

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 caring for one young person usually aged from 12 to 17 years 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 **outstanding**.

Young people experience outstanding care because staff provide consistency, stability and a safe nurturing environment. As a result, young people achieve excellent personal growth. The home works exceptionally 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. Very effective internal and external monitoring processes provide continuous quality assurance which helps to maintain the home's outstanding standard of care and assists in promoting the ongoing improvement of the service.

The excellent, trusting and sincere relationships observed between young people and staff are based on mutual respect and honesty. Young people receive excellent ongoing care and support from a care team that are dedicated, hardworking 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.

Rigorous monitoring of care delivery, through well-maintained recording systems ensures that both strengths and weaknesses are identified and effective remedial action is taken.

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people clearly benefit from the security and structure that exists within this home. 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. The extremely competent staff team have successfully created a nurturing environment that has well-defined boundaries, but remains both homely and supportive.

Young people enjoy a healthy lifestyle, are encouraged to take an active interest in and responsibility for their own physical health. Staff assist young people to make well-informed choices about their personal health, emotional and social issues, including sexual health, relationships, and the dangers of substance misuse.

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.

Young people's attendance and educational attainment are excellent, which has done much to improve their 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.

Staff support enables young people to maintain appropriate contact with their families and important people in their lives in line with their care plans. Guidance and practical experience in managing their own allowances, shopping, cooking and cleaning help young people prepare for their eventual transition into adult life.

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy excellent relationships with staff, based on mutual respect, which enables them to form meaningful and sustainable attachments. Young people, benefit from individualised programmes of support, in line with their identified needs, 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. Comprehensive care plans identify areas for development based upon young people's individual skills and abilities. Staff display very good communication skills and young people confirm that they feel listened to and actively involved in their care.

Young people live in a very healthy environment where their individual health needs are identified and services provided to meet them. Staff support young people to take charge of their own health care to better prepare them, for adulthood. 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 effectively identified and addressed. They have regular meetings with their key worker to discuss progress and any issues of concern. Young people state that staff are approachable and acknowledge their rights and truly value their contributions.

Clear policies and procedures effectively applied by a highly trained staff team effectively safeguard young people's health. Vigilant checking in and dispensing of medication ensures accurate and up-to-date records, which evidences safe practice. Excellent care planning supported by up to date and accurate assessments of risk ensures that staff have access to good up-to-date information about the young people in their care.

Care files contain health information and details of each young person's General Practitioner, dentist, optician and specific external specialists. Staff support and encourage young people to access external health professionals in line with their identified need. Clearly maintained records of appointments with health professionals evidence that the physical, emotional and mental health needs of the young people are effectively met.

The management and staff of the home, promote appropriate pride in high levels of educational attendance and attainment, whilst recognising the difficulties that young people have experienced in sustaining education placements prior to living at the home. Highly committed staff support young people's education and liaise regularly and effectively with the schools they attend, this ensures that young people achieve positive outcomes. Young people speak positively of their education and the support and encouragement they receive.

Young people are actively encouraged to pursue their own particular interests, and to try new activities, this increases their experiences and helps them to enhance their confidence and their social skills and abilities.

Young people's needs and development are reviewed regularly in the light of the care they have received and as a means of acknowledging the progress they have made. Staff, young people and, where appropriate, their families are assisted to contribute effectively to such case reviews. This ensures that all decisions are known and understood by all and can be implemented effectively into the daily care planning arrangements. Young people confirm they are encouraged to contribute to

their review and planned care. Regularly updated care plans include all relevant information regarding young people's needs. This ensures that staff can deliver care that focuses on the individual needs of each young person.

Communication between staff and young people is highly effective, which results in staff being able to respond effectively; this ensures that young people's needs and wishes are well known. Young people have regular meetings with their key worker to discuss progress and any issues of concern. They confirm that they are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives in line with their individual needs. As a result, they feel valued, take ownership of their placement and actively influence the running of the home. Young people present well, wear appropriate clothing and have sufficient belongings to meet their needs and receive pocket money and appropriate allowances to help purchase clothing and toiletries of their choice.

Young people live in a bright, modern home which provides sufficient space to meet their needs. All parts of the home are decorated to a high standard and 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 also has a vehicle that means that young people have convenient transport for activities, shopping and contact visits with family.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people confirm that they feel very safe living in this home. The home has a set of very comprehensive individualised assessments of risk for the young people in residence. These cover aspects of their potential behaviour, the environment and the activities they wish to undertake. Risk assessments are proactive, identifying potential risks and providing effective strategies to help to minimise these.

Staff, guided by other relevant professionals, work hard to enable young people to moderate and improve their behaviour. Young people confirm that the use of sanctions is minimal, fair and consistent. 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 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.

Young people confirm that the use of physical interventions are very infrequent, only being used as a last resort, by staff, to ensure safety for all. The resolutions of most incidents are through the skilful application of staff support and the sensitive use of conflict resolution techniques. The home's manager monitors each intervention,

ensuring that the intervention is necessary, applied correctly and comprehensively recorded. She also ensures that young people are aware of their right to complain, receive any medical attention if required or requested and that social workers and, where appropriate, parents are fully informed. No physical interventions have taken place since the home's last inspection.

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 continued development of staff's knowledge and understanding of child protection practice.

The location of this home enables staff to manage unauthorised absence extremely well. Established protocols and positive relationships with the local police complement practice. Tested responses are in place should young people go absent from the home or from an off-site excursion. No episodes of young people being missing from care have occurred since the home's last inspection. Staff remain aware of the potential reasons why young people may go missing, however, and use this insight to assist young people in managing their feelings and frustrations in a more productive manner, which deters young people from running off and putting themselves at risk.

The home has a good range of detailed policies and procedures covering aspects such as prevention of bullying, the processing of complaints, safeguarding young people and behaviour management. These policies and procedures are applied constantly, by a comprehensively trained staff team that receive regular updates to their training that ensures young people are effectively protected from abuse. The regular and effective monitoring of the home's records and staff practice, by the home's Registered Manager ensures that young people receive safe care in line with their individual needs.

The home has a vigorous health and safety regime, which ensures that all fire precautions, drills and equipment servicing are conducted routinely, consistently and 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 **outstanding**.

The home's Registered Manager provides excellent leadership and support to the staff group. This means they provide outstanding quality care tailored to address the

individual needs of the young people living in the home. Open and honest dialogue helps young people learn from their mistakes. Consequently, young people make significant changes in the way they react to others and in the choices that they make. The promotion of equality and diversity is exceedingly good. There is strong, visible leadership which promotes high quality care and positive outcomes for young people.

Staff receive excellent support and guidance through a clear management structure. This structure is successful at meeting the aims of the service to foster social awareness and mutual respect within the home and wider community. It achieves this by encouraging a happy and caring atmosphere in an extremely professional and motivating environment. Consistent and regular supervision, coupled with team meetings, provide staff with excellent opportunities to discuss their role, their professional development and the impact that working with children with complex needs has upon them.

The home has a clear accessible and comprehensive Statement of Purpose and young person's guide giving young people, their families and placing authorities comprehensive information about the services offered by the home. The financial viability of the provider is clearly evidenced in the high level of resources committed to the home. Young people confirm that they are treated with the utmost respect and dignity and are supported by staff to overcome significant and complex issues.

All staff members comment positively about the manager's commitment, child-centred approach, staff support and clear monitoring processes. Clear lines of accountability in the home has enabled a stable, consistent and structured environment to be established. Staff duty rotas confirm that the home keeps sufficient staff on duty at all times. The home has a very good system for dealing effectively with young people's complaints. Young people confirmed their awareness of the home's complaints system and stated they would use it with confidence. Since the home was last inspected no complaints have been received.

Staff are provided with quality induction and further training, support and resources and therefore understand the developmental needs of young people. The excellent training covers all mandatory areas such as safeguarding, behaviour management and first aid, as well as any specific training indicated by the needs of individual young people. The staff team work proactively to help young people to achieve positive outcomes, overcome barriers and to enhance their well-being. Good staff communication ensures that staff are consistent in the care they provide, which ensures young people's individual needs are well met. 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 she 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 levels of progress young people have made despite their complex needs is a testament to the impact the managers have made.

The home has comprehensive development plans for continuing improvement based upon its record of accomplishment, staff training programme and provision of a high quality physical environment. Records are clear, up to date and stored securely, and would contribute significantly to the young people's understanding of their life in care, if they choose to access these documents. The registered person notifies the appropriate authorities about all significant events relating to the protection of young people accommodated in the home.

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.