

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Helen Walker
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The children's home provides accommodation for one young person of either sex from 10 years to 17 years of age. The home is operated by a private organisation.

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**.

Young people receive high quality care which contributes to their significant progress and excellent outcomes. A consistent and experienced staff team are familiar with and understand the young people's diverse needs.

Staff actively engage with young people to ensure their education and health needs are well met. Young people lead a healthy lifestyle and are encouraged to participate in regular exercise. Staff enable young people to develop an understanding of their background and identity. This includes supporting contact arrangements with family and friends. Additionally, the staff are keen to enable young people to be involved in the wider community. Young people take advantage of the many varied opportunities and activities which broaden their social skills and increase their confidence.

The management and leadership of the home are strong and young people benefit from a caring and enthusiastic staff team. Staff provide a safe care environment and clearly understand their duty to protect young people from harm. Social care professionals say they consider the young people are well looked after and are kept safe. Young people are asked their views and through consultation they confirm they feel safe in the home.

One requirement and six recommendations have been made as a result of this inspection. These relate to the submission of the manager's monitoring reports to Ofsted, consultation with social work professionals, record keeping, bathroom maintenance and staff training.

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
34 (2001)	supply Ofsted with a copy of any review report of monitoring of the home, completed at six monthly intervals, within 28 days of its completion identifying any trends and issues of concern arising from monitoring of matters set out in Schedule 6. (Regulation 34 and Volume 5, statutory guidance paragraph 3.14)	29/10/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure the home provides a homely environment that is well maintained and decorated, in particular the young person's bathroom (NMS 10.3)
- ensure staff are equipped with skills and the training required to meet the needs of the children, in particular training relating to learning disabilities (18.1)
- ensure there is a system in place to monitor the quality and adequacy of record keeping, in particular that records including relevant documents are readily available and accessible (NMS 22.1)
- ensure the child's placement plan sets out any specific strategies that have been agreed to reduce the incidences of any negative behaviour exhibited by the child, additionally to update risk assessments (Volume 5, statutory guidance, paragraph 2.88)
- ensure that when staff in the home resort to any measure of control or discipline that this is carefully recorded with full details of the staff involved within 24 hours in a record kept for this purpose, in particular that sanctions are properly recorded (NMS 3 and Volume 5, statutory guidance, paragraph 2.91)
- ensure the views of the social worker and Independent Reviewing Officer are sought regularly on the child's care. (NMS 1.4)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Quality of care

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

Young people significantly gain from a service that meets their individual care needs. Relationships between staff and young people are exceptionally positive. Staff are competent, warm and very caring. This supports young people to develop a sense of security and feelings of belonging at the home. Young people are very happy and settled in the home and like the staff who care for them.

Young people are encouraged to participate in a wide range of activities, including charity events. They are looking forward to a planned trip abroad. This has been organised by the provider and involves working with disadvantaged children. The young people are excited and delighted to have this sort of opportunity. This type of activity helps young people to gain an insight into other children's situations and increases their own self-worth and empathy for others.

Young people benefit from staff who establish and maintain successful partnership working with professional agencies. This includes liaison with health, social work and education specialists. Young people's health is very well promoted through effective access to health professionals. Staff are trained in the storage and administration of medication. They have a thorough understanding of the medication procedures so that this is competently administered.

Staff successfully support and enable young people to attend college and reach their potential. Social work professionals strongly agree that young people's learning is supported by the care they receive. A social worker confirms that staff maintain excellent contact with them and keep them informed about young people's progress. However, social workers and Independent Reviewing Officer's views are not regularly sought to further inform and improve care for young people.

Staff are familiar with and follow young people's positive behaviour management strategies and placement plans. They have a clear understanding of young people's individual communication needs and are committed to ensure their overall needs are met. Staff encourage young people to participate in the development and update of their placement plans. Staff often undertake informal and formal key work sessions with young people. This enables young people to be gain a wealth of information, advice and guidance about different matters. This includes discussion about health, relationships and supported living.

Young people's achievements are highly valued with lots of praise and rewards from staff. The home's gardener recently recognised a young person's achievement for growing vegetables in the garden of the home. This was celebrated by the young person with their choice of a trip to London and the Olympic Park. The young person thoroughly enjoyed this reward and photographs in the house provide a lasting memory of the trip.

Young people live in detached house which is situated in a pleasant and smart residential area. The house is homely, comfortably furnished and generally well maintained. However, areas of the bathroom are in need of maintenance to improve the home environment.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people indicate they feel safe and well cared for at the home. Staff understand and are confident about their safeguarding responsibilities and know what action to take should a safeguarding situation arise. Staff undertake child protection training which helps to keep them well informed and promote young people's welfare.

Young people have not been missing from the home. Staff know the safeguarding procedures to follow should this occur. Young people benefit from staff who are positive role models and support them to develop self-respect and respect for others. This brings about an ethos of trust, honesty and happiness in the home. Young people's behaviour is managed in a positive way without the need of physical intervention. Sanctions are rarely used and only as appropriate. However, sanctions are not always accurately recorded to enable effective monitoring of the records.

The young people's placement plan and risk assessments assist staff to care for them properly and in accordance with their care plan. Strategies to manage young people's behaviour are discussed in staff meetings and at shift handovers. However, placement plans and risk assessments are not routinely updated to record and reflect the discussion and action needed to manage the behaviour.

Appropriate arrangements are in place to help ensure that staff recruited to work with young people are suitable and safe. Young people benefit from living in premises that are generally well maintained. Regular health and safety checks are undertaken of the premises to promote safety and security in the home.

Leadership and management

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

The manager is effective in her work and supports staff to provide a stable home environment with outstanding outcomes for young people. The provider continues to meet the aims and objectives in the home's Statement of Purpose. There were no requirements or recommendations made at the last inspection.

Young people benefit from being cared for by a consistent and very enthusiastic staff team. There is minimal staff turnover which enables continuity of care for young people from staff they know. Staff understand young people's individual personalities and needs. This has significantly helped young people to make strides in their social skills, particularly an increase in confidence.

Regular staff meetings and shift handovers ensure staff have current information about the welfare of young people. Young people were seen to respond very positively to staff. Staff routinely show an interest in young people's everyday life and achievements which promotes success in their life. A social worker comments that young people have very good staff supervision they make really good progress.

Staff are of a sufficient number and appropriately qualified or working towards a relevant qualification to assist them in their work with young people. Staff receive formal supervision from management which covers the care of young people and their professional development. Staff have access to a range of training to help equip them develop skills to care for young people who come to live at this home. This covers, child sexual exploitation, equality and diversity and attachment theory. Most of the staff have previous experience working with young people who have learning disabilities. However, there is little evidence of specific staff training to further support and develop their understanding in this area of work.

Young people's case records are stored safely and securely. However, the storage arrangements are rather chaotic which means documents and information are not always to hand when needed. The manager carries out a six monthly review of the quality of care in the home. This report has not been forwarded to Ofsted as is required by regulation.

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.