

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 who may have emotional and/or 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**.

The home provides good outcomes and quality of care for the young people. Systems and practices reflect a clear and consistent focus on the needs and welfare of the young people and high ratios of staff provide effective care.

Care planning and day-to-day care is highly individualised and meets the individual needs of any young people in residence. Care plans and placement plans demonstrate detailed, robust and comprehensive planning for each young person's assessed needs.

Young people have good opportunities to engage with staff and they develop open and meaningful relationships with them. Young people's education is well organised, with them benefiting from the support and guidance from staff in both their attendance and their achievements.

Support through therapy and reflective practice is evident from the key working sessions in which young people engage. This results in young people gaining a much clearer understanding of their behaviour and having good opportunities to address the less positive aspects of it.

Young people gain self-confidence and self-esteem; they acquire greater insights into their history, culture and background. This enables them to make sense of their, often, disjointed history in care and empowers them to make a positive contribution to their future plans. Staff provide good alternative role models who enable young people to have the confidence to challenge pre-conceived ideals and prejudices and to work at maintaining improvement.

The safeguarding of young people is good and this includes a reduction in behaviours that may place them at risk. This is supported by good health and safety systems. Young people know what is expected of them and feel settled because of this.

The home's manager is highly motivated, effective and focused and provides outstanding leadership to a close knit and consistent staff team. This results in young people being cared for by a motivated, professional and caring staff team.

There are effective arrangements for the quality assurance monitoring of service delivery and this contributes to the high quality care that young people receive. Good records are maintained to support the work undertaken at the home.

The inspection found one partial regulatory breach, in so much as, one example was found, where the home had failed in its responsibility to inform the regulator of an event listed in Schedule 5. The incident was, however, appropriately dealt with, all other outside agencies being informed and the impact upon the care of young people was judged to be minimal. A requirement has been made, to ensure future compliance.

One recommendation for improvement has been made following this inspection. This regards ensuring that remedial work is undertaken, to make good the damage to the home's decoration, following the recent fitting of a new central heating system.

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
30 (2001)	ensure that any of the events listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 5 takes place, the registered person shall without delay notify the persons indicated in respect of the event in column 2 of the table (Reg 30(1)).	31/07/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the home provides a comfortable and homely environment and is well maintained and decorated (this refers to making good damage to decoration following fitting of new central heating system) (NMS 10.3)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

The home has a good track record for enabling young people to make good progress, when viewed from their individual starting points at admission. Young people's self-confidence is encouraged and nurtured and they are supported to explore their background, culture and ethnicity. The home promotes a positive ethos that 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 promotes positive behaviours and assists young people to understand the consequences of their actions, and encourages alternative and more acceptable responses.

Young people benefit from a staff team who provide them with individual support in order to develop confidence and a positive view of themselves. Young people often arrive at the home in crisis, struggling to cope with home life, school or a break down at another residential placement. As a result, some young people display behaviours that can be damaging to themselves and others. While living in this home young people become more confident and make progress in developing their self-esteem. This is evidenced by a significant reduction in challenging and risk taking behaviours.

Young people state that they feel safe and secure at the home. They develop supportive and nurturing relationships with staff. Consequently, they feel confident to raise any concerns they may have. Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the needs of the young people. Behaviour is well managed; staff actively promote positive behaviour by continual reassurance and praise supported by rewarding positive behaviours. This supports young people to feel valued and respected by staff which helps to increase their self-esteem and reduce any negative and harmful behaviours.

Young people are supported to maintain contact with their families, friends and significant adults in their lives. Staff recognise the importance of family contact and work closely with families to facilitate, where appropriate, increased contact or a successful return home. Young people therefore make progress in developing and sustaining relationships.

Young people demonstrate a good understanding of the importance of living a healthy lifestyle. Staff spend time with young people talking about the benefits of healthy living and the long-term effects of risk-taking and harmful behaviour. .

The manager is committed to supporting young people back into education and from the time of a young person's admission she liaises with the education professionals within the organisation to ensure an appropriate package is provided. At the time of placement young people's attendance was above 80% and their attainment was reported to be good.

Young people have the opportunity to develop their independence skills at a level that is appropriate, taking into consideration their individual needs. Staff engage young people in a range of tasks from menu planning, shopping, budgeting and cooking to keeping their rooms tidy and general chores around the house. This gradual introduction into independence prepares them well for the future.

Quality of care

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

Young people benefit from the care provided, they confirm they are happy in this home and enjoy positive and mutually respectful relationships with the staff. Social workers and other professional stakeholders report that young people do well in this environment. They receive regular updates about the progress of young people and appreciate the quality of care provided; which meets the agreed aims and objectives of the placement.

Young people have detailed individualised plans which identify their care and development needs. This holistic and comprehensive approach to care planning ensures that young people are afforded opportunities to develop the skills and the knowledge they need. Plans are regularly reviewed and are agreed by young people.

Plans and risk assessments identify triggers to difficult behaviour and detail action to support productive responses. Clear boundaries and expectations support the positive behaviour of young people; maintaining their safety and protecting dignity by avoiding, where ever possible the need for physical restraint.

Young people benefit from the support and encouragement provided to attend full time education. Staff work in partnership with the organisation's own education staff to avoid disadvantage and address any issues which may compromise attendance or attainment.

Young people know how to make a complaint and can speak to staff if they have any concerns. A young person friendly complaint form is available which is easy to complete. The young person's guide to the home contains details of several independent associations who would provide support and guidance if needed. In addition young people have contact with parents and other professionals who could advocate on their behalf.

Young people influence all aspects of the care provided. They attend and contribute to care planning and review meetings where their views and wishes are taken into account and influence the decisions made. Consultation with young people affords them opportunities to provide feedback about the service and the staff. Young people routinely choose décor for the home, food and activities.

The care provided is led by the needs of young people, making them feel valued and contributing to the success of placements. Individual support sessions provide

regular opportunities for topical discussions and the early resolution of any concerns or worries. These are also used to inform and educate young people; examples include discussions about risk taking, relationships and sexual health.

The rural location of the home is a deciding factor in choice of placement and benefits some young people, who may have a history of running away or very challenging behaviours. Personalisation of the environment by and on behalf of young people adds to their sense of belonging. Following the installation of a new central heating system décor in parts of the home is poor. Other areas continue to require refurbishment and repair including the kitchen. These areas detract from the otherwise homely environment.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people confirm that they feel and are safe in this home. They can talk to any member of staff if they have any worries or concerns. They trust staff to act in their best interest to keep them safe. The staff have a good understanding of needs and provide regular individual support to young people allowing them to express issues and discuss problems.

An understanding of the particular vulnerabilities of young people, supports the implementation of good behaviour management strategies by staff. Behaviour is managed through modelling, praise and reward. The use of punitive sanctions is unusual, however, when applied they are reasonable, fair and related to the unacceptable behaviour. This allows young people to make sense of the consequences and think about their behaviour.

The home's policies state that physical intervention by staff is a measure of last resort, which will only be used to preserve safety. The resolutions of most incidents are through the skilful application of staff support and the sensitive use of conflict resolution techniques. When physical intervention is used, staff and young people are spoken with individually by the home's manager to discuss the matter and consider how methods of behaviour and conflict could be better managed in the future. Young people use these opportunities to discuss their behaviour and how they can be helped to manage it more effectively.

The home's rural location is often a deciding factor in the placement of young people who have a history of putting themselves at risk by being missing or running away. Talking with young people and helping them understand the risk factors in this behaviour helps to significantly reduce the frequency of such incidents. There has been just one incident since the last inspection.

Safeguarding of young people is a priority and all staff receive formal training so they know what to do and who to contact in the event of a child protection issue.

Children are protected by vetting of visitors to the home and a visitors' book is

signed to keep a record of those entering the premises. The recruitment process is robust, recruitment records are maintained in the organisations central office and a summary is kept in the home. This helps to protect young people from adults who may seek to do them harm.

Regular health and safety checks take place to protect young people. A fire risk assessment is in place as well as fire detection systems. Young people and staff practice evacuations so that they know what to do in an emergency.

Leadership and management

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

The Register Manager is highly competent, very experienced and suitably qualified. She is an excellent leader who consistently promotes high expectations for the provision of good child-care practice. As a result, staff clearly demonstrate a strong commitment to delivering good child-care practice that is tailored to the individual and personal needs of the young people they look after. The effectiveness of their approach is evident in the clear progress young people make.

Young people are looked after by very competent and well supported staff. They provide young people with a high level of consistency and an exceptional quality of care. They are enthusiastic and caring and work well together to promote young people's welfare. The skills within the staff team match young people's needs exceptionally well. The numbers of staff on duty are sufficient to meet the needs of young people in the best possible way. This includes the support they need for activities, visits and attending appointments.

Staff are suitably qualified and receive high-quality training to develop individual skills and knowledge relevant to the young people they are caring for. Staff are effectively supported and guided through consistent professional supervision. Team meetings take place every month which allow the whole staff team to discuss the running of the home; to look at ways to improve the service they offer and to reflect on young people's progress and how best to support them.

The home meets nearly all of the requirements of regulations and meets or exceeds most of the national minimum standards. It shows a strong capacity for continued improvement based on its performance in the development of positive outcomes for young people over a short period of time. The manager has a realistic understanding of the strengths of the service and the areas for further development based on evidence.

The provider and manager use strong quality assurance practices to monitor the running of the home, including consultation with young people and take action to improve their outcomes. Any weaknesses are promptly addressed.

Generally significant events relating to the protection of children accommodated in the home are notified by the registered person to the appropriate authorities, and

appropriate action is taken following these incidents. However, on at least one occasion a referral has been made to the local safeguarding board following a young person's complaint and a strategy meeting has been convened without this being reported to the regulator as required by Regulations.

Young people's written records are securely stored and provide a clear and detailed picture of young people's progress and experiences. The records generally provide a narrative for young people's daily lives, observations about young people's mood and behaviour, and analysis of the day's events.

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.