

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Angus Mackay
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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 a residential home for six children and young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is operated by a private company and can offer planned, emergency and respite placements.

Overall effectiveness

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

Young people enjoy their time living in the home even when they would prefer to be elsewhere. The management of the home is outstanding with the manager demonstrating and modelling good practice to staff and engaging excellently with young people. The manager uses monitoring information intelligently, providing clear analysis to staff, to improve outcomes for young people. The manager ensures that staff are appropriately selected and excellently supported to enable them to give young people outstanding personal care.

Most young people make good progress in education and work and staff endeavour to engage everyone in some form of educational provision. Young people make good progress with addressing high risk behaviours and reducing their risk of offending over time. Social workers comment positively on the good boundary setting, excellent relationships and clear messages from staff which have aided young people in their successful outcomes, including improving contacts with their families. Staff are excellent at aiding young people to meet their personal and cultural needs.

Young people are fully engaged in commenting on their own care and the running of the home and contribute extensively to the excellent records and placement plans. Staff maintain outstanding contact with external agencies supplying information to all appropriate people in a timely manner. Safeguarding is good and all young people feel safe and supported by staff even when subject to bullying. Staff make excellent use of information from complaints driving care standards up for young people. Sanctions are generally very appropriate and seek engagement from young people in the resolution of the conflict or incident. Staff have used some sanctions informally and have not recorded them in the sanction log. Some amounts for reparation are excessive leading to young people disengaging from such consequences.

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 all sanctions are recorded in the sanction log and that sums agreed for reparation are reasonable and fair (NMS 3.8)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Most young people make excellent progress within the home. They work hard with staff to address their presenting problems and to develop their personal identity and positive external links. Staff maintain excellent contact with social workers, independent reviewing officers and families assisting young people in achieving their ambitions and targets outlined in their care plans. Staff provide excellent assistance to young people to meet their cultural, religious and personal care needs. One social worker saying, 'I would give full marks to the home.'

Young people have variable attendance at school or education ranging from outstanding to poor. Staff provide excellent support to all young people most of whom are generally performing excellently in education or work experience. Social workers recognise the hard work and dedication of staff in assisting young people to achieve good standards in education and work. Comments include, 'he has really progressed well making decisions in his own best interest with the support from carers.'

Young people receive excellent support from staff to aid them in improving their health and personal hygiene. Staff provide them with a healthy diet and aid them in gaining an understanding of healthy balanced eating. Young people enjoy cooking meals and some are engaged in independence programmes to enhance their ability to care for themselves. Staff work closely with other professionals including mental health professionals to aid young people to successfully address their complex problems. Young people enjoy physical activities with staff who are creative in providing activities which are both fun and developmental. Young people show marked improvement in health issues with this assistance from the home. One social worker commenting, 'They are excellent at health care, they get him to eat healthily with lots of fruit, vegetables and exercise.'

Quality of care

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

Young people relate very well to the friendly, caring staff, displaying open affection and liking for them. The staff team is reasonably diverse providing a range of suitable role models for the young people. One young person saying, 'I like everything about the home, the manager is great and all of the staff are really good.' Young people feel engaged in their own care planning and in the organisation of the home. They and their previous carers assist staff in creating detailed placement plans clearly identifying all needs and how to meet them. Staff enthusiastically aid young people in meeting all of the care, cultural and religious needs including attendance at places of worship and appropriate diet. Young people say they can influence their

care describing the effectiveness of the daily meetings to address all issues within the home including personal issues or issues around choice to effect change in the home.

Young people have an excellent understanding of the complaints procedure and use it appropriately to resolve issues in and out of the home. Staff deal effectively with all complaints engaging young people in commenting on the resolution and agreeing a suitable outcome. The manager monitors all complaints identifying patterns or areas of necessary change using them to improve the service to young people. Young people engage in a positive incentive scheme which reinforces positive behaviours rewarding their success and progression. Staff aid young people in maintaining or achieving these targets by regular verbal prompts and comments seeking reflection and learning from them.

Young people are cared for in line with their placement plans and needs identified at the point of referral. Young people work closely with staff in their very regular key work sessions to ensure that the placement plan reflects their current needs and that staff are able to meet these. Staff display a detailed knowledge of all of the young people's needs including cultural, religious and all personal needs ensuring that they meet them in liaison with the young person, their family and social worker. Staff assist young people in making or maintaining contact with their families where this is safe and agreed by all parties. One social worker says, 'the contact with family has been smoothly organised by the home and co-ordinated by them. The family are very happy with how he is there and the co-operation they receive from staff.' Staff aid young people in addressing all of their health needs including where necessary mental health issues. Young people use key working sessions to discuss relationship issues, general health and safe sex to ensure they and others stay safe.

All young people have the opportunity to attend an education or work programme. Staff work exceptionally hard to encourage young people to engage with their education programmes and that they are properly prepared for them. Young people are supported to access and choose a wide range of recreational activities. Staff work with community groups, police community support officers and others to creatively expand the choice of activities available to young people to include fun educational activities.

Young people have highly personalised bedrooms which reflect their likes, hobbies and personal preferences. They live in an environment made safe by well-managed adherence to health and safety requirements and standards.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people say that they feel safe in the home and they like living there. They say that there can be bullying but that staff intervene rapidly to keep them safe. Staff have a vigorous and creative response to bullying both addressing it directly and seeking to provide young people with a clear understanding of how to stay safe and

why bullying occurs. The approach leads to a reduction in bullying and improved relationships between the young people. Young people enjoy excellent relationships with staff and have very regular key working sessions which aid them in addressing all personal issues including, religious requirements, sexual health, healthy eating and attitudes to others. The manager applies rigorous recruitment and selection procedures to ensure that only appropriate staff work with the young people and to maintain diversity in the staff team. The manager has recruited bank staff to provide continuity in staffing and to avoid the use of agency staff which had contributed to unrest in the young people.

Young people experience care from staff knowledgeable in safeguarding and well trained in such procedures. Staff apply procedures in practice to keep young people safe. Staff maintain highly detailed risk assessments on the young people which clearly identify triggers to behaviours, high risk situations and protective measures to keep all parties safe. The manager works closely with local agencies, including the police, to ensure that there are appropriate and prompt responses to young people going missing and to ensure a safe return.

Young people live in a home which is safe and provides an appropriately secure environment. Staff work hard at maintaining good relationships with neighbours to provide a positive environment for young people. Staff ensure that the environment is well maintained with due regard to young people's choices. Young people take part in very regular, excellently recorded fire drills and evacuations of the building improving their safety. Staff ensure that there is regular and comprehensive testing of all fire equipment and a speedy response to any faults to maintain this safe environment for young people.

Young people engage in regular discussion and comment on their placement plans and behavioural targets giving them more control and responsibility for their own behaviours. Staff engage well with young people minimising situations where physical interventions are necessary. The manager provides excellent guidance on how to record these incidents to enable detailed analysis to ensure safe interventions with young people. Young people comment on sanctions and staff encourage them to create their own allowing them greater control over the resolution of difficult behaviours. Staff occasionally do not record all sanctions in the log book and some financial sanctions are so excessive that they have no meaningful impact on the young people. Staff generally seek restorative measures with young people engaging them in a positive resolution of the damage, disruption or inappropriate behaviour. This promotes more understanding of the impact of their behaviour on others.

Leadership and management

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

Young people live in a home which is excellently managed. Clear direction is provided by the appropriately qualified and highly experienced manager to staff. The manager ensures that the home runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis modelling good practice to staff. This ensures high standards for young people. Staff say that the manager is,

'brilliant' and is not afraid to get her hands dirty. Young people like and respect the manager saying, 'she is really good she gets everyone well organised'. The manager maintains and adjusts the Statement of Purpose ensuring that it is clear, up to date and accessible to parents and social workers. Young people have their care enhanced by a speedy response to any recommendations or requirements from inspections or regulatory visits.

Young people enjoy excellent care and assistance with their complex needs from a well-qualified and highly motivated staff team. Staff receive regular supervision and annual appraisals to aid them in meeting the young people's needs. In addition supervision addresses any gaps in their knowledge.

Young people have a range of role models within the diverse staff group which meets their own cultural diversity as well as providing a spread of age and gender. Staff training is comprehensive being a mix of e-learning and formal courses to equip staff with the necessary skills and knowledge to meet the complex care, health and behavioural issues of the young people. The staff team are qualified to a minimum of level 3 in providing care for young people. All new staff undertake appropriate induction training and enrol on level 3 courses within six months, to ensure young people continue to receive excellent care.

Young people live in a home which provides them with reasonable resources. They are involved in all decisions about changes in the home which gives young people a clear sense of ownership. For example, young people are engaged in developing the rather dated dining room to use as leisure space.

The Registered Manager makes excellent use of the detailed management information gathered, during the monthly monitoring processes, tracking progress and identifying patterns and trends. This ensures the home meets all young people's needs. The manager maintains a development plan for the home demonstrating an excellent understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Monthly management reports produced by the manager clearly identify key issues for staff to work on to continue high standards in performance.

Young people can access their files which contain excellent detail on how they wish to be cared for and have their cultural, linguistic and religious needs met. Staff store files securely and assist or enable young people to record their comments on them. Files are excellent, well laid out and give a clear picture of how to care for each young person.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.