

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Stella Henderson
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home provides care and accommodation for two young people of either sex with emotional and behavioural difficulties or learning difficulties. The home is owned and managed by a private company.

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 are safe at the home and make good progress across all aspects of their welfare and development. They benefit from reliable and consistent care and enjoy positive relationships with staff. This, along with specialist input where required, enables young people to develop emotional equilibrium and resilience.

The manager provides strong and effective leadership of the home and promotes safe working practices. Staff present as caring and competent, and provide a high standard of care. They have a good understanding of their role, and support management to achieve positive outcomes for young people.

One shortfall is identified and a recommendation is raised in order to further develop practice in respect of recording young people's views in their placement plans.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure that children communicate their views on all aspects of their care and support. This is specifically in relation to placement plans. (NMS 1.3)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people benefit from experiencing the commitment, stability and consistency that long-term placements offer. This provides a sound basis from which they make continued improvement and achieve good outcomes with respect to their behaviour, education, health, attachment behaviours, self-confidence and resilience.

Young people are helped to learn about, and come to terms with, previous life experiences at a pace suited to their individual therapeutic needs and level of understanding. The calm, nurturing environment in which they live affords them the opportunity to reflect on their decisions and make positive choices. This helps them to develop socially acceptable behaviour and so relate better to others. Contributing to household tasks and taking some responsibility for decision making assists young people in the very early stages of their journey to independence.

Young people benefit from an emphasis on healthy lifestyles, including good diet, exercise, and the proper and safe administration of medication. Young people are of an age where they decide for themselves any sporting or leisure pursuits they wish to get involved with. They are helped to resist involvement in those activities that are a risk to their immediate and longer term health, and as a consequence these behaviours are decreasing.

Quality of care

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

Young people live in a supportive and well-maintained environment, looked after by staff who effectively support them to get the help they need. This includes practical assistance such as providing transport for contact and services, advice and guidance, along with advocacy on behalf of the young person where necessary.

Staff create an environment where young people's concerns and opinions are listened to and taken seriously. Decisions about the running of the home are made on an informal basis, and the manager and staff endeavour to meet young people's wishes and suggestions wherever possible. They are attentive to the individual needs of young people and implement clear and consistent behavioural strategies.

Detailed and comprehensive placement plans capture the unique and diverse needs of young people, the actions to be taken by staff to address those needs, and clear timescales for completion. Young people's contribution to this planning process is limited, however, which means their needs may not be fully identified and addressed.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are safe at the home and there is no bullying. Care plans are regularly monitored and reviewed to identify any heightened risks and strengthen protective factors where necessary. Young people are protected by the proactive approach of management to safeguarding issues, particularly where incidents of missing from home are concerned. Young people benefit from the strong liaison and effective working with safeguarding agencies, police and social workers in respect of this. As a result these incidents and other risk-taking behaviours are decreasing.

Young people are helped to improve their behaviour in a way that respects their level of development and understanding. There is rarely any need for physical restraint, and sanctions are reasonable and part of a wider behaviour management strategy.

Consistent adherence to health and safety procedures ensure that young people live in a home that provides safety and security. Medication is stored and dispensed safely, and environmental checks help to identify any hazards. Sound vetting procedures ensure that no one who is unsuitable to work with vulnerable children is employed at the home.

Leadership and management

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

The Registered Manager provides effective management and leadership of the home. She makes good use of information provided by the reports of the visits conducted on behalf of the provider under Regulation 33, and her own monitoring under Regulation 34, to ensure compliance with regulation and identify areas for improvement for the benefit of young people. Consequently, young people enjoy safe and consistent care and make good progress at the home.

The manager is highly conversant with young people's history, experience and needs. She ensures that the home is appropriately staffed and resourced in order for them to receive the best possible care. This means that young people have support and advice on hand, enjoy access to a range of activities and live in a pleasant, homely environment.

Staff confirm they are provided with effective support through training, team meetings and supervision. The manager makes good use of research and practice developments to inform and improve practice. This helps to equip staff with the knowledge and skills they need to deliver good outcomes for young people. Recording is of a good standard and files are methodically organised, giving young people a clear picture of their experience and events during their time at the home.

Young people have benefited from improvements made at the home. At the last inspection the provider was required to amend the Statement of Purpose, make reference to electronic surveillance in young people's placement plans, submit reports in respect of Regulation 34 assessments and ensure that the Regulation 33 visitor consults with young people in order to form an opinion of the standard of care

provided in the home. These requirements have been successfully addressed.

Recommendations have also been met in respect to missing from home police protocols and obtaining copies of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the Children's Homes National Minimum Standards 2011, and ensuring that all staff's work is consistent with them.

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.