

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Angus Mackay
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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

This privately run children's home offers care to three young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home has therapists who work with the young people and staff.

Overall effectiveness

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

Young people enjoy living in a safe excellently maintained, homely setting. There is good communication between young people and staff and young people confirm they feel safe and trust staff.

Social workers say that the young people are well looked after and make significant progress in education, emotionally and in health. Managers ensure that the home is a safe environment conforming to regulations and some enhancements to this were agreed during the inspection.

Excellent leadership, positive use of management information and detailed monitoring ensure that placement plans are of a high standard, delivering good consistent care and positive outcomes for young people.

Young people receive care which is good from well trained appropriately selected staff. They make good progress in all aspects of their personal development and there is good practice in safeguarding them.

Young people generally resolve their issues positively with staff but occasionally staff intervene appropriately and in line with regulations to sanction extreme behaviour. Following the inspection it is recommended that the home regularly review these sanctions to ensure their effectiveness and fairness.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure the emergency escape plan is reviewed to provide access to the rear

emergency exit (NMS 10.9)

- ensure that sanctions are regularly reviewed to maintain fairness and reasonableness in their application(NMS 3.8)
- ensure that all staff have taken part in an emergency evacuation of the home. (NMS 10.9)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people enjoy good outcomes in relation to their health, education and emotional well being with support and input from staff and therapists. They benefit from regular access to the homes psychotherapist who assists them in building a repertoire of skills for dealing with a range of emotions and behaviours which have been problematic for them. Social workers say that young people previously described as difficult and volatile are learning techniques to manage their own behaviours.

Young people are all required to participate in education programmes and are showing good success given their own starting points. Staff supply whatever support is required and are successful in assisting the young people to attend school daily. Young people are proud of their educational success and have school certificates and awards on display around the home.

Young people engage with staff in planning for their futures and realistically discussing family contacts. They display an awareness of the fragility of these relationships and seek staff support to improve successes. They take on self help and life skills as appropriate to their age and ability accepting staff guidance on healthy eating and good personal hygiene.

Young people enjoy good relationships with others outside the home. They receive advice and counselling from staff in staying safe and help in building relationships with their families. Social workers say young people benefit from the structure in the home and the consistency supplied by the staff team.

Quality of care

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

Young people are relaxed in discussion with staff and display good manners and consideration to guests. They say that staff listen to them and that their views influence aspects of the running of the home.

Young people can and do request key worker sessions and these are used positively to address concerns and improve their engagement in placement planning. Staff maintain the care and health files excellently to ensure they accurately reflect the changes in the young persons life, needs and that required actions are followed through by them and the young people.

Young people generally respond positively to staff interventions and their reward programmes leading to few incidences of physical restraint, low use of sanctions and few cases of missing from care. Staff address any such incidents creatively and appropriately involving young people in discussions with them and other professionals to keep them safe. Staff use sanctions appropriately involving young people in discussion about them but occasionally they have become ineffective and it is recommended that they are regularly reviewed to seek best outcomes.

Young people are successful in addressing issues of identity, emotional resilience and family background with assistance from staff and social workers. Staff and young people effectively implement advice from psychotherapists and psychologists to aid the young people in progressing with these often complex issues.

Staff encourage young people to participate in community activities, to build friendships developing their interpersonal skills. They aid them in maintaining friendships and in developing links to their families at a pace the young people are comfortable with. All young people attend school and receive appropriate support from staff to make this a successful experience.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people confirm that they feel safe in the home, know how to make a complaint and that staff deal with issues of bullying instantly to maintain the positive environment. They feel comfortable discussing personal issues with staff recognising this is helping to keep them safe. Staff cultivate open, frank relationships with young people to encourage them to share sensitive information to aid in maintaining their safety.

Young people benefit from being looked after by staff who are well trained in child protection and skilled in interpersonal relationships. Staff utilise psychotherapists to assist young people in addressing identified problems, personal issues and in managing behaviours which place them at risk. They encourage young people to contribute to their risk assessments seeking to imbed the learning from this and to improve outcomes for them.

Young people's safety in the home is enhanced by excellent recruitment practices which seek to select staff who can safely meet their needs. They live in a home where safety is maintained by regular checking and testing of all services. Staff implement procedures to eliminate hazards from the home and maintain risk assessments to ensure safety on activities young people take part in. To further enhance safety it is recommended that staff and young people have access to the rear fire escape and that all staff and young people take part in fire drills.

Leadership and management

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

Young people live in a home which benefits from excellent leadership and management. The registered manager makes excellent use of a range of information, identifying patterns of behaviour and directing staff engagement with young people improving the outcomes for them. The young people also benefit from receiving a service from staff who are well trained, supervised and properly directed to meet their needs. Young people and staff respect the manager and have confidence in her support and decision making which provides them with fairness and consistency.

The registered manager ensures that practice in the home meets that outlined in the Statement of Purpose and the young people's booklet. Young people actively engage in the monitoring process and the registered manager makes excellent use of this information to constantly move the service forward in line with the needs of the young people. They are aware of the aims of the home and believe that it is helping them to make progress in all aspects of their development.

Young people's files are excellently structured and maintained to provide a clear picture of each young person and clear advice on how to meet their needs. The registered manager ensures that all files are regularly reviewed and that young people are encouraged to contribute to them and to their own care planning. The home is excellent at keeping social workers and families informed of all aspects of the young peoples lives.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.