

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC373941
Inspection date	14/12/2011
Inspector	Linda Bond
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	02/03/2011
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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 home is run by the local authority. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four young people, who have suffered disruption in their lives and display difficult behaviour as a result.

Overall effectiveness

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

The home provides an excellent level of care. The outcomes achieved by the young people are exceptional. Young people thrive in a warm and nurturing environment. A very dedicated and motivated staff team provides excellent continuity of care. Young people say that they feel safe, are well looked after and 'love living at the home'. Robust safeguarding policies are implemented by an attentive, knowledgeable and well trained staff team. Staff have developed strong and positive relationships generating a culture of trust and openness. Staff model positive and respectful behaviour thereby promoting good values and beliefs. Young people state that they are listened to and their views are being respected at all times. Excellent systems are in place in order to provide personal and well-organised care. Individual assessments are of an excellent quality and provide staff with an in-depth understanding of young people's emotional and social needs. Staff focus young people on their educational potential and promote positive outcomes and consistent progress. Staff create opportunities for young people to access work and voluntary experience to develop independence and social skills. Excellent internal and external management ensures that the home's performance is effectively monitored and the home is enabled to continually improve outcomes for young people.

No recommendations or requirements are put in place following this inspection.

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people are supported in an environment where practice is excellent. All staff are committed to ensuring that the individual needs of young people are carefully planned, monitored and evaluated. These core principles are underpinned by a very comprehensive care planning process which combines young people's holistic needs and planned interventions. The values of respecting, nurturing and understanding young people as individuals are strong and consistent. Evidence can be found of this from discussions with staff members.

The educational achievements of young people are inspiring and young people are supported to access a variety of educational provision, for example, work experience,

voluntary work, attendance at college, military and football academy. The staff team supports and encourage young people to consider future employment or training. Discussions with young people confirm that they feel 'supported by staff' with their plan to go to university. They are exceptionally positive about their placement and confidently describe how they have benefitted and developed.

Young people enjoy good health and are supported to live healthy lifestyles. Staff maintain excellent links with local health services and good access to specialist services are available. This includes personalised attention and support when young people attend for example the sexual health clinic, thereby encouraging young people to develop self respect. Members of the team are very knowledgeable and receive good guidance and training to meet young people's needs. They are assisted by a team of external clinicians, for example the Child and Mental Health Team. Together, they compile and update an excellent range of assessment tools to monitor and track young people's physical, emotional and psychological health. This allows staff and other professionals to make informed judgements on a range of indicators such as the development of young people's self-esteem, their emotional resilience and their view of themselves.

Young people are encouraged to foster relationships and a sense of purposefulness with the wider community and neighbours. This includes devising menu booklets that are sold in a local charity shop. The young people work together to distribute the proceeds to designated charities.

Relationships and contacts with family and friends are strongly supported and every effort is made to maintain, restore and support contact with all people who are important to them. Restrictions on contact are well documented and agreed by all professionals involved to ensure young people are kept safe physically and emotionally. This is regularly reviewed and young people's views and wishes, through house meetings and key worker sessions, are taken into account.

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy positive and strong relationships with staff and are encouraged to interact confidently with others. Staff have realistic and constructive expectations of the young people and foster caring and supportive relationships. The home provides a warm and nurturing environment allowing young people to reflect, relax and grow. Young people state that they feel safe and enjoy living at the home.

Positive relationships generate an open and inclusive culture of consultation. This includes weekly house meetings that formulate plans that the young people can work towards. Staff encourage young people to trust, be open and to contribute to the way the home is run. Young people confirm that they have many opportunities to discuss any worries and concerns and that staff respect their views and wishes. Young people know how to complain and are fully supported to raise any concerns openly in line with the provider's policies and procedures. Records show that all

complaints are well recorded, responded to and addressed without delay.

Staff are very creative and innovative in their approach to helping young people celebrate their achievements. For example, throughout the home there is memorabilia of events. This includes the visits of foreign students, the day that was shared and what was learnt from the different cultures. These qualities not only empower young people but help them build on self-esteem and self worth. Management and staff are consistent when engaging with young people or advocating on their behalf. This contributes towards an environment which enhances reassurance for young people and reinforces the key principals of building on trusting relationships.

The home has robust systems in place for the management of medicines and ensures that risk assessments are completed for all young people. The home ensures that the health care needs of young people are clearly identified and comprehensive health plans are developed and regularly reviewed. The home supports young people to access health care professionals and ensures that detailed records are kept of such visits.

Placement plans address the unique differences and strengths of the young people and document a wide range of imaginative approaches to their needs. The home's approach to placement planning is one of its particular strengths and is strongly supported by the provider. Discussions with a social worker confirm that young people make excellent progress and are supported in their development. Care plans are highly specific and include assessments of exceptional quality and depths. This is achieved by additional input from external health professionals dedicated to this task. Staff are offered clear and outcome focused guidance and are given good opportunities to consult clinical experts. Young people are fully involved and contribute to their placement plans.

Young people enjoy meals that are varied, nutritious and meet their individual dietary needs. The home promotes the involvement of the young people in the planning of the menus and they are encouraged to eat healthily and take exercise. Young people are involved in the devising of the weekly menus and theme nights. Young people enjoy the experiences of different foods and report that 'they learn a lot from the meals they have together'. Cooking is a shared and social process which is enjoyed by all. Young people praise the cooking skills of staff and are very happy with the quality and quantity of meals provided.

The home's design and location is suitable for its stated function. It is a detached property set in a corner plot, in a residential part of the town. There is car parking for several vehicles to the front of the property and a large garden to the side and rear. The home has four single bedrooms and a sleep-in room for staff. A dining room, study and lounge all provide communal space and a conservatory provides an additional recreational area. In addition, there is a well-fitted kitchen and utility room as well as two bathrooms and a shower room. It provides young people with excellent facilities and is maintained to an exceptionally high standard. It is very homely, well furnished and in good decorative order. Young people are provided with

their own bedrooms which are personalised to their own tastes. All bedroom doors, bath, shower and toilet facilities are fitted with appropriate locks and provide good privacy. Young people take pride in their home and state that 'it's the best home I have ever lived in and I want to stay here until I go to university'.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

The home has policies and procedures to promote young people's safety and welfare and all staff have received safeguarding training. Staff demonstrate a good awareness of safeguarding policies and procedures. The staff team are vigilant in recognising particular vulnerabilities relating to the needs of young people, and take appropriate action to address them. Comprehensive placement plans clearly identify risks and protective factors and there are clear plans to address these.

The staff are committed to ensuring that young people's safety is promoted and is extremely flexible and supportive in supporting young people when in the community. The home has agreed arrangements with the local police and staff are provided with guidance if young people are absent from the home, and when young people may become missing. Discussions with staff coupled with robust documentation demonstrate the action that staff would take when addressing such matters, and the action taken once young people return. The warmth and concern the staff provide the young people following a period of being missing enables the young people to feel safe and cared for. The home has developed good monitoring and recording tools, and the results of what happens when young people go missing. This is shared with the placing authorities. The home continues to work closely with placing authorities and any concerns in relation to the increase of young people becoming missing are highlighted and discussed. This demonstrates the home's wish to be pro-active in addressing such matters and to ensure that young people are safe and their well-being is safeguarded.

The home develops robust protocols and guidelines in relation to the management of young people's behaviours. There have been no incidents of restraint or physical intervention. The home operates an excellent system of de-escalation and positive reinforcement. Excellent individual behaviour management plans and a range of risk assessments provide staff with clear strategies for managing young people with challenging behaviour. Debrief sessions are held with young people in respect to any incident providing them with the opportunity to reflect on their presenting behaviour.

Health and safety policy and practice guidelines are well established to ensure that staff and young people are appropriately safeguarded. No specific health and safety issues were identified during this inspection. Risk assessments are carried out to identify potential sources of harm and ensure that staff and young people are safe from fire and other avoidable hazards. Young people and staff regularly practise fire evacuation procedures and the various health and fire safety records are accurate and up to date.

New staff are carefully screened and vetted to ensure that they are suitable to work with the young people. The criteria is wide ranging and this also helps all applicants to assess their own abilities and attributes for wanting to work in an environment which can often be challenging and complex. Thorough vetting procedures are followed out before offers of employment are made. This includes Criminal Records Bureau checks and the verification of written records.

Leadership and management

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

Staff are confident in the management support they receive. This stems from the quality of the induction process through to ongoing formal and informal supervision arrangements. The staff are well balanced with staff of both genders and a mix of ages. The deployment and numbers of staff on duty at any one time is indicative of the needs of the young people. The management team ensures that staffing levels take in to account extra responsibilities for example, staff representing young people at reviews and attending meetings.

Staff present as confident and confidence is modelled by management. Staff present competent in their abilities to manage challenging and sensitive issues with the young people. Management and staff are genuinely enthusiastic about their work with young people. This is disseminated throughout and the dynamics of the staff team create a very safe and reassuring environment. The management team is very experienced and skilled in creating a home whereby young people can be themselves and staff feel they can develop their professional skills. The management structures in place are sound and management are accessible to staff, young people and others significant to them. The current team has worked together for some time and provide young people with excellent continuity of care.

Training opportunities for staff are extensive and wide ranging. Staff are supported in obtaining professionally recognised qualifications such as National vocational Qualifications. The management team is proactive and responsive to staff development. Staff use their training wisely and can associate this with young people's support needs. Staff have excellent opportunity and access to supervision, support and training to develop their skills and understanding of children's needs and behaviour. Managers have substantial experience in supporting staff teams and in working with young people. Staff are supervised regularly and managers appraise performance formally. Training and development needs are identified and met.

Excellent external monitoring procedures are in place to ensure that the conduct and the performance of the home are regularly evaluated. The manager has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home and constantly drives improvement and better outcomes for young people. Well documented monthly monitoring visits on behalf of the registered provider include meeting with the young people and provides space for dialogue and feed back. Young people's social workers are kept well informed and are regularly updated of their progress. Significant events

relating to the protection and welfare of young people are routinely notified to all relevant parties.

Young people's records are stored securely. Staff understand the nature and purpose of the records. The home's management maintains and supports systems to monitor the quality and adequacy of record keeping.

The Statement of Purpose is in place and is up to date. The aims and objectives of the service are clearly specified and embraced in the day-to-day work with young people. The children's guide is appropriate and available to young people. It remains a working project whereby young people are involved in its development, personalisation and publishing. Staff and young people have identified a need for an electronic interactive version being available, ensuring young people with different learning styles are not excluded.

Equality and diversity practice is **outstanding**.