

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Brian Mcquoid
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is privately owned and is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to eight young people with learning and/or physical disabilities. Short breaks, long-term assessment and support periods of care are provided.

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 home is good with positive outcomes being successfully achieved for young people. Young people enjoy staying there; they feel safe and have excellent relationships with the staff who care for them. Care planning processes effectively support the delivery of highly individualised care and help ensure that the varied and sometimes complex needs of individual young people are met.

Seeking the views of young people is an integral aspect of how the home operates and they are very positive about their experience of staying there. The views of parents and placing authorities are sought routinely on a regular basis and they have a high regard for the service and the care provided.

There is a newly-appointed manager in post who ensures that the home runs smoothly. The manager has clear plans for developing and improving the service. There are no breaches of regulations or failures to meet standards that are having an adverse effect upon the welfare of young people.

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 the home provides a comfortable and homely environment that is well maintained and decorated (NMS 10.3)
- ensure that individual case records are kept up to date (NMS 22)
- ensure that the result of all statutory reviews are recorded on the child's file, and individuals responsible for pursuing actions at the home arising from reviews are clearly identified. (NMS 25.8)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Outcomes for young people at the home are good. They are very happy staying there; they feel safe and well cared for and they develop and sustain excellent relationships with the staff who look after them. Staff treat young people with respect as individuals, adopting an approach which helps them maintain and develop a positive view of themselves. Young people are consulted as much as possible about matters affecting them. They are encouraged and supported to maximise their ability to do things for themselves and make a positive contribution to the home; for example, by helping with household tasks and assisting with meal preparation.

Young people's school attendance is excellent and their educational progress is sustained while placed at the home. Social activity is being successfully encouraged and young people enjoy participating in a wide range of activities, both within the home and in the community. A fun day in a local country park, organised by another of the provider's homes, and a trip to London during the summer holidays are examples of this. Young people make good progress in relation to their behaviour while at the home and staff are very good at responding to the specific needs of those who arrive at short notice. Parents are able to visit the home to see their children and routinely have regular contact with them. One parent commented, 'my son has received fantastic support.'

Quality of care

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

The quality of care provided for young people is good, with their welfare central to practice within the home. They enjoy extremely positive relationships with staff and successfully spend time in social situations with other young people. Group and individual meetings are held regularly, with records kept. Seeking the views of young people is an integral aspect of how the home operates.

Parents are very involved in the care of their children and staff have a good understanding of their responsibility to advocate for young people. Good quality plans support the delivery of highly individualised care for young people with diverse and sometimes complex needs. 'Needs always met to the highest standards', and 'staff have an excellent understanding of young people's needs', are comments

received by the home from a placing social worker and parent respectively. The home had also received high praise from a parent when they had provided support which enabled the young person to attend a family wedding.

The home provides a healthy environment where young people with complex health needs are well cared for, and where staff work closely with the health professionals involved with individual young people. The home has a designated medication room and the arrangements for the management and administration of medication are safe and effective. School attendance is excellent and there are good working relationships with the schools attended by young people. Young people enjoy a range of activities which are available to them both within the home and in the local and wider community. A soft play room and a pool within the garden are well used by young people. Activities during the summer holiday period included a trip to London.

The home's location and design are well suited for its purpose and the overall standard of maintenance is generally good. However, there are some areas which do not reflect a high standard of maintenance. For example, the lounge carpet and furniture looks old and worn; some items of furniture are broken and the décor in some rooms needs refreshing.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Provision for ensuring the safety of young people is good. The home provides an environment within which young people feel safe and where they are suitably protected from harm. Bullying or targeting type behaviours are not a significant problem in the home and are dealt with very effectively when they do occur. Young people very rarely go missing from the home, with only one incident since the previous full inspection. This incident was responded to appropriately, with steps taken to minimise the chance of a re-occurrence. Staff are very aware of the specific vulnerabilities of individual young people and respond accordingly. All young people have detailed risk assessments which identify strategies to minimise the risks that they present and include such measures as two-to-one staffing for some young people to ensure they are safe while out in the community. Safeguarding training is undertaken by all staff and there is a culture of transparency within the home where any incidents of poor practice are challenged and dealt with robustly and according to procedures.

Staff adopt a successful and positive approach to managing young people's behaviour, with detailed individual plans in place. The use of sanctions and of physical intervention is at a very low level within the home and staff employ a number of techniques to avoid the use of any form of physical restraint. The premises are suitably safe and secure with good arrangements for monitoring and addressing all matters associated with health and safety. This includes comprehensive audits, which take place twice yearly. Specialist equipment, such as hoists, are serviced regularly and the electrical and gas installations are inspected at

the required frequencies. External fire safety audits are carried out annually and appropriate action has been taken to address the recommendations of the most recent report. Young people have personal emergency evacuation plans and regular practice evacuations are taking place. Recruitment procedures are being effectively implemented and provide the necessary safeguards to protect the welfare of young people.

Leadership and management

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

Leadership and management of the home is adequate overall, but with many aspects which are good. A newly-appointed manager is in post and at the time of the inspection had just submitted an application to become registered with Ofsted. Staff are enthusiastic about the new appointment and the home has continued to operate smoothly and effectively on a day-to-day basis since the appointment. The new manager has a very good understanding of the service and has clear plans to develop and improve the provision. However, these have yet to be implemented. The home has a good track record of addressing requirements and recommendations from previous inspections and is good at responding to any concerns or complaints received. Young people and their parents speak positively of the service and the aims and objectives as detailed in the Statement of Purpose are clearly being met. The home is resourced sufficiently to be able to meet the needs of young people. However, the physical environment is currently not being maintained to a high standard.

The home employs sufficient staff and there is the ability to increase staffing levels should it be necessary to meet any increased needs of young people being cared for. Staff are very enthusiastic and positive about working in the home. They receive good support and sufficient training which enables them to provide good quality safe care that meets the diverse needs of young people. Regulation 33 visits to the home take place as required with young people being consulted as part of the process. Reports of visits are extremely thorough and are being used to drive forward improvements to the service. The home has positive and constructive relationships with the external agencies involved with young people but do not have an established relationship with the local police and this is to be addressed by the manager. Records are stored securely within the home, however there is inconsistency in the auditing of young people's case files. Some are not up to date and do not contain all of the necessary information. Appropriate action is taken to address significant events occurring in relation to young people and all relevant authorities are always informed.

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* and the evaluation schedule for the inspection of children's homes.