being aids the recognition and ability to have fun. They are aware how lifestyle choices can impact on their health. For example, balanced eating, exercise and improved personal hygiene. Young people also understand how to access a variety of health agencies that will support their medical needs and give advice about lifestyle choices.

Young people's educational achievement and school attendance is exceptional taking into account their attainment level at the commencement of their placement and subsequent progress. They appreciate the support and guidance given by staff who are proud of them and care about their futures. Key workers talk to them about the importance of school, going to college and being able to get a job. They feel good about themselves as they are consistently congratulated and rewarded for their efforts and achievements.

Young people make decisions about their placement plans, reviews and running of the home. They feel confident to say what they think, can read what is said about them and sign records. Staff support them to become involved in house meetings and weekly key worker sessions. A lot of discussion also takes place during social occasions such as meal time. They enjoy discussing a wide range of things including food, personal activities in the local community, holidays, sanctions/house rules and the decoration of the home.

Young people are actively encouraged by staff to participate in suitable leisure activities within the home and the wider community. Staff promote new experiences aimed at providing the opportunity for young people to learn new skills, develop new interests and gain confidence. Comments made by young people include, 'staff are always trying to get me to do different things.'

Where appropriate young people freely make contact with family members and

friends. They are also aware of the reasoning when it is necessary to agree planned and supervised contact with their families. These include visits to the home, telephone contact, and planned overnight stays with parents. Exceptional staff commitment in providing emotional and practical support enables young people to maintain, and in some instances, re-establish relationships with their families.

Quality of care

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

Young people benefit from outstanding supportive relationships with staff that are based on mutual respect. Interaction is generally informal, good humoured with appropriate boundaries being maintained.

There are established forums including residents meetings and key working sessions, which young people use to express the views on aspects of how the home is organised and run. Young people learn to negotiate and develop confidence in expressing themselves. They are listened to and their views are valued in affecting changes on matters that are important to them.

Staff actively promote education as part of preparation for adulthood and provide young people with practical and emotional support. Staff have excellent understanding of the young people's education and are enthused in providing consistent and meaningful support.

Young people know how to report any concerns but rarely make use of the formal complaints process. They portray having confidence in taking issues directly to staff and being listened to. Staff are supportive and proactive in helping young people raise issues with agencies and organisation outside of the home.

Young people are cared for in line with their detailed and comprehensive placement plans. Individual needs are identified and well understood by staff. Young people have a clear understanding regarding the aims of their placement and what they need to achieve them.

There is a strong emphasis with the home on promoting the young people's physical, emotional well-being and welfare. Young people are encouraged to routinely attend appointments with their doctors, dentist and opticians. Also have access to a range of specialist services providing medical and psychological support. Staff receive training in first aid and have excellent knowledge of robust procedures for administration of medication.

Needs relating to young people's cultural background and personal identity are identified and positively addressed in both daily living and care planning. For example, young people are supported and enabled to exercise choice relating to culture and religious beliefs and helped to make links with members of their own communities. Young people also have equal access to all of the opportunities provided by the home.

The home provides a safe, pleasant and healthy environment which young people enjoy living in. The accommodation provides good spaces for group and individual activities. Young people have their own bedrooms which reflect individual personalities and interests. The home is well resourced for age appropriate leisure activities and interests to enable young people to acquire and develop life skills.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

The excellent relationships between all associated with the home ensures that young people always have a trusted adult they can talk to. Allegations or disclosures are taken very seriously by staff who are trained and confident in the use of the procedures. Any significant event relating to the protection of young people accommodated in the home are notified to the appropriate authorities and agreed action is taken following an incident.

Staff are especially astute at identifying and considering risks for each young person in relation to their diverse needs and in relation to the group living arrangements; these are documented and reviewed when circumstances change.

Effective action is taken in relation to the potential for bullying. Bullying is rare in this home because of the high level of personal respect each young person and member of staff has for each other. In the rare event of bullying occurring this is treated very seriously and dealt with very effectively. Both the bully and the bullied are very well supported and detailed work is carried out with the bully to ensure they really understand about bullying and its effects.

The arrangements for promoting positive behaviour are extremely effective. Young people are clear about these arrangements and are fully committed to them. While sometimes behaviours are not in line with expectations young people are aware and understand the consequences of this. Young people are involved in setting their own behavioural targets which supports the development of a sense of responsibility for their own actions. Physical restraint is rarely used and clear records are maintained of any incidents. Young people are clear that physical restraint is used as a last resort and only used to protect them or other people from harm or damage to property. Young people rarely go missing from the home because they feel safe and cared for. Clear arrangements, including protocols with the police and young people's placing authority are followed should this occur.

Young people live in a very safe and very well-maintained environment that supports their developmental needs. The investment in the home in terms of décor, furnishings and equipment is exceptional; this sends a clear message to young people that they are valued.

Staff working with young people in the home are carefully selected and vetted. The

robust recruitment process is in keeping with current vetting procedures and ensures that suitable people are employed.

Leadership and management

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

This is an outstanding service that provides young people with a high level of care. The home is effectively and efficiently managed. The staff team are fully committed, motivated and driven to deliver the best possible outcomes for young people. This is a result of efficient management that actively promotes development within the workforce and provides opportunities for staff to enhance their skills.

Staff are provided with an excellent range of training, including mandatory courses in safeguarding, first aid and the administration of medication. The manager of the home ensures that time is available for all staff to attend training, which further promotes the welfare of the young people. All staff working at the home have a qualification in caring for children or are working towards it. Comments received include, 'my training needs are a fixed item for my supervision', 'I am being well supported in completing formal childcare training', 'we have annual refresher training in the mandatory areas such as child protection', and, 'the company provides specialist training to meet the needs of young people before they are admitted.'

The home demonstrates a capacity for continuing improvement based on its track record and performance since its previous inspection. The management team have robust systems in place to ensure on-going monitoring is taking place and that information collated leads to improvement and development. The home is able to identify excellent care practice as well as further areas for improvement. Staff are very enthusiastic about working at this home and have very high expectations of themselves and the support they provide to young people.

The home offers care and accommodation for young people in line with its Statement of Purpose and objectives which are understood by the staff team. There is an appropriate young person's guide. The manager and responsible individual regularly consider the running of the home and young people's individual needs to maintain excellent care levels. Young people's needs, development and progress are well recorded to reflect their individuality.

Monitoring arrangements are very effective. Significant events are notified promptly and dealt with appropriately to improve practice where possible. The Regulation 33 monitoring visits are thorough and include observations. The manager monitors the quality of care through her Regulation 34 reports but also on an on-going basis through supervision, involvement with young people, and contact with their parents, carers, other agencies and social workers.

All records are clear, up to date and stored securely, and contribute to a full understanding of young people's lives.

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* and the evaluation schedule for the inspection of children's homes.