

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Trevor Hall
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This is a small private children's home catering for one young person aged from 12 to 17 years who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The layout of the home allows staff to quickly adjust the environment and the care being provided to respond to and meet the needs of the young people being accommodated.

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**.

Young people experience good care because staff provide consistency, stability and a safe nurturing environment. As a result, young people experience personal growth. The home works hard to ensure young people receive effective healthcare, assessment, treatment and support that reflect their particular needs.

The home is particularly resourceful in managing a clear framework for behaviour while celebrating and encouraging appropriate individuality. Young people's behaviour, health, education, social and safeguarding needs are effectively supported. Highly personalised placement plans effectively capture all these aspects of young people's care. Priority is given to helping young people develop their sense of self-worth and to help them to maximise their educational and personal development. Young people's diverse needs are met because they are supported by an experienced and well-trained staff team.

Safeguarding young people's welfare is placed at the highest priority in terms of both the health and safety of the environment and promoting their physical and mental well-being. Effective internal and external monitoring processes provide continuous quality assurance which helps to maintain the home's good standard of care and assists in promoting the ongoing improvement of the service.

The trusting and sincere relationships observed between young people and staff are based on mutual respect and honesty. Young people receive good ongoing care and support from a care team that are dedicated, hard working and committed to achieving the best possible outcomes for them. The home has an energetic,

motivated and well-qualified manager, who leads by example and is ambitious to achieve the best possible outcomes for the young people in her care. The service demonstrates the capacity to improve because the Registered Manager is continually evaluating the standards of care and support being delivered. The Registered Manager uses a range of information to help determine the quality of care being provided and the impact this is having on young people's lives. As a result of this monitoring, there is a development plan in place detailing areas for improvement and change.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure a clear written policy on managing behaviour is available, which includes supporting positive behaviour and that all staff understand and apply this at all times (this refers to providing greater detail and clarity in physical intervention recording) (NMS 3.3).

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people clearly benefit from the security and structure that exists within this home. These boundaries are consistent and help to give young people a feeling of security without denying them their individuality. They enjoy positive relationships with the staff group, based upon mutual respect and positive regard; this helps them to improve their self-image and build up their emotional resilience.

Young people are provided with a nurturing and safe environment where they can make good progress in relation to their individual starting point. Staff work consistently to address young people's individual needs and to promote their physical and emotional well-being. Young people are successfully encouraged to express their feelings and emotions. The home promotes a positive ethos that fully embraces diversity and difference; as a result, young people learn to appreciate the significance of differing values and cultures and to have respect for other people. This ethos also promotes positive behaviours, assists young people to understand the consequences of their actions, and encourages alternative and more acceptable responses.

Staff clearly identify, support and address young people's health issues. Individual needs are included in placement plans that are updated when health needs have been met, or when new issues are identified. This helps the staff team monitor young people's emotional and physical well-being and ensures continuing good health and development. Young people enjoy a healthy lifestyle, take regular exercise and choose to eat healthy food options. New and different food options are

regularly introduced to the home's menu to expand young people's food experience, nutritional knowledge and confidence.

Young people's attendance and educational attainment continue to improve, which has done much to improve their poor self-image and build up their emotional resilience. Staff maximise every opportunity to help young people engage in education. This supportive approach enables young people to build their knowledge and skills. It also helps them to develop the values and skills they need to help them stay fully engaged in their education.

Young people enjoy a good range of activities both in the home and out in the community. This gives young people opportunities to develop their social skills and increased interactions with peers and the wider community.

The service works in partnership with families and significant others to ensure young people can maintain helpful and close relationships with important people in their lives. Particular attention is given to planning and organising family contact and staff listen to young people and family members in order to achieve arrangements that are appropriate and safe.

The staff team are committed to providing young people with individualised support, focused on their personal development and individual circumstances. Staff prioritise the work they do with young people in terms of life skills and future plans. Young people benefit from a pragmatic approach, which fully involves them in day-to-day routines that help them learn about personal responsibility and growing independence.

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy good relationships with staff, based on honesty and mutual respect, which enables them to form meaningful and sustainable attachments. Young people, in line with their identified needs, benefit from individualised programmes of support provided by both the staff in the home and independent specialists, such as clinical psychologists and members of the local child and adolescent mental health services team. Young people are encouraged to develop skills, identified in their care and placement plans, which are linked to their individual abilities. Staff display very good communication skills and young people feel listened to and actively involved in their care.

Young people's care needs are agreed and comprehensively recorded. Regular review of these plans by the manager in partnership with young people, placing social workers, the staff team and parents, ensures that they are up to date and relevant. Young people assist in creating detailed written reports for these meetings. These help to inform the meetings and to facilitate good information sharing about progress made and future needs. Plans of care are reviewed regularly to ensure young people's complex and diverse needs are being met. Changes to young

people's needs and risks are highlighted and discussed during team meetings to ensure everyone is informed about current circumstances. Placing social workers and parents are positive about how the home is operating and how staff look after each young person.

Young people live in a healthy environment. Comprehensive health plans identify individual needs and detail the services provided to meet them. Care files contain comprehensive health information and details of the child's General Practitioner, dentist and optician. Staff support and encourage young people to access external health professionals in line with their individual needs. The records of appointments with health professionals are comprehensive, ensuring the physical, emotional and mental health needs of young people are met.

Care planning and risk assessment are good, which ensures that staff have good up-to-date information about the young people in their care. The staff group provides the right balance between nurturing and enabling young people to develop appropriate self-reliance. Young people have their individual cultural, religious, language and racial needs affectively identified and addressed. They have regular meetings with their key worker to discuss progress and any issues of concern.

Young people attend education regularly and achieve well whilst there. The management and staff promote appropriate pride in a high level of attendance and attainment, recognising the difficulties the young people have experienced in sustaining education placements prior to living at the home. Staff are committed to supporting the young people's education and liaise regularly with school to ensure that positive outcomes are achieved. Young people are actively encouraged to pursue their own particular interests, or to try new activities. This increases their experiences and helps them to develop confidence in their social skills and abilities. All parts of the home are decorated to a high standard. Young people have good quality furniture in their bedrooms and ample storage for personal clothes and belongings. The home enjoys good links to local facilities and is within easy reach of good transport links, however, the home has a vehicle, which means that young people have convenient transport for activities, shopping and contact visits with family. The Registered Manager monitors the home's environment to ensure it is safe for everyone to live and work in. In addition, the Registered Manager keeps track of maintenance requests and has a programme of planned improvements to the layout, fixtures and fittings.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people feel safe in the home and with the staff who look after them. Good systems and safety procedures promote and ensure the young people are safe. Vigilant and knowledgeable staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and know to whom they should report concerns. Robust policies, procedures and regular safeguarding training underpin staff practice. The Registered Manager is the designated person with responsibility for managing safeguarding concerns and

effectively fulfils this role in practice. The Registered Manager liaises with the Local Authority Designated Officer when necessary and acts in accordance with organisational and local safeguarding procedures to ensure everyone is safe.

Staff promote and encourage a culture of positive behaviour between everyone in the home. Staff support young people to take responsibility for their actions. Staff work hard, guided by other relevant professionals, to enable young people to moderate and improve their behaviour. Formal measures such as sanctions are seldom used and physical interventions are reducing in number. Records of physical interventions are not always specific as to why staff, feel that such an intervention is justified, rather than using generic terms, such as 'staff safety'. There is an emphasis on recognising and rewarding positive behaviours, rather than purely punishing those behaviours identified as being unacceptable. This enables young people to develop more socially acceptable behaviour and better prepares them to interact more positively with the wider community. Young people understand that the boundaries in place are there to ensure their safety. They are invited to sign all records relating to the use of sanctions, which helps them develop understanding and responsibility.

Staff receive regular and wide-ranging training in safeguarding. As a result, they demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the action they should take should they have any concerns about a young person's safety or well-being. Effective working with external partners, such as the Local Authority Designated Officer, ensures the continual development of staff's knowledge and understanding of child protection. The episodes when young people are missing from care have reduced, with only two incidents having occurred since the last inspection. Clear boundaries are set and included in each young person's behaviour management plans. Staff are aware of these plans and follow them consistently.

The home has a good range of detailed policies and procedures covering aspects such as prevention of bullying, complaints, safeguarding and behaviour management. Staff know these policies well and implement them effectively. Comprehensive training with regular updates in all these areas, enables staff to protect young people from the risk of harm and abuse. The regular and effective monitoring of the home's records and staff practice contribute to ensuring that young people receive safe care in line with their individual needs.

The home's vigorous health and safety regime ensures the routine conducting of all fire precautions, drills and equipment servicing within timescales set by the relevant regulations. Good staffing levels further help to keep young people safe and reduce any risk of harm. The organisation's effective recruitment procedures ensure the careful selection recruitment and retention of staff. This ensures young people are safe and have a staff team who know them well. New staff are comprehensively vetted prior to their deployment in the home and before having unsupervised access to any young person. This ensures young people are safe and have a staff team who know them well.

Leadership and management

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

Young people benefit from living in a well-managed home. The home's Registered Manager is suitably qualified and experienced and has the support and respect of the staff team. The team communicate well with each other to ensure everyone is up-to-date with new and changing information about young people's needs and circumstances. This is done in a variety of ways, which are effective in practice such as well-structured daily handovers, through to more formal team meetings. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. There is strong, visible leadership which promotes high quality care and positive outcomes for young people. Regular supervision and appraisal meetings enable staff to reflect on their practice and relationships with young people. Good quality training enhances individual staff skills and ensures all staff have attended core or refresher training in all key practice areas.

The home has a clear accessible and comprehensive Statement of Purpose and young people's guide giving young people, their families and placing authorities comprehensive information about the services offered by the home. The children's guide contains up-to-date information that provides useful helpline numbers and contact details if needed. The financial viability of the provider is reflected in how well resourced the home is. Young people are treated with the utmost respect and dignity by staff that support them in overcoming significant and complex issues.

Clear lines of accountability in the home enable a stable and structured environment for young people. Staff duty rotas and staff deployment confirm that the home keeps sufficient staff on the duty rota at all times. The home has a very good complaints system that is clearly and effectively communicated to the young people.

Staff are provided with quality induction and further training, support and resources and therefore understand the developmental needs of young people. Staff training covers all mandatory areas such as safeguarding, behaviour management and first aid. The staff have a strong focus on promoting positive outcomes and to enhance the well-being of young people. The staff work proactively to help young people overcome barriers and to succeed. Good communication between staff ensures that young people's individual needs are met consistently. Young people take an active part in the running of the home and they are encouraged to make their views known, through discussions with staff and by attending house meetings. Staff ensure that a safe, secure and nurturing environment is maintained which assists young people to make real progress and to fulfil their individual potential.

The manager has established rigorous internal quality assurance monitoring systems. It is clear that he checks all reporting systems regularly and comments if any record fails to meet either the home's policies and procedures or national regulations. Regular internal monitoring reports are produced which help the home to develop its practice and ensure that young people are receiving the care and support they need. Regular Regulation 33 visits take place to provide additional quality assurance mechanisms and involve consulting young people wherever possible. The managers have a strong commitment to meeting young people's needs. The level of progress

young people have made despite their complex needs is a testament to the impact the managers have made to help young people aspire, irrespective of their ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or faith.

The home has comprehensive development plans for continuing improvement based upon its record of accomplishment, continual staff training and ensuring the maintenance of the physical environment to a high standard. Records are clear, up to date and stored securely, and would contribute significantly to the young people's understanding of their life in care, should they choose to access these documents. The Registered Manager notifies all significant events relating to the protection of young people accommodated in the home to the appropriate authorities and appropriate action is taken following the incident; this ensures the safety of 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.