

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC369825
Inspection date	02/05/2012
Inspector	Michelle Spruce
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	13/03/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for two young people of either gender with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is operated by the local authority.

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 is a good service that provides positive outcomes for young people. The staff team are the key strength in delivering good quality care. They are passionate and motivated about meeting young people's needs. The effectiveness with which the home provides personalised, well planned care 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 enhance positive behaviour. Staff work hard to provide a safe environment in which young people feel safe.

Young people have 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 is one shortfall to the service and as a result, one recommendation has been made.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure young people are provided with the facilities and opportunities as needed;

this is in relation to providing suitable equipment to support education. (NMS 8.4)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make good progress from their starting point educationally, socially and emotionally because of individualised planning and assessment. As a result, relationships, behaviour and education have significantly improved.

Young people's confidence and self-esteem improves because they take an active part in building their skills and knowledge around their identity. Young people say, 'I am more organised, confident and ready for independence. I know my own mind and do not mind challenging others. I take pride in my appearance and I recognise who I am.'

The health of young people continues to improve and young people take responsibility in maintaining a good balance of well-being. For example, young people attend routine appointments and reduce risk taking activities that impact on their health. However, young people who smoke say they are taking advice to cut down or quit. The menus reflect a healthy diet and young people plan, shop and prepare their own meals. Additional support from health professionals encourage young people to manage their weight and diet. As a result, young people improve their health.

Young people make significant progress in education attendance. Where there have been difficulties young people try hard to work with staff and other professionals to ensure their attendance does not impact on their achievement. Young people say, 'I now attend school full time and am doing well, staff encourage me to go. This helps me but there is no computer for me to use to revise when I get home from school.'

Young people plan for leaving school and engage in exploring further learning and career opportunities. As a result, young people continue to make a positive contribution to society and their life chances improve.

Young people benefit from excellent leaving care plans. Staff implement robust independence plans to enhance the life skills of young people. Young people take responsibility in managing money to purchase food, clothing and items necessary for independent living. Young people say, 'I am working really well towards transition and have weekly money to purchase food shopping and other items necessary. I have been buying household items and purchased my own arm chair and all kitchen items.'

Young people have contact with people who are important and significant in their lives. Young people benefit from overnight stays with friends and family. This improves and strengthens relationships and decreases anti-social behaviour.

Quality of care

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

Young people have good relationships with staff that care about their welfare. Staff encourage young people to share their feelings openly and honestly. Young people say, 'I can tell staff things in confidence and they are not judgemental in regards to what I share with them.' As a result, young people are confident in acceptance of who they are.

Staff take an invested interest in managing positive behaviour. Young people benefit from individualised behaviour strategies developed during careful care planning. This means young people take a more mature approach to difficult situations. For example, young people now find ways to cope with frustrations with minimal disruption to others and the environment.

Staff provide forums to engage young people to express their opinions about the home and the care they receive. This means, young people are actively involved in shaping their home, future goals and aspirations. Where requests from young people cannot always be met, young people say, 'staff compromise, I wanted a house party for my birthday but staff discussed having a meal out with a friend instead. I was happy with the outcome.'

Young people know how to complain and forms are readily available. Young people confirm that staff follow up their grumbles or complaints and the outcome is shared with them. However, there have been no complaints since the last inspection. The home provides a private telephone with relevant phone numbers for young people to raise concerns or complaints. This mean young people are protected and able to raise their concerns externally.

Health and well-being are a primary focus to the delivery of care for young people. Young people recognise the need to reduce some unhealthy activities and seek support to help them achieve this. 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. Some young people take responsibility for managing their own medication where the risk assessment shows this is safe. Staff return unwanted medication in line with policy guidance and now use a tracking sheet to safeguard against any discrepancies. As a result, young people improve their physical health and well-being.

Staff demonstrate good models of parenting and role modelling. They strive to achieve a thorough understanding of equality and diversity in all aspects of young people's lives. Young people have recognised the importance of accepting the differences in others and relationships have improved as a result.

Staff continually strive to improve educational attainment and achievement with constant encouragement. Staff support young people who find it difficult to attend education and provide alternative measures. Young people demonstrate

improvement in attainment and achievement. Young people say, 'I only used to attend school part time and now I go every day.' Staff provide young people with adequate resources to enhance educational learning opportunities. However, the home has been without access to a computer for young people to use for some time. This affects some young people's learning potential.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people have a strong sense of safety and well-being and staff are highly efficient and proactive in their safeguarding practice. There are clear risk assessments in place to manage and protect young people while enabling them to take reasonable risk as part of their growth and development. Young people are mature and take responsibility for their actions. As a result, offending and risk taking behaviour no longer occurs.

Young people say they feel safe because they know the staff well and trust them. The home protects young people against potential bullying and harm by providing forums to raise concerns or complaints. There is access to external advocacy services to promote the wishes of young people. This protects their rights. Young people say, 'I feel protected from all kinds of abuse and I don't feel bullied.'

The home has effective behaviour management strategies in place that significantly reduce offending behaviour. Young people's behaviour improves because staff use verbal praise along with de-escalating techniques. Young people do not go missing and remain in contact with the home at all times, for example, if choosing to stay at friends or knowing they will be late returning home. The use of physical intervention is a rare occurrence and only used as a last resort. Young people benefit from reward incentives for positive behaviour. Young people receive sanctions in line with the behaviour management plan. Staff take responsibility in reviewing the effectiveness to ensure they are having a positive impact. As a result, incidents and damage to property have significantly reduced.

Young people are protected by a clear recruitment and vetting procedure which reduces the risk of unsuitable candidates having access to young people. Young people benefit from staff who know them well, which means they continue to receive consistent support and continuity of care.

The environment is safe and young people say they take part in regular fire drills. All staff are trained in the fire procedures and are clear about action to take in the event of fire. The home undertakes regular health and safety checks to maintain a safe environment. This means the home provides a safe place of residency.

Leadership and management

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

Young people benefit from a Registered Manager and a committed, experienced and child-centred staff team. 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 improves the delivery of service and takes action to address requirements and recommendations. As a result, the effectiveness of behaviour management and medication systems is more clear and robust.

The manager gains feedback from staff by using a quality assurance questionnaire. This information helps to shape the homes development plan and highlights the strengths and areas for improvement. This tracks and enhances performance. Regulation 33 visits take place as required and the manager undertakes the schedule 6 monitoring. As a result, young people continue to benefit from a good quality of care.

Staff are well trained and skilled in understanding the needs of young people and benefit from regular supervision, appraisal and a personal development plan. The home now benefits from a newly appointed assistant manager. This has improved staffing levels and provided the service with additional skill and knowledge to enhance service delivery.

The provider meets the aims and objectives in the Statement of Purpose. Young people, staff and the placing authority are clear about the aims and objectives and what service and facilities it provides. Young people benefit from a well maintained and resourced home.

The manager promptly notifies all significant events relating to the protection of young people to the required authorities. Staff take appropriate action following any incident. Records are stored securely and correctly and reflect young people's experiences and plans for the future.

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.