

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Caroline Jones
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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

This is a private home that provides care and accommodation for up to five young people of single gender with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home specialises in providing a therapeutic service for young people.

Overall effectiveness

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

Young people make good progress in relation to their starting points and continue to develop in a structured and supportive environment. They achieve better outcomes in their education, safety, health and emotional development. Young people like living at the home and are involved in its daily running. Staff promote young people's safety and protection. The Registered Manager is committed to reviewing behaviour and risk management strategies to ensure that young people's rights and privacy are respected.

Young people feel safe living in the home and most of them feel that staff care about them. Staff encourage young people's independence, although more development is needed to ensure young people take appropriate risks as part of growing up. They have good relationships with staff and feel able to talk to them. This builds young people's confidence in raising concerns or worries. Staff work constructively with families and professionals to make sure that young people gain the help, advice and support they need. Regular feedback from young people's families and partner agencies about the quality of care that young people receive is not routinely sought, therefore opportunities to learn and improve can be missed.

The home is well managed by a committed and enthusiastic Registered Manager. Good monitoring examines the quality of care and plans are in place for improvement. However, analyses of trends needs developing further to continually improve the service to young people. Additionally, the children's guide requires updating to provide young people with information on how to contact independent advice from advocacy services and their Independent Reviewing Officer. Anti-discriminatory practice is reinforced through day-to-day care and young people have a good understanding of their background and identity.

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 views of young people, their family, social worker and Independent Reviewing Officer are sought regularly on young people's care, unless in individual cases this is not appropriate (NMS 1.4)
- ensure that the children's guide sets out how young people can contact their Independent Reviewing Officer and advocacy services (NMS 13.5)
- ensure that monitoring utilises the information on emerging patterns or trends to continually improve practice (NMS 21.2)
- ensure that young people are encouraged to take appropriate risks as a normal part of growing up. (NMS 4.4)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make good progress in their development, notably their education and emotional health. Staff work closely with professional therapists to ensure young people gain a better understanding and appreciation of their personal circumstances to move forward in life. Young people are growing in confidence and continue to learn from their experiences. Staff work individually with young people to encourage their skills, abilities and independence. Further work is needed to ensure young people develop more autonomy for adulthood, including taking appropriate risks as part of growing up.

Young people are fully involved in the development and evaluation of their placement plan and complete their own child-friendly version of the plan. They participate in young people's meetings and key worker sessions to contribute their ideas for change and improvement. There is also a 'listen ear' box for suggestions and ideas. These practices help to empower and value young people.

Staff are proactive in ensuring young people lead a healthy lifestyle. They take part in regular physical activities including outdoor activities, horse riding, ice skating and gymnasium. Young people are registered with general medical practitioners, dentists and opticians and have individual plans to target their health needs. Medication is stored safely and records are in place for administration of medication. All staff receive suitable training to support health and well-being and this contributes to the development of young people.

Staff have high expectations for young people and promote their educational achievement. Young people have an excellent record of school attendance and significant achievement is highlighted within education reports. Staff forge relationships with professionals and advocate on behalf of young people to ensure they reach their potential. There is an excellent programme of educational activities including music and drumming lessons.

Staff value the importance of contact for young people in understanding their identity

and heritage. Individual contact plans are in place with local authorities to ensure young people's contact is safe, enjoyable and positive. Staff facilitate contact with family to ensure young people remain in touch with those significant to them. Moreover, staff are knowledgeable of the emotional impact of contact upon young people and ensure that they are sensitively supported.

Quality of care

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

Young people develop in a structured and supportive environment. Individual placement plans and staff's knowledge of young people's likes and dislikes contributes to the good standards of care received by young people. Young people comment: 'I like living here, I like the staff, some I get on with better than others.' Young people have a good understanding of their heritage and staff recognise their individual needs in terms of identity, gender, culture, and faith tradition. This encourages pride and value in young people's backgrounds.

Young people enjoy good professional relationships with staff, who know them well. These relationships provide a firm base in understanding young people and promoting their development. Staff have high expectations for young people and are committed to enabling them to overcome any difficulties they face. Young people comment: 'I would give it (the home) a good.' Young people's views are sought regularly in day-to-day life, young people's meetings and key worker sessions. Young people have independent visitors and have used the children's rights services to gain advocacy. Young people know how to make a complaint and have used this to settle their dissatisfaction.

Young people live in a healthy environment in which their physical and emotional well-being is promoted. They engage in activities, see family and have private time with staff to discuss personal and individual issues. Young people have access to health care services and a clinical psychologist to meet their personal developmental needs. Staff involve young people in menu planning and cooking to encourage their independence and knowledge of nutrition and health.

Staff promote young people's achievement in education and have made good relationships with teachers and social workers. Young people attend educational provision regularly and make excellent progress. Staff emphasise the value of education and provide learning and experiences to complement the young person's education. Each young person has an achievement file that they are proud to show. These practices enable young people to experience success and pride in themselves.

Young people live in a structured home environment where they are closely supervised and monitored in line with the local authority plans. These measures are used to safeguard young people. The Registered Manager is committed to reviewing these practices to ensure that young people's privacy is respected. The home is beautifully maintained and furnished and young people have their own bedrooms that are personalised and reflect their interests.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Firm arrangements are in place to safeguard and protect young people. Staff receive safeguarding training that is refreshed and have a good understanding of their role and duties in safeguarding young people. Young people feel safe and receive specialist therapy to address individual vulnerabilities and risks to encourage young people to keep themselves safe from potential harm.

Structured boundaries, one-to-one care, and respect between staff and young people provides the basis for managing behaviour. There are no incidents of restraint and staff are clear that this is only used as a very last resort to prevent harm to young people. Rewards and consequences and adult role modelling encourage young people's positive behaviour and assists them in accepting responsibility for their actions. The recordings of sanctions and physical interventions are reviewed and include the opportunity for young people to record their views. The Registered Manager recognises that their approach to behaviour management requires review and is committed to doing this. Staff reinforce an anti-bullying culture and sound processes are in place to respond and record missing from home incidents.

Young people live in a home where health and safety matters are considered in ensuring a safe, clean and secure environment. Staff carry out routine health and safety checks around the home. Safety and insurance certificates are up to date and fire drills take place to ensure young people and staff are aware of an emergency evacuation route in the event of a fire.

Young people benefit from a competent staff team. A rigorous recruitment process, Criminal Records Bureau and reference checks are all undertaken before any appointment of staff is made. Staff are subject to an induction, probationary period of work and appraisal to further ensure their competence in caring for young people. Records of visitors are maintained and identification is requested where appropriate to ensure the safety of young people.

Leadership and management

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

The home is efficiently managed by a dedicated and forward thinking Registered Manager. Throughout the inspection the Registered Manager was extremely receptive and enthusiastic for the development of the service to young people. The Registered Manager works directly with young people and staff to monitor young people's welfare, which ensures the good standards of care and the safety of young people. The Registered Manager provides leadership and accountability, therefore staff fully understand the roles and responsibilities delegated to them. The children's guide is accessible and requires updating to include contact information for independent advice from advocacy services and the Independent Reviewing Officer.

There are various systems in place to monitor the quality of care which include monthly visits by a designated person in accordance with regulation. Although, monitoring is very good not all the data is fully analysed to identify continual improvement. This means that any emerging patterns or trends are not always utilised to develop the service further and improve outcomes. Regular feedback from young people's families and partner agencies about the quality of care that young people receive is not routinely sought, therefore opportunities to learn and improve can be missed. The Registered Manager is well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the home and has plans for the development of the service to young people.

Staff confirm that they are very well supported and the organisation demonstrates a commitment to professional development. Most staff have attained the required qualification and two staff are to commence this in the near future. Regular quality supervision, team meetings and training opportunities all contribute to the competence of the staff in providing good care to young people.

Staff have a good understanding of young people's individual needs. Plans are in place to actively recruit a diverse staff team to ensure a gender balance of role models for young people. Staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and have high expectations for young people. Recordings are good and provide a picture of young people's daily lives. Young people's information is securely stored and confidentiality respected to protect their safety and privacy.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.