

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Susan Mullin
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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 small children's home is registered to provide care for up to two young people of either gender, aged between 10 and 17 years.

Overall effectiveness

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

Young people benefit from thorough individual assessments and comprehensive behaviour management plans. Young people make good progress in education and enjoy varied opportunities to engage in hobbies and activities. As a result, young people improve their social skills and increase in confidence. Young people are encouraged to have a say in the running of the home, so that they get a real sense of belonging.

Young people are kept safe and staff demonstrate a good understanding of safe working practices to meet young people's needs. The staff team creates a responsive and nurturing environment, building mutually respectful relations with young people. The team are resilient and display commitment to offering a high standard of care. Equality and diversity is intrinsic in everyday practice.

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make good progress with their educational attainment from their starting points in the home. Young people benefit from routines which enable them to make the most of educational opportunities and be prepared for the school day.

Young people engage in a wide and varied range of activities and outings which increases their confidence, self-esteem and they say it makes them feel better about themselves. Emotional resilience and a positive self view, is further enhanced through a good understanding of their backgrounds and why they are living in a care home. Where appropriate there is supported contact with family members and friends. The home also provides safe access to electronic forms of communication. This enables young people to sustain important relationships that are meaningful to them.

Young people are encouraged to eat healthily and are registered with local health services. Where there is some reluctance, staff are persistent in getting young people to routine health checks. Specialist services provided in the home environment, support young people's emotional well-being and development which enables young people to start to make sense of their experiences and feelings.

Young people are supported to develop their practical skills to help prepare them for adult life. They are encouraged to do their own laundry, take care of their own rooms and maintain good personal hygiene. There is also a focus on improving their social skills in the key working sessions that are undertaken regularly. This preparation will help young people feel more confident about moving on into independent living.

Quality of care

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

Relationships between staff and young people are generally good. Staff strive to develop positive relationships with young people. The team understand the importance of creating consistent and meaningful relationships based upon trust. This enables them to engage young people and promote positive behaviour. Young people are encouraged to have a say in how the home operates and house meetings are held regularly. Young people also know how to make a complaint if they are unhappy about something. No complaints have been made since the last inspection.

Young people are provided with pocket money and have a clothes allowance and they are able to buy the clothes and toiletries that they want and in keeping with a modern fashionable trend. This helps young people to develop a clear and unique identity.

Young people benefit from comprehensive care plans that include behaviour management strategies and detailed risk assessments. Plans are frequently updated in line with changing needs. Young people are actively encouraged to be involved in developing their care plan, in line with their age and capabilities. Each young person's care is monitored by a key worker and effective contributions are made to statutory care reviews. Staff will support young people to put forward their views, attend these meetings or will advocate on their behalf. This helps ensure young people's views are heard and taken into account when amending individual care plans.

Staff effectively support young people's attendance and achievement at school. There is effective communication with the schools and staff make good contributions to help determine future plans and educational targets.

Young people enjoy a range of stimulating activities based on their needs, facilitated by the creative and enthusiastic approach of staff. Young people benefit from living in a homely environment that is appropriately furnished, decorated and well-maintained. The home is located in a residential area, with good public transport links. Young people have personalised bedrooms and are encouraged to put up posters and photos, which enhances their feelings of belonging.

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.

The staff engage the young people in talking through any identified concerns to develop young people's own understanding of concerns and the reasons adults are concerned. As a result young people's risk-taking behaviours reduce and they feel cared for and protected.

Young people are supported to develop socially acceptable behaviour. This is based on individual management strategies that include de-escalation, re-direction and the use of verbal prompts to help young people to self-manage their own behaviour. Physical intervention is very much seen as a last resort and only applied when there is an immediate risk of harm. All staff receive training in physical intervention and records are maintained of interventions and these are monitored by the manager. This ensures that the young people are appropriately supported in the event of a physical intervention.

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. The manager secures good multi-agency working, for example, liaising with the local community police to ensure a holistic approach to safeguarding.

Health and safety audits are carried out regularly and the home has an up-to-date fire safety risk assessment. Other fire safety measures are in place including regular equipment checks and fire drills are undertaken by all staff and young people. This ensures that the safety and well-being of young people is promoted. There have been no new staff employed since the last full inspection.

Leadership and management

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

The newly appointed manager is an effective and enthusiastic leader, who demonstrates real commitment to improving the lives of young people. Two requirements made at the last inspection have now been satisfactorily met. There is now in place the opportunity for a young person to talk to someone independent of the home, following an unauthorised absence. Secondly, young people now have a transition plan in place, which is consistent with the placing authorities' pathway plan.

The staff team are diverse in their attributes and sufficient in number to meet the needs of young people. All staff have a qualification in working with young people.

They offer stability and consistency in a nurturing environment. The team are creative and resilient in their approach to care and support individuals with differing needs well. Staff receive good training opportunities and all mandatory training is up to date. The team are well supported by the Registered Manager through regular supervision and annual appraisal.

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 home is very well monitored through management checks and checks by an external representative of the agency. Monitoring visits occur monthly as required under the regulations. There are systems in place to identify and address any shortfalls.

Sensitive information is held securely. Records are up to date and present a clear picture of young people's situations. The office is well ordered through an efficient filing system.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.