

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Michelle Bacon
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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 home is privately owned and provides care and accommodation for one young person of either sex.

Overall effectiveness

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

Young people benefit from a very highly staff team who are well supported and trained in their work. Young people needs and views are central to how the home operates and they have consistently positive views about the quality of the care and support they receive. One young person commented, 'the staff are really nice and they have really helped me.' This is evident in the strong and positive relationships that exist between the young people and staff.

All aspects of care planning are highly personalised to meet the needs of young people. These promote positive outcomes, ensuring that young people make excellent progress from the starting points of their placements.

Young people state they feel safe and are safe. Staff assist young people in managing their behaviour and physical intervention is not a feature of this home. Staff have the skills, experience and understanding that ensures young people receive the right support and guidance. They understand that young people need a stable and nurturing environment to develop. A social worker commented that the staff had been effective in helping one young person manage their behaviour much more positively.

The home is effectively managed. The manager provides strong leadership and makes effective use of the excellent monitoring systems in place to review the quality of care, ensuring improved outcomes for young people. There are two minor shortfalls, however they do not have any direct impact on the excellent quality of care young people receive. These instead relate to a shortfall in a formalised development plan and the young people's guide.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- provide a written development plan which details any planned changes in the

operation or resources of the service(NMS15.2)

- ensure the safeguarding procedure submitted for consideration and comment to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSBC) and the Local Authority Designated Officer is ratified(LADO)(NMS 20.4)
- ensure the children's guide details how a young person can contact their Independent Reviewing Officer(IRO), and the Children's Rights Director ,if they wish to raise a concern about their care. (NMS 13.5)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make exceptional progress to develop a positive self view, emotional resilience and knowledge and understanding of their background. They have a clear understanding of their personal issues and of the plans in place for them. Young people recognise the excellent progress they have made and acknowledge the support they have received to achieve this. Young people feel settled and are growing in confidence and maturity. They are able to communicate their thoughts and feelings much more appropriately.

Young people's health needs are actively promoted and supported. They take responsibility for their own personal care and appearance. They have access to a wide range of health services that ensure young people achieve good health and maintain a healthy lifestyle. For example, they receive detailed information on healthy eating, smoking, drugs and alcohol. The young people are involved in activities in the community and have developed positive friendships outside of the home.

The educational achievement of young people is exceptional from their starting point at the time of placement. One young person said, 'staff help me with my home learning'. Young people say they enjoy school and the experience of learning and want to achieve their full potential. They have aspirations for the future and want to go onto further education. Their attendance and behaviour have improved significantly and school acknowledge the excellent progress made. This is evident with the certificates on a young person's file.

Young people have a good understanding of the standard of behaviour that is expected of them. Regular young people's and one-to-one meetings enable young people to reflect on the impact their behaviour has on others. The home provides mobile telephones to the young people for their own personal use. Young people benefit from maintaining appropriate contact with family, friends and those who are important to them. Young people can use their personal mobile telephones, email and social networking sites to maintain contact in line with their placing authorities care plan.

Young people are being well prepared in becoming more independent. They are given every opportunity to develop their life skills. For example, young people

routinely help prepare meals, take part in the shopping, do their own laundry and travel independently.

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy positive and supportive relationships with staff that are based on mutual respect. They are very positive about how they are looked after. Staff view young people in a positive light and have high aspirations for them. They have a strong commitment to improving outcomes for young people and ensuring they overcome any difficulties. Interaction is informal, good humoured while appropriate boundaries are maintained. Young people confirm they are able to talk through their problems with staff. This means young people's anxieties are reduced and they are able to manage their feelings more appropriately.

Regular young people's meetings and one-to-one sessions afford young people the opportunity to express their views and opinions on day-to-day matters in the home. For example, young people have personalised their own bedrooms and chosen their own furnishings. They are consulted on menu choices and activities as well as being involved in decision-making that affects their future. Staff help young people to understand why it may not be possible to always act on their wishes and feelings.

Education is viewed as important and staff actively promote young people's education. This is achieved by attending parents evening and other school meetings. The staff also provide support with homework and revision. Staff provide young people with support for homework and revision.

Young people know how to complain and have on two occasions had cause to use the complaints process. Young people confirm their complaints are taken seriously, however they prefer to talk to staff directly about any issues. The young people's guide has recently been revised but does not contain a summary of how young people can contact their independent reviewing officer or the Children's Rights Director, should they wish to raise a concern about their care.

The arrangements for dealing with medication and first aid are robust. All staff are trained in first aid and the safe handling of medication. This ensures young people have access to a qualified person at all times. Health plans contain a detailed health history and the current health needs of young people. Records show young people attend regular health appointments and check ups. They are fully supported to develop and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Comprehensive placement plans identify young people's needs and how these are to be met. Young people are well cared for in line with their plans and benefit from having these regularly reviewed. Placement plans take into account each young person's personal identity and cultural background and these are positively addressed in daily living. Staff work exceptionally well with parents, social workers and other agencies to promote young people's welfare. Social workers confirm they

receive regular up dates from the home, this ensures young people are cared for in line with their placing authority's plans.

The home provides a safe and homely environment. It is decorated to a high standard and well furnished. Young people's privacy is respected and they are able to lock their bedroom door. The local shops and leisure facilities are all within walking distance of the home.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people say they are safe and feel safe. Robust policies and procedures minimise the risk of young people going missing from the home and staff follow joint protocols to respond to any incidences. Thorough risk assessments clearly identify the risk taking behaviours which young people may present and the strategies to be used to minimise these risks. For example, where appropriate, young people are suitably supervised and activities well planned. However staff balance the safety of young people by enabling them to take reasonable risks as part of normal development.

All staff have undertaken training in safeguarding and have an accurate understanding of their role and responsibility to safe young people. Robust recruitment procedures ensure young people are not cared for by adults who may cause them harm. The well established staff team provide stability and consistency that ensures young people feel secure.

The staff are effective in managing young people's behaviour and this is a particular strength of the home. Reflection on behaviour is encouraged; this allows young people to develop socially acceptable behaviour. Young people receive excellent support and guidance on how to deal with their problems in a constructive way. The use of incentives reinforces young people's positive behaviour and the use of sanctions is kept to a minimum. The staff are trained in behaviour management and the use of de-escalation. Physical intervention is not used in the home.

Thorough steps are taken to ensure the home is safe from fire and other hazards. Regular fire drills ensure young people know how to leave the home in the safest way possible in the event of an emergency. All fire, gas and electrical equipment is serviced annually. Comprehensive risk assessments identify risks associated with the building, environment and activities and how these should be managed. This ensures the level of risk is kept to a minimum and young people and staff are kept safe.

Leadership and management

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

The home meets the aims and objectives of its Statement of Purpose. Management

and leadership are very strong. They stimulate the enthusiasm of staff and channel this effectively. This is clearly demonstrated by the excellent progress young people make. The manager and staff have a strong commitment to ensuring they deliver an excellent service. The skills within the team match the young people's individual needs. The numbers of staff are sufficient to meet the needs of young people; this includes the support they need to attend appointments and activities.

Staff are well supported by the manager. They confirm that they are provided with excellent support and receive regular supervision. Monthly team meetings ensure the whole team reflect on young people's progress and any improvements they can make. In addition, the team make use of external agencies to further develop their skills and understanding in relation to young people's needs.

Robust internal and external monitoring systems involve consultation with the young people and contribute to improving the quality of care for young people. This is evident in the excellent progress young people have made.

The home shows a capacity for continued improvement. The manager has a clear understanding of the strengths of the home and the areas that need further development. However, any areas for development have not been put into a formalised plan and this is likely to limit the ability to evidence continued improvement. The requirements and recommendations made following the last inspection have been addressed. All staff have received training in fire prevention and comprehensive risk assessments ensure that where practical, the home is free from hazards. Young people are provided with a key to their bedroom and have safe lockable storage for personal possessions.

Young people's files are securely stored and provide a clear and detailed picture of the progress they have made. The files contain up-to-date information, including all the relevant information from placing authorities. These records contribute to an understanding of young people and their plans for the future.

Equality and diversity practice is **outstanding**.