

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Linda Bond
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home provides care and accommodation for up to two young people of either gender, who may have emotional or 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 **adequate**.

The home provides an overall adequate level of care with quality of care and measures to ensure young people are safe which are good. Young people recognise and appreciate the care and support they receive from a very committed and dedicated staff team and enjoy living at the home. Young people are making progress and their needs and views are central to the work undertaken at the home. The home provides young people with a nurturing environment in which to live, grow and reach their full potential.

The manager is in the process of being registered with Ofsted and the staff team is in part new. However, the staff team are dedicated, knowledgeable and skilled, and are led by an experienced, motivated and strong manager. As a result all are very proactive in engaging the young people, particularly with education, which has resulted in a positive response from the young people.

Ofsted has received very positive comments from a placing authority in relation to the care and support that is provided by the home. Young people have positive comments to make about the home, and suggest ways in which things could be improved.

Overall the home's manager and staff team are confident that young people will have positive outcomes from their experiences whilst living in the home.

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people are very appreciative of the care and guidance they receive from staff. Young people and social workers describe the care as 'very good' and report that 'staff are fair and listen to you'. All staff demonstrate a maturity, self confidence, strong skill base and emotional resilience that enable young people to settle and feel safe. Young people are articulate, self-sufficient and generally have a positive sense of identity. The home offers them a stable, nurturing base where they can thrive.

The staff team demonstrate a motivated and committed attitude to ensuring all young people receive education. A creative and holistic approach to education enables young people to achieve well. Young people have aspirations for their future both in education and in employment. Young people benefit from the strong partnership working between the home and educational establishments. This focuses on their best interests and assists them with maximising their potential.

Young people reside in a home which demonstrates a commitment to their health. Staff proactively address young people's physical health and their emotional and psychological needs. By providing access to a qualified psychologist, young people are supported in developing a sense of self and keeping safe. This provision is also available to the staff group. This is a valued opportunity to reflect and explore presenting issues enabling them to work more effectively. The home provides nutritionally balanced meals and an ample supply of fresh fruit.

Young people benefit from a variety of activities that are provided in and out of the home environment. Young people are enthusiastic and are actively involved in choosing activities, contributing to the activities weekly planner at house meetings.

The home ensures that young people maintain appropriate contact with family, friends and other people who are important to them. Any restrictions in contact are clearly identified in young people's placement plans. Supportive and experienced staff provide and encourage young people to understand these plans and provide an environment that young people feel safe in.

When a young person is ready to move to independence, clear plans and effective working together enables a smooth transition. The ethos of the home strongly encourages independent living skills for all age groups. This provides young people with support and advice, ensuring they mature and establish themselves independently.

Quality of care

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

One of the key strengths of the home is the enthusiasm and motivation of the staff team to improve the quality of care for young people. Respectful and warm relationships between young people and staff ensure young people make progress in raising their self-worth and self-respect. The warm atmosphere enables young people and staff to share their life experiences and respective cultures. In doing so, young people feel safe to explore and develop an understanding of their

backgrounds and experiences.

The staff team make every effort to ensure that the environment is as homely as possible and there are plans to further improve the environment. Young people are protected because the staff team ensure that any health and safety matters are addressed, within robust and clear risk assessments.

Young people benefit from the home's comprehensive approach to care planning. The home embraces the principles of normalisation, social inclusion and unconditional positive regard for the individual. Placement plans clearly outline their individual needs and objectives. Plans detail specific aims relating to a young person's ethnicity, faith, sexuality, culture, family background and any disability. Key work meetings enable young people to work on their goals, which are linked to their placement plan. In doing so young people are encouraged to be involved and have a sense of contribution in the decision-making processes. Staff work effectively to motivate young people and help them to recognise their unique qualities and talents.

Opportunities for young people to be involved in the running of the home and contributing to their individualised plans are varied. Key and group working sessions plus house meetings enable young people to be involved in developing the home and the care they receive. The home provides a young people's guide that young people have positively contributed towards. As a result young people feel valued and involved in constructive developments.

Young people are encouraged and supported to attend education and the care team liaise closely with education settings to promote attendance. A social worker was impressed with the support young people receive in accessing education, stating 'the home has been absolutely fantastic'. Young people have every opportunity to achieve and reach their potential. Based on individual needs, activities provided by the home provide a specific educational element. Young people have internet access to support their homework and are aware of any restrictions imposed when accessing this. Young people are encouraged to use information technology systems to support their learning; while doing so, they are protected by systems the company has installed to keep them safe.

Young people know how to make a complaint and are familiar with the complaints process. Contact details of Ofsted are provided in the young person's guide and posted in the home. Young people feel that their views and opinions are listened to and that they can approach any member of staff. Young people report they 'feel listened to' and 'the staff are fair'. The service conducts regular house meetings with the young people with an agenda and minutes kept.

Young people live in a healthy environment. They are registered with and access a variety of health care professionals including general practitioners, dentists and opticians. The service helps young people to access services in support of their emotional and psychological health if and when needed. Young people are supported and encouraged to lead a healthy lifestyle. Those young people that choose to smoke are guided by staff to reduce or give up. Staff draw upon the policies and

procedures in relation to promoting healthy living. As a team they present as positive role models. For example they engage in sport and activities.

Young people are protected because the service ensures that medicines are kept safe and secure and satisfactory records are maintained of the administration of prescribed medicines. All staff are suitably qualified and knowledgeable in supporting young people when they feel unwell.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people reside in a home which effectively promotes their safety. Young people generally enjoy spending time at home. There are currently no issues with young people being absent without authority. If there should be any occurrences, staff look for the young person in addition to making the necessary referral to the police. The home has a strong relationship with the missing person's liaison officer. When young people are away from the home without staff supervision, they are further protected by providing staff with addresses they may be at and friendship groups. This is in the form of a written agreement. Young people respond well to this initiative. They understand the reasons why they need to keep in contact with staff.

Young people are competently safeguarded. Staff receive regular training and know the procedures for reporting allegations. Staff also knew they could pass on concerns to external agencies. The organisation has a director who leads on child protection and has an overview of issues. There is a good understanding of bullying, particularly cyber bullying. Young people do not report bullying as an issue. Regular house meetings provide a forum for young people to develop an understanding of, and consideration for, the feelings of those who work and live in the house..

Placement plans clearly identify risks and the measures that are to be taken to reduce risk. To support plans, the home ensures that individual risk assessments relating to activities and known areas of risk are conducted and implemented. The service is proactive in arranging meetings between all interested stakeholders to address any concerns relating to this.

The service has robust policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding. Any allegations or suspicions of harm are acted upon immediately. All care staff receive safeguarding training. The home develops comprehensive guidelines, strategies and individual behaviour management plans that support the care staff in the management of behaviours.

Young people are encouraged to maintain boundaries and develop appropriate behaviour by following incentives agreed and set by the home. Young people say that the rules are fair. The use of physical intervention is rare and records contain the required elements. All staff undertake de-escalation and physical intervention training and good records are maintained if intervention has been used. Sanctions are imposed if needed and these are regularly reviewed for their effectiveness and

consequence. The sanctions record has recently been reviewed and contains the required elements.

Young people are safeguarded through the maintenance of health and fire safety. Good records are maintained of the regular checking of the home's fire system and environmental risk assessments are regularly reviewed. The service has robust arrangements for the selection and recruitment of staff. No one is employed at the home until a satisfactory enhanced criminal records bureau check has been undertaken. Visitors to the home are closely monitored in order to protect young people.

Leadership and management

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

No recommendations or requirements were made at the last inspection. There is a new manager in post who is yet to be registered with Ofsted but is in the process of applying.

The service has a detailed Statement of Purpose that clearly sets out the aims and objectives of the home. The document has recently been updated to reflect the recent changes to the management structure, thereby providing young people and providers with accurate and current information. The home has a comprehensive children's guide and young people sign their copy to confirm that this has been provided and discussed with them.

The home ensures that there are high numbers of staff on duty at all times to meet the needs of the young people. This usually means there is at least at a ratio of one staff member to each young people. Two care staff undertake sleep-in duties. The manager and care team are very flexible and work extra hours and change shifts if required. If needed, relief staff are employed and the home ensures that continuity and consistency of care are maintained by using only a small pool of relief staff.

Newly appointed and more experienced staff all receive good supervision and records of this are accurate and clear. All staff spoken with stated that they feel extremely well supported by the new home's manager. They have found the home's manager very approachable and have welcomed a time of stable management. Monthly team meetings are held with records kept. There is a real optimism in the staff team for the development of the home and how this will improve the outcomes of young people. Staff feel confident of management and are looking forward to the further development of the service further.

There is clear evidence that both the manager and the registered provider routinely carry out monthly monitoring. They produce comprehensive reports following these visits. There is also clear evidence in the home's records of monitoring. A detailed and current development plan, formulated by the home's manager and staff team outlines the home's weaknesses and strengths with realistic timescales to reach any targets set. Young people's views and wishes are included within this plan. By doing

so, young people benefit from feeling included and valued. The home has an appropriate policy and procedure in place for notifying the required authorities of significant events.

Young people's files are securely stored. They provide an up-to-date and accurate amount of information. All documentation, reviews, care plans and risk assessments are signed and agreed. They are current and reviewed regularly, ensuring young people and the staff working with them are safeguarded. Evidence of life story work validates the staff teams approach to supporting young people in both understanding their experiences and planning for the future.

The home has recently undergone some internal decoration and updating of furniture. However, there remains room for improvement both internally and externally. The home's manager and staff team are motivated and committed to raising the living standards within the home. As a result young people enjoy living in a home that is well maintained, homely and of a high standard.

The service is committed to having a well-qualified workforce. The majority of staff have a National Vocational Qualification at level 3 or above. The remainder of the staff team are undertaking this qualification. The service offers staff good training opportunities in order to ensure they are trained and competent to meet the needs of the young people. All staff receive mandatory training including safeguarding, food hygiene, de-escalation, restraint and first aid. Staff also receive broader training in areas such as attachment and trauma, restorative justice, basic drug awareness, sexual health and equality and diversity.

Policies and procedures regarding the promotion of equality and diversity are available. Staff receive training and demonstrate an understanding of equality and diversity but there is little evidence of how equality and diversity is promoted within the home. However, from discussions with the home's manager and staff team, there is a real commitment to developing and promoting a greater understanding and knowledge of how to promote equality and diversity.

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.