

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Denise Perry
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This is a privately owned children's home that provides care for up to two young people, of either gender. The home provides care for young people with emotional and/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 **outstanding**.

The home is providing an excellent standard of personalised, well-planned care to young people. Staff provide a high level of care in a supportive environment that enables young people to make sustainable and meaningful progress. Staff are proactive and have in-depth knowledge of young people's individual needs and cultural backgrounds. This is reflected in individualised care planning and daily living. This attention to detail practically assists young people to greatly improve their self-confidence, emotional resilience, social and personal skills. As a result, young people are making exceptional progress across all aspects of their welfare and development.

Young people talk extremely positively about staff and share meaningful and sustainable relationships with them. Staff create an atmosphere of openness and honesty whereby young people feel confident to share their views and feelings. This contributes to young people's sense of security and safety.

Strong and dynamic management ensures a good quality of care and outstanding outcomes for young people. The home demonstrates its ongoing capacity for continuous improvement. Comprehensive, informative and rigorous monitoring systems confirm the quality of care underpinning a firm focus on maintaining and maximising positive outcomes for young people. There is an identified area of improvement relating to the home's recruitment records. However, this currently has no negative impact on young people's safety.

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 home's record of recruitment and vetting checks includes telephone enquiries being made following written references. (NMS 16.1)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people do not engage in risk-taking behaviours and make substantial progress in all aspects of their lives. The staff team has high aspirations for young people and provide incentives, motivation and encouragement. Consequently, young people develop a greater understanding of sociably-acceptable behaviour and respond well to the consistent and effective boundaries in place.

Young people have exceptionally good attendance at school and their achievements are recognised and celebrated by staff. There are specific, individualised arrangements and high levels of support provided to suit young people's educational needs and learning disabilities. Young people enjoy going to school and partake enthusiastically in their educational programmes. They are on track to achieve set targets. All this represents extensive progress, given their starting points at the time of placement.

Young people make significant progress to develop a positive self-view, emotional resilience and knowledge and understanding of their background. They are assisted to understand their cultural and family background through highly-personalised placement plans and detailed risk assessments. Consequently, family relationships and contact arrangements have significantly improved. In particular, some young people are able to have planned unsupervised overnight stays with their families. This ensures young people benefit from appropriate contact with family, friends and other people who are important to them.

Young people are effectively supported in developing their independent life skills, such as laundry, cooking, shopping and general household tasks. They recognise the importance of building on their skills to prepare themselves for a successful transition to adulthood. High priority is given to support young people with sensitive tasks, such as personal hygiene routines. Young people have made immense progress in this area and have flourished; they take pride in their appearance and their self-confidence and self-esteem have improved markedly.

Young people make a positive and successful contribution to their home and the wider community. They have formed and sustained meaningful attachments with the people who care for them. Young people are extremely confident and at ease in the company of staff. They share their feelings and views openly with staff about personal matters that are important to them. This includes discussions on reproduction, puberty, relationships, sexual orientation, staying safe and personal

identity. Young people clearly benefit from the stable and committed staff team. A young person said, 'I love my key worker, he's great and I can talk to him about anything.'

Quality of care

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

Staff work effectively with external agencies and professionals to secure positive outcomes for young people, including health and education. This ensures young people's individual needs are identified and appropriate support is provided. Staff encourage young people to access medical treatment in order to promote their health. They explain why specific medical advice or treatment is required and discuss the short- and long-term benefits involved. As a result, young people are taking small but significant steps to access professional advice from health services, such as dentists, doctors, and clinical therapeutic psychologists.

The supportive staff team is warm and caring towards young people. They ensure young people access a range of purposeful and enjoyable activities in the community, such as youth clubs, cadets and voluntary work. Staff recognise the particular vulnerabilities of the young people that they look after and this is reflected through considered and creative daily working practice. This allows young people to meet with other young people in the community within the constraints of their individualised risk assessments. As a result, young people are allowed to take proportionate risks as part of their growth and development.

Equality and diversity matters are clearly identified in care planning and positively addressed in daily living. Young people's first language is recognised and promoted within the home. For example, staff have learnt basic Welsh words and displayed words and symbols throughout the home depicting young people's language. Young people also have access to Welsh-speaking advocates to ensure they have the opportunity to speak their first language with independent people. The young person's guide is provided to young people, but this is written in the English language. This has limited young people's access to written information about their home and their rights in their first language.

Young people say that they are able to share their views through daily discussions with staff, key working sessions and young people's meetings. They are fully involved in their highly-individualised placement plans and they are encouraged to write and review the progress of their plans with allocated keyworkers. Staff are genuinely interested in young people's views and wishes and, where appropriate, take action. For example, staff have arranged to take young people to visit their places of origin and locations relevant to their history. This means that young people's views and feelings are always considered and they feel valued. Placing social workers also report that staff are very good at involving young people in all aspects of their care and development.

The home is appropriately located, designed and maintained to an excellent

standard. This ensures that the physical environment meets young people's needs. Young people's rooms are personalised, decorated and furnished in a way that is comfortable for them, so that they feel valued and safe. Young people are confident in welcoming and talking with visitors appropriately.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people do not engage in risk-taking behaviours and are protected and kept safe from harm. The home has extensive safeguarding policies and procedures in place and staff are knowledgeable and competent in their professional practice. Staff regularly review and update young people's risk assessments which are clear and accurately recorded. Staff's proactive and creative safeguarding practice has enabled young people to take proportionate risks as part of their growth and development. This has secured young people's well-being and provided them with a strong sense of security and safety.

The staff team encourage open discussion with young people around a variety of topics, such as sexuality and appropriate touching. This ensures young people are given the opportunity to safely explore these issues and develop an understanding of acceptable behaviours. Staff follow individualised behaviour management plans diligently. They focus on promoting young people's positive behaviours through mutually-agreed reward systems and by implementing consistent and fair boundaries. Young people are highly valued and consistently involved in their plans. As a result, young people learn to self-regulate their emotions, and to take control of their behaviours leading to significantly improved outcomes.

All staff are rigorously selected and checked through the organisation's recruitment procedures. The home maintains a record of the checks but this provides insufficient detail on written references being followed up by telephone enquiries. However, the checks themselves and the recruitment process remain robust and so this shortfall has no negative impact on young people's safety.

The home is physically safe and appropriately secure, taking into account the needs and characteristics of the young people cared for. Staff pay excellent attention to health and safety management. They use comprehensive risk assessments around the home and in the local community. Young people have regular opportunities to participate in fire evacuation drills during the day and night. All safety checks are up to date and high-quality environmental risk assessments promote young people's safety.

Leadership and management

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

At the time of the inspection the Registered Manager was in post with a permanent

manager appointed to take over the running of the home. The manager is in the process of applying for the post of Registered Manager and is aware of the appropriate timescales. The transition of managers has been meticulously planned and allowed the manager to work alongside the Registered Manager. This arrangement has ensured continuity of care for young people and enabled them to develop trusting relationships with the new manager. In addition, this has enabled the manager to make an instant contribution to the quality of care and outcomes for young people. For example, the manager has implemented staff development plans which clearly identify strengths and weaknesses, with action plans to secure ongoing development and secure improvements.

The home meets the aims and objectives of its Statement of Purpose and young people, staff and placing authorities are clear about the support the home provides. The Registered Manager and staff are committed to improving outcomes for young people and delivering an excellent service tailored to the needs of individual young people. This is demonstrated by the significant progress young people make in their lives.

There are rigorous systems in place to monitor the quality of care which include monthly visits by a designated person. Regulation 33 monitoring is embraced by the manager and is an effective aid for securing improvement of the home. Senior staff complete specific monitoring tasks and the manager oversees these. This empowers staff to take ownership and be involved in the development of the home. Staff are highly competent and understand the home's systems, policies and procedures. They maintain clear and comprehensive records that are stored securely. Case file records are highly detailed, reviewed regularly and contribute to a full understanding of young people's backgrounds, experiences, progress and future plans. Consequently, young people benefit from working with a knowledgeable and dedicated staff team.

There were no requirements or recommendations made at the previous inspection. The Registered Manager is resourceful and plans ahead to ensure staff are deployed effectively. All existing and experienced staff hold relevant qualifications and new staff have commenced the Children and Young People's Workforce Diploma at level 3. All staff complete mandatory training that enhances their capabilities and supports them in their roles. In addition, the Registered Manager identifies supplementary training that reflects the more specific needs of young people. As a result, the team's skills and abilities comprehensively match the needs of young people living in the home. This contributes to young people's quality of care and they benefit from a dependable, committed and well-trained staff team. The management team strives to further improve on quality of care. For example, they have requested that the young person's guide be made available in Welsh, as well English. This will afford young people's access to information in their first language.

The home's physical environment is maintained to an excellent standard and the maintenance programme ensures required action is taken to address any work needed. This ensures that the environment is physically safe and that the security reflects the individual characteristics of the 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* (March 2011) and the evaluation schedule for children's homes.