

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Susan Mullin / Jo Stephenson
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Provision subtype	Children's home

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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 home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is privately owned and the organisation operates other children's homes in the area.

Overall effectiveness

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

Outcomes for young people are good. In relation to their starting point, young people make good progress in education and have opportunities to engage in a variety of activities. Equality and diversity is intrinsic in everyday practice and feedback from professionals and young people is positive. The home is well managed by a pro-active manager and good relationships have developed between staff and young people, with mutual respect evident. The staff group are knowledgeable about the young people in their care.

Young people say that they feel safe in the home and know that staff are concerned about their welfare. The home continues to provide personalised, well-planned care to all the young people in the home. Young people report that they have input into the daily running of the home.

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
12A (2001)	must in co-operation with the young person's placing authority, agree and sign the plan for each child's placement, prepared in accordance with the provisions in regulation 9 of the Care Planning Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010. (Regulation 12A (1))	31/12/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure children are given opportunities to communicate their views on all aspects of their care and support. (NMS 1.3)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make good progress in developing a positive self-view and knowledge and understanding of their background. They benefit from high levels of support that allows them to prosper educationally and socially. Staff are enthusiastic and support young people in promoting links with the wider community. Individual activities form part of evening and weekend routines for young people, as well as group activities and young people feel able to achieve their personal goals.

Staff are effective in identifying the individual needs of young people and these are reflected in their placement plans, transition plans, and behaviour strategies. Young people said that they understand the plans that are in place to assist their development but do not feel that they have been consulted in all aspects of their care.

Young people are achieving good educational outcomes based on their starting point and all young people are in full time education. Staff are proactive in securing suitable and sustainable educational placements and as a result, young people are enthusiastic about their learning, skills development and achieving their ambitions. School attendance levels are high and staff support young people to engage positively in their education.

Young people have detailed health plans, which ensure that their individual health needs are assessed and met. Staff support young people to attend all their health appointments and the home has fostered excellent links with more specialised services. As a result, young people receive specialist interventions, which support their emotional and complex needs and feel able to engage with these services. Staff support and encourage young people to develop an understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and they benefit from individual key work sessions in this area.

Young people profit from appropriate contact with their family, friends, and other people who are important to them and staff support this contact through partnership working with the placing authorities. Where contact is restricted, young people understand why this is the case and staff encourage them to express their thoughts during key work sessions. Parents report that they feel involved in the care provided for young people and that their needs are met.

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy good relationships with staff, which enables them to engage positively and confidently and feel supported. Staff are skilled in their knowledge and understanding of the diverse needs of individuals and young people benefit from a motivated and enthusiastic staff team. Young people have developed appropriate relationships with each other and this contributes to the homely feel of the setting.

Young people are confident in participating in their meetings; state that issues raised are addressed and that staff listen to them. Staff seek young people's views about the running of the home including menu and activity planning, and they are provided with timely feedback when they raise issues or concerns. As a result, young people feel they are involved in the day-to-day running of the home.

The home promotes a complaints procedure, which the young people say they are aware of and understand how to use. The young person's guide to the home details information on children's rights and advocacy services. Complaints are taken seriously and dealt with promptly. This results in young people developing emotional resilience and feelings of self-worth.

Young people have detailed placement plans and behaviour strategies in place that staff review on a regular basis, although young people and social workers have not signed these internal plans. They contain little evidence of consultation with young people although key work sessions demonstrate this occurs. In one case, the local authority placement plan was not on file, limiting staff knowledge and understanding of the aims and objectives of the placement. As a result, young people with complex care needs do not receive a cohesive care package. However, staff work hard at engaging young people to ensure they receive the right support and guidance, which promotes improved outcomes for young people.

The home has clear policies and procedures on promoting a healthy life style. Young people benefit from good links between the home and health professionals that ensure a holistic approach to their care and staff are imaginative when considering additional health services. As a result, young people are provided with effective guidance and support when they most need it. Medication is stored safely and administered correctly. Staff support young people to attend their health appointments and demonstrate a detailed knowledge of the health needs of individuals. Young people understand the importance of regular exercise and a healthy diet and contribute to weekly food menus. Menus demonstrate the promotion of meals from other countries. Young people are involved in the budgeting, shopping and cooking of their meals, based on individual need, which subsequently supports the development of independence.

Staff are committed to promoting educational achievements for young people and support their school attendance through effective working relationships with schools. Staff are professional and effective in challenging barriers to young people accessing education. As a result young people benefit from consistent engagement, which

enhances their skills and educational development and they are making good progress. Young people state that staff support them to identify their ambitions and work towards achieving these. Placement plans identify the support that young people require in relation to their educational needs. The home does not have a computer for the young people and this has been raised as an issue in young people's meetings. The Registered Manager said that this has been identified with head office for consideration and this is evidenced in meeting minutes.

Young people are provided with a range of activities that enhance learning opportunities and develop independence skills and self-confidence. Staff provide individual plans for young people that reflect their interests and supports their aspirations. The home also encourages group activities for young people, within the community such as participation in a local youth club, which subsequently supports them in building sustainable relationships with others.

Equality and diversity are established within the culture and ethos of the home and staff spoke positively of the 'valuing diversity' training course they had completed. As a result, young people feel respected and confident. Staff recognise individual needs and consequently internal placement plans and key work sessions reflect the personal identity and cultural background of young people.

The home is decorated and furnished to a high standard, which subsequently creates a homely environment. Maintenance repairs are addressed promptly with minimal impact on the young people. Bedrooms are individually accessorised to reflect the personal tastes of the young people but they report that they are not permitted to keep recently painted colourful walls, and that these must be returned to a more neutral colour. Young people confirmed that their privacy and dignity is promoted and all bedroom and bathroom facilities have suitable locks.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Systems are in place to promote the safety and well-being of young people. Staff are provided with information about safeguarding during their period of induction and further training is provided as part of mandatory training. This ensures that they have current knowledge to promote the safety and well-being of young people.

Staff provide good individualised care and support young people to behave in a socially acceptable manner. This means that young people are highly valued and consistently involved in their own behaviour plans and measures of controls. This enables young people to develop an understanding and take responsibility for improvements in their behaviour. When incidents have occurred, these are accurately recorded and signed by the young person.

The home has clear practices and procedures regarding what to do if a young person is missing from the home. Individual risk assessments also underpin the procedures to follow and these are known and understood by staff. This is supported by a social

services and police service jointly agreed protocol.

Health and safety audits are carried out regularly and the home has an up-to-date fire safety risk assessment. Fire safety measures are in place including regular equipment checks and fire drills are undertaken by all staff and young people. Appropriate arrangements are also in place to ensure that staff recruited to work with young people are suitable and safe. These measures ensure that the safety and well-being of young people is promoted.

Leadership and management

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

Young people benefit from a well-managed home where they receive a good level of care. The manager takes into account young people's individuality, personal attributes and difficulties. The staff team is diverse and sufficient in number on individual shifts to meet the assessed needs of young people in placement. They are also well respected and liked by the young people. The staff team feel the current arrangements offer all the support and guidance they need and describe the management as being supportive and approachable.

Staff receive good training opportunities which are provided on an ongoing rolling programme, available company wide but monitored within the home. All mandatory training is up to date. The team are well supported by the manager through the supervision process, which ensures all staff are fully trained and competent to meet the needs of the young people in their care. A written compliment from a social worker describing the care a young person was receiving by the staff said, 'I cannot begin to express my thanks to the staff, the young person has thrived in this placement and really turned a corner. The level of care is outstanding and I would definitely recommend this home to colleagues.' There was also a thank you card from a young person which said 'thank you for looking after me, for cleaning and cooking and being there for me, I will never forget any of you, I couldn't even if I wanted to. You all proved there was light at the end of the tunnel.'

The home's Statement of Purpose has recently been updated to reflect the current operation of the service. A young person's guide is given to young people when they move in, which provides them with useful information about the day-to-day operation of the home. The aims and objectives set out what the home aims to achieve for each child placed and the ethos promotes equality and diversity for all looked after children.

The home is monitored through management checks and checks by an external representative of the company. Monitoring visits occur monthly as required under the regulations and there are systems in place to identify and address any shortfalls. This enables the management to be reflective of practice and continually evaluate the service provided. Young people's case files include all the required information and are stored securely to protect privacy.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.