

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Pete Hylton
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This privately operated children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to two young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

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 **good**.

Young people benefit from highly individualised care delivered by a competent and well-trained staff team. Young people's needs, wishes and feelings underpin how the home is run. Their views are sought and acted upon. Young people have positive views about the home and positive relationships with the staff.

Young people make adequate progress at the home. They make good progress in developing their confidence, independence skills and emotional security. However, educational attendance is often sporadic and this impacts on the progress that young people make.

The safety of young people is appropriately promoted. The environment is safe and regularly checked for defects. However, fire drills are not practised in evening times. Therefore, the ability of young people and staff to evacuate at these times is untested.

The Registered Manager ensures that the home is regularly audited and any defects or concerns swiftly acted upon. The staff team are appropriately trained and supervised. Regular visits from the organisation ensure the home is monitored. The manager's own monitoring is similarly effective. However, the Registered Manager's reports have not regularly been sent to Ofsted. Three recommendations have been made as a result of this inspection.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure that where any sanctions, disciplinary measures or restraint are used, children are encouraged to have their views recorded in the records kept by the home (NMS 3.18)
- ensure that children are supported to attend school, college or alternative provision regularly (NMS 8.3)
- ensure that reports made under Regulation 34 are completed at six monthly intervals and a copy of every report is sent to HMCI within 28 days of completion. (Volume 5 Statutory Guidance paragraph 3.14)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **adequate**.

Young people maintain positive relationships with their families and friends. As a result, young people benefit from meaningful emotional attachments and this contributes to their overall emotional security and resilience. Young people enjoy spending time in the local community with their friends and enjoy accessing a range of age-appropriate activities. For example, a local skate park is regularly visited and young people enjoy accessing local facilities.

All young people have appropriate educational placements. However, attendance is sometimes inconsistent. As a result, the educational progress of young people is not always in line with their abilities. This results in young people experiencing poorer outcomes as they are not attending educational opportunities. Young people are aware of the importance of receiving education but sometimes choose not to attend.

Young people develop appropriate self-care skills and take pride in their personal appearance. Young people are secure in their personal identity and are take pride in their developing independence. For example, young people are supported with budgeting, planning and preparing meals in the home. Domestic chores are also completed and young people take an interest in maintaining their own possessions and learning about routine domestic maintenance tasks. For example, young people help staff with changing light bulbs and checking the home's vehicle prior to making journeys. This enables young people to develop skills that will equip them for adulthood.

Young people know that they are valued as individuals and that their personal preferences are central to their care. Their views influence the running of the home and this promotes young people's dignity and sense of self-worth. Young people personalise their bedrooms and areas of the home. As a result, they develop a sense of belonging and attachment. Young people feel respected and treated as young adults. They speak to staff about issues that are affecting them and are able to

discuss their feelings. Furthermore, young people are able to discuss their emotions with appropriate professionals. This ensures that their emotional and mental health is promoted at all times.

Quality of care

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

The quality of care given to young people is good. The individual needs of young people are identified and met. Where concerns arise, they are appropriately discussed. However, there are some inconsistencies with regards to promoting educational attendance and these impact on the outcomes for young people.

Complaints from young people are rare and where they do occur, are appropriately managed and resolved. The young person's guide includes all required details and explains how young people can raise their concerns. This ensures that young people are empowered to express any worries that they may have. This is further underpinned through regular key work sessions. These sessions focus on the views, opinions and ideas that young people wish to discuss. Regular young people meetings discuss wider issues in the home. These include: activity choices, menus and ideas for redecoration. This ensures that young people have a voice in the home and that they know that their views are listened to and acted upon.

Care plans for young people are highly individualised and ensure that all identified needs are addressed. Regular reviews ensure that the care given to young people is appropriate and any concerns are appropriately shared with parents and placing authorities. Detailed records are made of young people's progress and this informs future planning. For example, where young people have developed skills in independence, additional aims and objectives are discussed with the young person and the placing authority. This ensures that young people are encouraged to develop their skills and recognise their achievements. A therapist commented 'the staff team encourage young people to reflect on behaviours and identify goals and targets.'

Meals given to young people are balanced, varied and reflect the individual tastes and preferences of young people. The health needs of young people are promoted and the staff team support young people in attending their medical appointments. Where young people choose to smoke, the staff team support young people in attending smoking cessation services and provide advice about healthy lifestyles. Medication is safely administered and appropriately stored. Detailed records of medication ensure that there are no errors in administration or recording.

The staff team ensure that young people are provided with activities relevant to their interests. For example, where young people are interested in outside pursuits, staff with similar interests share their experiences and knowledge. This results in young people developing their own interests and forming appropriate relationships with staff around their mutual interests.

The Registered Manager has established clear expectations and boundaries regarding

educational attendance for young people. Where young people refuse to attend school or other provision, the staff try to engage young people and promote the benefits of educational attendance and achievement. However, this approach is not always consistently applied by the staff team. As a result, young people are sometimes missing education sessions and this affects their progress.

The home is well decorated and appropriately furnished. Young people feel at home and are able to personalise areas of the home. This ensures that young people feel that they belong in the home. The home is situated in spacious grounds and there is ample space for outdoor activities such as mountain biking, trampoline, football and playing outside.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are safe at the home. The staff team are vigilant to the risks that young people pose and ensure that all areas of the home are safely maintained. There have been no restraints since the last inspection. The recording system is appropriate and ensures that all required detail can be recorded if needed. The behaviour of young people is well managed in the home. Sanctions are rarely given and where used, are fair and proportionate. Positive behaviour is recognised and rewarded. This ensures that young people are encouraged to display socially acceptable behaviours. Furthermore, the views of young people are explored and recorded. This ensures that the Registered Manager is able to evaluate the effectiveness of behaviour management in the home.

The home is safely maintained. All required checks are in place and any defects affecting health and safety are swiftly and appropriately resolved. This ensures that young people live in a safe environment. Since the last inspection, additional fire fighting equipment has been obtained and the required improvements have also been made. This ensures that the risk of fire is now more appropriately managed. Regular fire drills ensure that young people know how to safely evacuate the home in the event of fire. However, the home does not regularly practice fire drills in evening times. As a result, the ability of young people and staff to safely evacuate the home is not fully tested at different times of the day.

Young people's care plans clearly define all risks and vulnerabilities. Behaviour management plans are clear and provide staff with guidance on how to manage challenging behaviour. As a result, staff are vigilant and ensure that young people are safe at all times. Young people do not go missing from the home and clear protocols are in place should this occur. Regular informal visits from the local police ensure that young people are able to build purposeful and trusting relationships with these services.

Leadership and management

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

This home was last inspected in February 2013 and was judged to be making inadequate progress. The Registered Manager has ensured that all required actions have taken place since the last inspection. As a result, the home has demonstrated improvement and the safety of young people is now better promoted.

There have been no serious incidents since the last inspection. The Registered Manager has systems in place to ensure all staff know when and how to refer concerns to the appropriate bodies. All staff are appropriately trained in safeguarding and are aware of their responsibilities in this area. This results in an environment where the safety of young people is promoted at all times. The staff team are vigilant to the risks and vulnerabilities of young people.

The Registered Manager leads a committed and enthusiastic staff team. Staff are well supported and are able to discuss their concerns with the management of the home. Regular supervision ensures that staff are able to formally discuss the progress of young people and their ideas for improvement. The staff team are regularly appraised and any training needs identified and met. The staff team are competent, knowledgeable and appropriately skilled. The Registered Manager commented, 'we have a cohesive staff team who regularly demonstrate that they want to get the best for young people.'

The home's Statement of Purpose is comprehensive, up-to-date and explains the aims and objectives of the home. This ensures that young people, parents and placing authorities are able to review the home's services and facilities. All required policies are in place at the home. The Registered Manager regularly reviews the performance of the home. The use of statistical data, drawn from analysis of young people's progress, enables the Registered Manager to identify patterns and trends. Where concerns are identified, swift action is taken to implement changes and make improvements. This results in a home that is well managed and able to identify areas for improvement. The home's development plan is regularly reviewed and updated where necessary. The Registered Manager has made improvements since the last inspection; areas of the home have been redecorated and the recording of young people's progress has improved.

The home is regularly visited by the organisation in line with the children's home regulations 2001. These visits ensure that any defects are identified and the views of young people, parents and placing authorities are explored. The manager's own monitoring reports are similarly completed and ensure that the home is regularly audited. However, the manager's reports have not been regularly sent to Ofsted. There is no demonstrable impact of the outcomes for young people.

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.