

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Brian Mcquoid
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This privately operated children's home offers short-term respite placements for up to eight young people with learning and physical disabilities, who have complex care needs.

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**.

The overall effectiveness of the service is good. Young people with varied and complex needs receive high quality, individualised care within an environment where their welfare is central to how the home operates. The home works very closely with parents and external agencies in relation to all aspects of young people's welfare and relationships between young people and staff are extremely positive. Staff successfully promote positive outcomes for the young people they care for, and help them to make real progress in areas of their lives. The home provides a safe and secure physical environment and high staffing levels help to ensure young people are suitably protected from harm at all times. Staff have a good understanding of safe working practice, with an acute awareness of each young person's needs and the associated risks they may experience. The home's manager provides good leadership and is very effective in overseeing the implementation of the home's development plan. They are, however, not in receipt of regular supervision or appraisal and it is a recommendation of this report that this matter is addressed.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- make suitable arrangements for the professional supervision of the registered person and their annual appraisal. (NMS 19.3, 19.6)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Outcomes for young people at the home are outstanding given their starting points at the time of placement. Staff are highly skilled at working with the young people they care for and possess a keen understanding of their individual needs. Young people's relationships with staff are excellent. The home works in close partnership with parents and placing social workers, all of whom have a very high regard for the service. They describe communication with staff as excellent and say they feel very welcome during their regular visits. Working relationships with external agencies are extremely good and have contributed highly effectively in promoting positive outcomes for young people. Stakeholders, parents and placing authorities describe staff as being 'brilliant' in dealing with behaviour and that they had achieved, 'lots of success' in reducing the anxiety of one young person. 'He has made significant progress since being there, and is definitely more mature', and, 'has come on in leaps and bounds' were others.

Comprehensive care plans support the delivery of highly personalised care which is extremely successful in addressing the physical, emotional, and psychological needs of young people. The homes accommodation provides an environment well suited for meeting the needs of young people with disabilities. Specialist equipment and well trained staff enable young people with complex health needs to be remarkably well cared for. Young people's school attendance is excellent and staff are fully supportive of their education. Great detail is paid to the transition process for any young person moving to another placement and staff work very closely with those involved to ensure the process is successful. Seeking the views of young people is an integral aspect of how the home operates and being able to choose the décor of their bedroom is an excellent example of this. Excellent provision is made to ensure young people maintain contact with their families, with both parents and grandparents being regular visitors. 'Absolutely brilliant', and 'an excellent service', was how one placing social worker described the home.

Quality of care

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

Young people with varied and complex needs receive an excellent quality of highly individualised care at the home. Comprehensive care plans support extremely effective care practice and young people are treated with respect and dignity while having their personal needs well met in all areas of their daily lives. Relationships between young people and staff are excellent and staff have a sensitive understanding of each young person's needs and the techniques to communicate very effectively with them. This includes those young people who are non verbal and for whom staff use a variety of means such as PECS (picture exchange communication system) and symbols to communicate. Staff are skilled at positively engaging young people; involving them and seeking their views is a central aspect of

how the home operates. Young people are provided with choices as much as possible in all areas of their daily lives and staff meet regularly with them to ascertain their views about living at the home. Partnerships with parents and external agencies are exceptionally effective in supporting the delivery of care to young people, including those with complex health needs where there are direct links at all times with health agencies.

Young people's school attendance is excellent and staff are fully supportive of their education. One young person was receiving an element of education on the premises during the holiday period in order to prepare them for a transition to a residential educational placement at the beginning of the Autumn term. Staff from the future placement had already visited the home to meet with staff and to gain information. The home, a large detached property, has been specifically converted and extended to meet the needs of the young people it accommodates and contains specialised facilities, such as a sensory room, outside play area and specially designed bathrooms. All children have their own rooms and those in longer term placement have been able to choose the colour their rooms are painted. Acquiring a trampoline and paddling pool, and contributing to menus are further examples of young people being consulted about matters affecting them.

Staff at the home are creative in providing young people with lots of opportunities to do things they enjoy doing. Community facilities both locally and those further afield are used regularly and there are excellent resources within the home for recreational activities. Arts and craft and baking are two examples of activities enjoyed regularly by young people. Parents and placing social workers are overwhelmingly positive about the service.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

The home makes good provision for ensuring the safety and well-being of young people. Young people are cared for safely within an environment which is safe and secure and where their welfare is paramount. The management of risk is extremely good and staff have a perceptive awareness of the risks associated with each individual young person and their vulnerabilities. High staffing levels ensure appropriate supervision at all times and include two-to-one staffing while in the community for those young people who may have no sense of danger and may attempt to run off from staff. There have been no instances of young people being missing from the home since the previous inspection. Staff have a good understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities and of safe working practice. They receive training relating to safeguarding and in the provision of safe care for young people with complex health needs. There is clearly an open culture within the home where any allegations of harm are dealt with fairly and according to procedures.

Staff at the home successfully promote the development of positive behaviours and manage any challenging behaviour in a safe manner. Physical restraint is only ever

used as a last resort and detailed records show staff use a variety of techniques to avoid having to hold a young person. These include clear instructions, redirection, distraction, reassurance and a change of face to reduce conflict. Parents and placing social workers are very positive about how staff manage behaviour and enable young people to make really positive progress in this area. One social worker said staff are, 'Brilliant in dealing with behaviour'. Staff also work very closely with external specialist services such as CAMHS (children and adolescent mental health service). Internal safety audits and regular health and safety reviews ensure a safe environment. Fire safety arrangements are extremely good; all checks and tests are carried out as required and each young person has an individual fire risk assessment linked to the evacuation procedures. Recruitment procedures are implemented effectively and provide adequate safeguards for the welfare of young people.

Leadership and management

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

Leadership and management of the service are good with a well-qualified and experienced manager providing clear and effective leadership. Parents and placing social workers value the service; the stated aims and objectives are clearly well met. The home runs smoothly with established operational systems and staffing structure ensuring all contingencies are catered for. This includes successfully ensuring staffing levels are maintained at the prescribed levels at all times. Agency workers used are provided with a comprehensive induction programme and do not compromise the excellent consistency of care provided for young people. A well established and experienced staff group have good quality supervision and their training needs are identified and met. Staffing levels are maintained at a high level at all times and are successful in ensuring the varied and complex needs of young people are able to be met. However, there is currently no established system for providing the manager with professional supervision and appraisal.

The home now has an ongoing development plan, in line with the one recommendation made at the last inspection. This contains realistic targets and which demonstrates a clear commitment to continuing improvement for the benefit of young people. Revising daily records to better evidence outcomes for young people is one example of improvements made since the previous inspection. There have been no complaints received since the last full inspection and the home has a good track record of addressing requirements and recommendations. The Statement of Purpose has been updated. The home is adequately resourced; the physical environment is well maintained and work is underway to improve the garden area for young people. Regulation 33 reports are carried out as required and the home's manager provides effective monitoring of the home's overall operation and the welfare of young people.

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.