

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC396721
Inspection date	29/05/2012
Inspector	Denise Perry
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	28/02/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This children's home is operated by a private company and can accommodate and provide care for one young person who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties and/or learning disabilities. The company has its own school for children not attending mainstream education.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service 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 **outstanding**.

The home is providing an exceptional standard of personalised, well planned care to young people. Staff provide a high level of care in a supporting environment that enables young people to make sustainable, meaningful progress. Staff have in-depth knowledge about young people's personal needs and backgrounds. Individualised care planning, sensitive to specific needs, practically assists young people to greatly improve their self-confidence, emotional resilience and social skills. As a result, young people are making outstanding progress across all aspects of their welfare and development.

Young people are safe and feel safe living in their home. They talk extremely positively about staff and share successful and meaningful relationships with them. There is an atmosphere of openness and honesty within the home, whereby young people feel confident to share their views and feelings. This contributes to young people's sense of security and safety.

Strong and dynamic management ensures outstanding quality of care and meaningful childcare practice. This has promoted young people's educational outcomes and achievements. The home demonstrates its ongoing capacity for continuous improvement. Comprehensive, informative and rigorous monitoring systems confirm the excellent quality of care underpinning a firm focus on maintaining and maximising positive outcomes for young people. There are identified minor areas of improvement relating to the home's recording systems and Statement of Purpose. However, this does not currently impact negatively on the young people living in the home.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure the home has a clear statement of purpose which is available to and understood by staff and children and reflected in any policies, procedures and guidance (NMS 13.1)
- ensure the Children's Guide includes how a child can contact the Children's Rights Director (NMS 13.5)
- maintain in the home a record of the recruitment and vetting checks and ensure these vetting checks includes telephone enquiries being made following written references and the level of CRB disclosures. (NMS 16.1 and NMS 16.3)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people are making immense progress in all aspects of their lives. They attend mainstream school and their educational achievement is exceptional in relation to their starting points. Young people have personal aspirations and have confirmed plans in place for their future. They have been successful in gaining employment through an apprenticeship scheme when they leave school. As a result, young people's future prospects are bright.

Young people make a successful contribution to their home and the wider community. They have formed and sustained meaningful friendships with young people who live locally. This has enabled young people to integrate positively into their community. Young people excitedly look forward to attending their school prom and the preparations this entails, such as clothes shopping and booking beauty treatments. They enjoy having their friends visit their home on a regular basis and benefit from accessing social activities such as youth clubs, going to the cinema and having trips out to places of interest.

Young people are effectively supported in developing their independent life skills, such as laundry, budgeting, cooking, and general household tasks. As a result, they recognise the importance of building on their skills to prepare themselves for a successful transition to adulthood.

Young people are extremely confident and at ease in the company of staff. They share their feelings and views openly and honestly with staff about personal matters that are important to them. This includes discussions on sexual health, staying safe, drugs, free time and relationships with family and friends. This means that young people are flourishing and making informed choices about the lifestyles that they

lead. A young person said, 'I love it here, the staff are amazing. I see this as my home with great people around me.'

Young people make exceptional progress to develop a positive self view, emotional resilience and knowledge and understanding of their background. They understand and discuss the complexities of their family relationships in a mature and insightful way. This helps them to have a say in maintaining appropriate levels of contact with people who are important to them.

Quality of care

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

Staff have consistently high aspirations for the young people they care for. The Registered Manager and key staff attend school events such as parent's evenings and they take an active interest in young people's educational development. They work exceptionally well with external agencies and placing authorities. This ensures young people receive the support that they need. Staff's proactive practice ensures young people promptly receive additional support from professionals to gain advice and guidance with revision techniques and planning. This has enabled young people to achieve educationally and develop in confidence and abilities.

Young people share excellent and constructive relationships with staff. Young people seek positive involvement and feel valued because staff consistently go above and beyond their duty of care. Staff welcome and encourage young people's friends to visit the home and play an active role in promoting appropriate friendships. This practice ensures young people have equal opportunities to maximise their lives, as their peers do.

Staff have the welfare and well-being of young people as a prime focus in their daily practice. They continually review young people's individualised risk assessments. These are comprehensive, detailed, well written and updated to reflect changes in young people's lives as and when they occur. Young people are actively and fully involved in their placement plans, which also thoroughly identify the relevant equality and diversity issues for each individual. This means that young people's views and feelings are always considered and appropriate action taken when necessary.

The home provides a healthy environment where young people are able to access the services and support they need to meet their physical, emotional and psychological needs. When young people experience setbacks, staff take swift action to ensure they are well supported. Young people have direct access to the company's clinical psychologists who provide extensive support to help them move forward in their lives. This helps young people to take control of their emotions and manage their own behaviour. The involvement from therapeutic services has significantly reduced and in some cases ceased. This is because young people have gained knowledge and understanding of their backgrounds and evaluated what this means to them in a mature way. Staff and external agency support have contributed to young people making immense progress in their lives.

Young people know how to make a complaint and have access to the complaint procedure. The Young Person's guide includes contact details for independent people who can advocate on young people's behalf. However, it does not include details for the Children's Right Director. This does not impact negatively on young people's rights, as they are able to share their views through daily discussions with staff, key working sessions and young people's meetings.

The home is appropriately located, designed and maintained to a good standard. This ensures that the physical environment meets young people's needs. Young people's rooms are personalised, decorated and furnished in a way that is comfortable for them, so that they feel valued and safe. Young people are confident in welcoming and talking with visitors appropriately.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people do not engage in risk taking behaviours and behave appropriately. They talk enthusiastically and positively about what it is like living in their home. Staff's proactive and creative safeguarding practice has enabled young people to take proportionate risks as part of their growth and development. A young person said, 'I absolutely feel safe; staff look out for me and trust me to do things on my own.' Young people occasionally spend planned time on their own in the home or in the community. This practice is in agreement with placing authorities and reflected in young people's clear risk assessments. This affords young people the opportunity to build trusting relationships, with a level of independence reflecting their individual needs.

Staff follow individualised behaviour management plans diligently. They focus on promoting young people's positive behaviours and implement mutually agreed consistent and fair boundaries. Young people are highly valued and consistently involved in their plans. As a result, there has been no incidence of physical restraint.

All staff are carefully selected and checked through the organisation's recruitment procedures, although the home does not maintain a record of the checks. This record was made available for inspection but provides insufficient detail on the level of Criminal Record Bureau disclosures and references being followed up by telephone enquiries. However, the checks themselves and the recruitment process remain robust and so this shortfall has no negative impact on young people's safety.

The home has robust health and safety procedures in place. Staff carry out fire drills regularly with young people so that they are knowledgeable about evacuations and can exit the home quickly in an emergency. All checks are up to date and good quality environmental risk assessments promote young people's safety.

Leadership and management

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

There were no requirements or recommendations made at the previous inspection. The Registered Manager is a strong leader and runs the home exceptionally well. He consistently communicates high expectations to staff about sustaining improvement. High quality staff supervisions and team meetings are underpinned by a robust development plan which clearly identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the home. The Registered Manager reviews information about the progress young people make and their outcomes. This has secured further development and improvement in their lives. For example, the manager obtained external agency support to improve educational outcomes for young people.

The Registered Manager is resourceful and plans ahead to ensure staff are deployed effectively. All existing and experienced staff hold relevant qualifications and new staff have commenced the level 3 Children and Young People's Workforce Diploma. Staff complete mandatory training that supports them in their roles. In addition, the manager identifies supplementary training that reflects the more specific needs of young people. As a result, the team's skills and abilities unreservedly match the needs of young people living in the home. This contributes to young people's quality of care and they benefit from a consistent, stable and well-trained staff team.

There are rigorous systems in place to monitor quality of care which include monthly visits by a designated person. Regulation 33 monitoring is welcomed by the manager and is an effective aid for continuing improvement of the home. Senior staff complete specific monitoring tasks and the manager oversees this. This empowers staff to take ownership and be involved in the development of the home. Staff are competent and understand the home's systems, policies and procedures. They maintain clear and comprehensive records that are securely stored. Case file records are detailed, regularly reviewed and contribute to an understanding of young people's backgrounds, experiences, progress and future plans. Consequently, young people benefit from working with a well-informed and committed staff team.

The Registered Manager meets the aims and objectives in the home's Statement of Purpose. However, from an organisational perspective this statement does not reflect the services they provide to children and young people with learning disabilities. This has no impact on young people currently residing in the home and therefore does not impede on the services provided.

The home's physical environment is maintained to a high standard and the maintenance programme ensures required action is taken to address any work needed. This ensures that the environment is physically safe and the security reflects the individual characteristics of the 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.