

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC381085
Inspection date	23/05/2012
Inspector	Michelle Spruce
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	23/01/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for two young people of either gender with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is operated by the local authority.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service 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 good home with some outstanding features. Young people are safe and feel safe. The staff take full account of the individual needs of young people and provide effective, personalised well planned care.

The home actively promotes positive outcomes for young people. The home is successful in providing transition into adult care and young people receive tailored care packages to work towards independence. All staff are well trained and experienced to meet the diverse needs of young people. The home works hard to ensure young people receive effective healthcare and assessment reflected in individual placement plans.

The staff are a real strength in the home and young people are provided with a stable and consistent staff team. Young people benefit from positive role models that encourage, support and praise development in all aspects of the young people's lives. The relationships are strong and are built on trust and respect.

The management is effective and strong leaders strive to improve, develop and drive forward the focus on improving outcomes for children and young people.

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make good progress in education attainment and achievement despite the difficulties they face, taking account of their individual starting point. Young

people strive to do well and say, 'I have done exams today and I think I did well'. This means young people recognise their achievements and their confidence in their own abilities improves.

Young people benefit from excellent role models of staff and other external influences that assist young people in understanding their identity through well planned care. Young people develop healthy and appropriate relationships with others because they understand who they are. Young people benefit from regular contact with people that are important and significant to them and as a result, strong bonds are developed and maintained.

Young people live a healthy lifestyle and benefit from good menu planning and healthy eating. Staff encourage young people to plan, shop and prepare their own meals as part of planning for independence. This maintains a good diet. There is support for young people to access external health professionals for routine services. Young people attend routine appointments and are pro-active in making appointments or seeking advice where they recognise there is a problem. As a result, young people gain the support they require to keep them fit and well physically, emotionally and psychologically. Young people recognise the impact some activities such as smoking have on their health and they take action to address this. Young people say, 'I did quit smoking but started again but I have cut down and do want to quit'. As a result, some young people take active measures to reduce risk taking behaviour.

The home provides young people with a range of activities to explore their personalities. Young people benefit from community sports such as football and boxing to encourage active social participation and strengthen community links. Young people make their own activity choices and plans reflect personal choice. This encourages independence, supports social inclusion and reflects individuality.

Quality of care

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

Staff put young people central to the care they provide and have high aspirations for all young people in the home. Young people know staff have their best interest at heart and as a result, relationships have formed strong bonds of trust and respect. Independent advocacy services say about the home, 'the good relationships between staff and young people reduces the work for advocate services as issues are addressed in the home with the manager and staff'.

Young people receive exceptional support to maximise their potential in education, the community and wider society by robust and effective care planning and external partnership working. Staff are clear about individual needs and challenge barriers to reduce the impact on young people because they understand the investment necessary to promote inclusion and stability for young people to succeed. As a result, young people achieve better outcomes in education achievement that enhance future learning opportunities and life chances.

Young people behave appropriately with staff support and benefit from detailed behaviour management plans that encourage positive behaviour and provide fair and proportionate sanctions. This reduces incidents and as a result, episodes of physical intervention are minimal.

Staff support young people in understanding how to make a complaint. Staff provide grumbles and complaint forms for young people to complete. Young people confirm they know how to make a complaint and have access to the independent advocate who visits the home regularly. This ensures young people's rights are recognised and addressed.

Staff encourage young people to take part in the planning of their care through one-to-one discussion and weekly residents meetings. Young people say they feel listened to. As a result, young people influence the running of the home. Staff have a clear understanding of each young person's personality, this means young people benefit from fair and equal opportunities regardless of their differences.

Young people's health and well-being are a primary focus to the delivery of care for young people. Young people who smoke are encouraged by staff to quit or cut down. Staff provide a good balance of healthy eating by giving young people the opportunity to plan, shop and prepare their own meals. Where additional support is necessary, the staff liaise with external partners to maximise the best outcome for young people. As a result, young people maintain good health and well-being.

Staff are consistent and continually strive to improve educational attainment and achievement with constant encouragement. Staff effectively manage partnership working to provide opportunities to explore challenges young people face and address issues of declined attendance. As a result, meetings take place and the wishes of young people are listened to.

Young people live in a safe, caring and nurturing environment that provides stable, consistent support from a dedicated and skilled staff team. The home is welcoming, well decorated and maintained. Young people influence the nature of the home and respect and care for their environment.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Staff are highly efficient, skilled and knowledgeable in safeguarding practice. The home has clear procedures in place that effectively support the safety of young people. Young people are safe and say they feel safe because they benefit from robust individualised risk assessments that manage and protect their engagement in specific activities. As a result, young people are safe and protected from harm.

Young people are protected from potential bullying and staff address any issues

immediately. For example, where staff recognise behaviour from one young person to another may be bullying staff discuss, document and monitor the incident to identify any patterns or trends. As a result, bullying rarely occurs and young people say they are not victims of bullying.

Staff understand young people's behaviour and adapt accordingly by using strategies to reduce incidents and outbursts. Staff know the trigger factors because they share best practice and provide a consistent approach, which is effective in positive behaviour management. Staff use verbal praise along with de-escalating techniques to diffuse situations. As a result, behaviour improves. The use of physical intervention is a rare occurrence and only used as a last resort. Young people benefit from reward incentives for positive behaviour and receive sanctions in line with the behaviour management plan. As a result, young people develop positive approaches and manage their behaviour more positively.

Young people say they rarely go missing and remain in contact with the home at all times, for example, if choosing to stay at friends or knowing they will be late returning home. Staff are proactive when young people go missing or are absent without authority. Staff monitor young people by contacting them by mobile phone and do welfare checks to establish their whereabouts. Staff keep detailed and clear records to evaluate and monitor the safety of young people. This keeps young people safe.

Young people are protected by a clear recruitment and vetting procedure which reduces the risk of unsuitable candidates having access to young people. Young people benefit from staff who know them well, which means they continue to receive consistent support and continuity of care.

The environment is safe and young people say they take part in regular fire drills. All staff are trained in the fire procedures and are clear about action to take in the event of fire. The home undertakes regular health and safety checks to maintain a safe environment. This means the home provides a safe place for young people, staff and visitors.

Leadership and management

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

Young people benefit from a Registered Manager and a committed, experienced and child-centred staff team. Staff and young people regularly share their input into the running of the home through team meetings and supervision. This ensures the aims and objectives of the service continue to be met and reassessed.

The manager improves the delivery of service and takes action to address any recommendations. As a result, the home benefits from a development plan that highlights strengths and weakness.

The manager gains feedback from staff by using a quality assurance questionnaire.

This information helps to shape the home's development plan and highlights the strengths and areas for improvement. This tracks and enhances performance. Regulation 33 visits take place as required and the manager undertakes the schedule 6 monitoring. As a result, young people continue to benefit from a good quality of care.

Staff are well trained and skilled in understanding the needs of young people and benefit from regular supervision, appraisal and a personal development plan. The home now benefits from a newly appointed assistant manager. This has improved staffing levels and provided the service with additional skill and knowledge to enhance service delivery.

The provider meets the aims and objectives in the Statement of Purpose. Young people, staff and the placing authority are clear about the aims and objectives and what service and facilities it provides. Young people benefit from a well maintained and resourced home.

The manager promptly notifies all significant events relating to the protection of young people to the required authorities. Staff take appropriate action following any incident. Records are stored securely and correctly and reflect young people's experiences and plans for the future.

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.