

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Diane Thackrah
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This home is registered to provide care for up to four young people who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is managed by a local authority.

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**.

This is a supportive home where young people make good progress in all areas of their lives. Young people enjoy positive relationships with staff. They receive high quality care from staff who are dedicated to promoting the welfare of young people. Care planning is highly personalised and this goes some way to ensuring that young people thrive. Young people benefit from effective and fair behaviour management. They know that they will be treated fairly and consistently and this contributes to them feeling settled and secure. Staff are motivated and strive to ensure that young people reach their potential.

Young people feel safe and are safe. This is a result of the strong commitment from staff to safe working practices. Young people know what is expected of them and feel settled because of this. There is strong leadership which results in young people being cared for by a motivated and professional staff team. There are effective arrangements for monitoring quality and this contributes to the high quality care that young people receive.

Minor shortfalls were identified in the recording of some medicines.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure there is a written record of all medication, treatment and first aid given to children during their placement. (NMS 6)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Outcomes for young people living at the home are good. Young people feel secure and make good progress in developing a positive self-view. They have developed attachments to staff and feel well supported. Young people are very positive about the care they receive. They say, 'I like most of the staff' and 'I like living here'. They develop resilience and confidence as staff provide a stable and consistent environment in which they thrive. Young people accept the support that staff provide and this contributes to them making considerable progress in developing feelings of self-worth.

Staff say young people are 'making good progress and engaging and responding well'. Young people know how to take responsibility for their health and lead healthy lifestyles. They are well supported by staff to eat well, exercise and take up psychological and specialist health services. As a result they lead healthy lifestyles. Young people are making good progress in their educational achievements. They attend school and have plans to move on to further education. A young person said, 'A staff member came with me to talk to my new college and check what support I might need. I want to work in a children's home like this.' Young people feel well prepared for adulthood. A young person said, 'I am looking forward to moving into supported living' and said they 'feel it's right'.

Quality of care

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

Young people benefit from the strong relationships they share with staff members. They enjoy positive and warm relationships with staff and as a result feel settled in the home. Staff members are consistently concerned for young people's welfare. A staff member said, 'I have a really good relationship with the young people and they really engage with me.' Highly individualised care is provided for each of the young people. Staff set out a clear focus of work for young people so that everyone is clear about the individual aims of each placement. Individual activities are sought for young people to support them to feel special and cared for. This helps them to develop a strong sense of self-worth. Staff understand and are confident about the behaviour strategies required to support young people to develop skills in developing positive behaviour. They are consistent in their responses to young people. The culture of the home encourages dialogue and communication with de-escalation as a key component of strategies used to avoid the need for restraint. As a result, young people make good progress with their behaviour. A social worker said of a young person, 'They engage better with staff now.'

Staff actively promote and value education. They have high aspirations for young

people and support school attendance. As a result, young people generally attend school and make progress. A social worker said, 'Staff encourage the young person to attend school and attend personal education planning meetings regularly.' The views and wishes of young people are valued. A staff member said, 'We have house meetings every Tuesday and the young people are encouraged to be involved and choose what should be on the weekly menu.' Young people say they know how to make a complaint or express a concern. Information about how to do this, including contacting advocacy services, is displayed openly in the home. Complaints are rare and those that are made have been responded to swiftly with clear and appropriate outcomes for all concerned. Young people's physical and emotional health needs are positively addressed. Staff are proactive in encouraging young people to exercise and activities such as swimming and cycling are encouraged.

There is regular consultation with the Child and Adult Mental Health Service at team meetings and young people receive individual input from this service, where relevant. A good number of staff are trained in the giving of medicines and only those that have, administer them. The arrangements for dealing with medication is generally safe and effective. The storage of medicines is appropriate and written medication records are generally well maintained; however, minor shortfalls were identified in the recording of some medicines. This did not impact on young people's welfare. Staff actively promote constructive activities such as meals out, horse-riding and holidays. As a result, young people are able to enjoy their interests and develop confidence in their skills. Young people benefit from living in a well-designed, safe and pleasant home. The home is well maintained and homely and this goes some way to supporting young people to thrive.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people feel safe in this home and know that they are cared for when they are away from home. Care plans for young people clearly identify risks and there are clear plans to address these. Behaviour is managed positively in the home and this is consistently applied by staff. A staff member said, 'Restraint is rarely used here, we concentrate on de-escalation, we respect the young people and model appropriate behaviour.' As a result, young people make progress in managing their behaviour. Staff take steps to ensure young people's safety when they go missing. They recognise the vulnerabilities of young people who go missing and take action to minimise the associated risks. A staff member said, 'We try to provide alternatives for young people, build strong relationships between staff and young people so they can discuss honestly what is happening in their lives and we can keep them safe.' A social worker said, 'The home is proactive when the young person goes missing, they go looking.' Another said, 'Staff do everything they can when she goes missing.' As a result of these actions, the frequency of young people going missing has reduced. A strong and proactive relationship with the police helps to ensure that young people's safety is promoted. For example, staff liaise with the police about young people's associations with people deemed as unsafe.

Health and safety in the home is given a strong priority to ensure the safety of young people and staff. Regular health and safety checks are completed, including fire drills and fire alarm checks. Routine servicing ensures all areas of the home are maintained appropriately including the testing of electrical installations and portable equipment. A robust approach toward child protection ensures that staff receive suitable training in safeguarding matters. The safety and well-being of young people is promoted through the home's strong approach to staff recruitment. Staff are carefully selected and vetted.

Leadership and management

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

Young people benefit from living in a home that is managed well. An effective and efficient management approach ensures appropriately high standards of care are expected and implemented in practice. Strong leadership and guidance is provided by the Registered Manager to staff within a culture that seeks to improve care provision. Staff are well supported and there are respectful and open interactions between staff and management. Staff say the training they receive helps them to effectively meet the needs of young people and support them to make on-going progress. Staff are competent in their roles and have established positive relationships with young people, parents and other agencies. Feedback from stakeholders is highly complementary on the communication with the home and commitment of staff to the young people. Sessional staff are currently being used in high numbers, however, there is a commitment to ensuring that new staff will be employed in sufficient numbers to meet the needs of current young people. There is strong and effective monitoring in the home which leads to improvement. The views of young people, staff and other stakeholders play an important part of this quality assurance process. The home has a clear development plan based on assessments of the strengths and weaknesses.

Management and staff share positive relationships with other agencies. A social worker said, 'I speak to the staff every day, we have a really good relationship.' This goes some way to promoting young people's well-being. Good quality records that are clear, comprehensive and up to date contribute to a good understanding of the children and young people's lives. All notifications of significant events relating to the protection of children are reported to the appropriate authorities and appropriate action is taken.

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.