

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Elaine Clare / Angela Whiteley
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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

The children's home provides accommodation for one young person of either sex from 10 years to 17 years of age. The home is in a private housing estate and is similar to other properties in the area. It has three bedrooms. One bedroom is dedicated for a young person, another is a sleep-in room for staff and the third bedroom is currently spare. There is access to local bus routes, and a health centre is a short journey away as are shops and local amenities. The home has a fitted kitchen, a utility room, a bathroom, a separate toilet, an office area and gardens to the front and rear of the property.

One young person lives at the home.

Overall effectiveness

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

Young people who live at this home benefit from individually planned care delivered by a committed and competent staff team. Young people settle well and form good relations with the staff and generally between themselves. Staff are enthusiastic, well skilled, and pursue areas of training that interests them but benefit the whole team and are relevant to young people's needs. Staff strive to promote the highest outcomes for young people. They support young people through their education, through individual crisis and transition into adult life. Consistent care has enabled young people to achieve educational qualifications and work placements as part of their ongoing development. Young people themselves state they feel safe in the home and know staff have their best interests at heart. Their observations on their care reflects the efforts of staff to provide a high quality of care in a supportive and safe environment.

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people are assisted to maintain a healthy lifestyle. They benefit from individual support which helps them to develop a positive view of themselves. Staff actively encourage and assist young people to develop their own identities whilst recognising the identities of others. Staff demonstrate a very strong commitment in supporting the needs of young people with significant progress having been achieved. The home's expectations, rules and routines provide young people with an environment that focuses on positive outcomes.

Young people are actively supported and given every opportunity to achieve their educational ambitions. Young people attend further education which are tailored to

meet their individual needs. Clear routines are well established which support young people to achieve excellent school attendance. Young people are provided with suitable facilities to engage in private study and staff actively support them with any homework.

Staff are very committed to maintaining the level of agreed contact between young people and their families according to their individual circumstances. Practical support is also offered by staff to transport and take the lead role in any supervised contact arrangements. Systems are well established which enable young people to make and receive telephone calls as well as to meet with any visitors in private.

Young people are fully supported to develop independent living skills as part of their transition to adult services. They are able to develop budgeting skills as well as undertaking the shopping, preparation and cooking of meals. Young people confirmed these arrangements and stated that they are also involved in the cleaning of the home as well as doing their own washing.

Quality of care

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

Young people develop very warm and positive relationships with members of staff and each other. Highly individualised care is planned and provided by an experienced and stable staff team. Within the team individual staff skills are many and varied and all contribute to the ability of the group to deliver individual and effective care to young people.

There is close and effective collaborative working with other agencies such as the placing authority and health professionals. Ethnicity and language diversity is reflected in the overall staff group and works positively to understand and support individual young people's needs. Staff work tirelessly to provide opportunities for young people to succeed. They are not daunted by any initial setbacks or failure but relentless in their aim for young people to aspire to the highest possible goals. Staff are realistic in how they set these targets and how they approach the task. Staff work pro-actively with young people and their placing authority to ensure reviews of care are timely and include the views of the young person. Staff advocate for young people in order for their voice to be heard and for achievements to be realised.

The home provides a safe environment for young people to live in and there is an emphasis on developing healthy lifestyles. Individual physical, emotional or psychological health care is planned and young people are appropriately supported by staff.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

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Young people are safe and feel safe in this provision as a result no young people have been missing from the home. Highly qualified and competent carers treat safety and well-being very seriously to protect young people. Detailed individualised risk assessments and placement plans show staff carefully balance the need for increasing independence with safeguarding requirements. There are excellent systems in place for responding to allegations and suspicions of abuse. The staff team receive regular safeguarding training and know how to proceed if they have concerns about young people's welfare. However there have been no concerns raised in this provision for some time.

Staff understand the level of individual support needed to keep young people safe both in the home and in the community. Young people are supervised whilst being encouraged to take reasonable risks as part of their growth and development. This is commensurate with their age, abilities and understanding. Young people develop respect and self-esteem through positive and pro-active behaviour management strategies and policies. Staff receive regular training in how to manage behaviour positively using high nurturing, low arousal and diversionary techniques. Staff discuss with young people the appropriate responses and interactions with other people. This results in increased social activities and compliments the provider's ethos of not using physical restraints. There have been no incidents of restraint or need for sanctions in this setting. There is excellent communication between the provider, social worker and college, which benefits the young people as it provides a consistent approach, minimises risks and makes positive progress more achievable.

All staff are carefully selected and vetted. There have been no new appointments in the last year, which allows young people to form positive relationships with a consistent staff group. Visitors to the home are vetted and supervised as appropriate to ensure young people are protected from people who may pose a risk.

Young people live in a physically safe and secure home. The building is well maintained and all relevant safety checks are carried out at the required intervals. There is good outside space and play equipment with the relevant risk assessments in place for the premises and grounds protecting young people from the risk of harm.

Leadership and management

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

An excellent Statement of Purpose outlines the aims and objectives of the service. The home is operating in line with this statement and the principles are understood by interested parties, including young people. Young people's information is relevant and appropriately focused. Young people benefit from a consistent, enthusiastic and committed staff who focus on their needs and welfare. As a result, young people's progress is clearly evident and noted by placing authorities.

Staff feel very well supported, supervised and involved in making decisions. Staff report development and training opportunities are available and varied in order to progress their careers. Opportunities include equality and diversity and management training. The manager and staff team are very well qualified and sufficient in number to meet the needs of young people. Regular meetings, supervisions and appraisals ensure practice improves further and the focus remains on young people's needs and development. Staff are challenging young people to think about differences in broader terms than race or religion, for example differences in food, beliefs, and understanding of family backgrounds.

A comprehensive development plan outlines the aims and objectives for the year with clear reviews to chart progress. Exceptional levels of monitoring young people's care and experiences ensures practice is safe and the quality of care remains consistently high. Young people are consistently consulted about their care and therefore settle in the home and are clear about their care plans. The quality of care at this visit is consistently high resulting in no requirements or recommendations.

Equality and diversity practice is **outstanding**.