

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Trevor Hall
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This children's home is operated by a private company. The home provides care for up to two young people of either gender with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

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 home has been judged as being good for overall effectiveness. Young people receive an outstanding quality of care because staff provide consistency, stability and a safe nurturing environment. As a result young people make good progress on personal, emotional and behavioural issues.

Effective healthcare, assessments and treatment ensures that young people's individual health needs are fully met. Young people's behaviour, health, education, social and safeguarding needs are effectively supported and positively promoted. Highly personalised placement plans effectively capture all aspects of young people's needs and the care that is planned to meet them. Priority is given to helping young people develop their sense of self-worth and to help them to maximise their educational and personal development.

Safeguarding young people's welfare is placed at the highest priority both in terms of their health and in terms of safety of the environment and promoting their physical and mental well-being. The home's managers provide effective leadership, which results in staff being clearly focused on meeting the needs of young people. Relationships between staff and young people are attentive, caring and very supportive.

Young people benefit from living in a home that is consistently managed and organised to ensure that each young person has their needs met. Very effective internal and external monitoring processes provide continuous quality assurance which helps to maintain the home's outstanding standard of care and assists in

promoting the on-going improvement of the service. There is a need, however, to ensure that external monitoring reports are shared with the regulator at the required frequency.

Areas for improvement

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
33 (2001)	ensure a copy of the report required to be made under paragraph(4)(c) is supplied to the HMCI (this refers to the prompt sending of regulation 33 visitors' reports to the HMCI). (Regulation 33(5)(a))	30/09/2013

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people are making good progress in all aspects of their lives because staff are flexible and responsive in meeting their on-going and changing needs. Staff respond positively to young people, helping them build confidence and skills that are consistent with their abilities and potential. Attachments are strong between young people and staff and these bonds are used positively to promote progress and challenge young people to address areas of concern.

Young people clearly benefit from the security and structure that exists within this home. Boundaries are consistent and help to give young people a feeling of security without denying them their individuality. They enjoy extremely positive and very supportive relationships with the staff group, based upon mutual respect and positive regard; this helps them to improve self-image and build up their emotional resilience. The extremely competent staff team lead by an experienced and dedicated manager have successfully created a nurturing environment that has well-defined boundaries, but remains both homely and supportive.

Young people have ready access to all the primary health services they require. They receive the support and encouragement they need to access required medical appointments. Young people take an increasingly independent role in the provision of their own health care, as appropriate, in order to help them prepare for adulthood. Young people access specialist health provisions as required including any support needed with their emotional health. They benefit substantially from the therapeutic procedures applied in the home. Their individuality is valued and promoted. Sensitive

issues are worked through methodically and professionally in ways that young people understand and accept. This means they learn to value themselves and have confidence in the adults around them. Young people are successfully encouraged to express their feelings and emotions. The home promotes a positive ethos that fully embraces diversity and difference; as a result, young people learn to appreciate the significance of differing values and cultures and to have respect for other people. This ethos also promotes positive behaviours, assists young people to understand the consequences of their actions, and encourages alternative and more acceptable responses.

Regular attendance and improving attainment at school is an outstanding feature of the home. Current residents attend one of the organisation's own registered education units, located some distance from the home. However, attendance at mainstream schools or colleges would be supported if this better meet the young person's abilities and needs. The daily routine of formal education, with care staff supporting classroom activities enables young people to make steady progress. Individualised study programmes support this progress helping young people to enjoy and succeed through regular learning. Staff have very high aspirations for the young people and assist and encourage each young person to achieve to their individual potential.

Quality of care

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

The home's dedicated and skilled staff team provide an outstanding level of care and support to the young people in residence. Placing social workers comment that staff are consistent and caring and provide young people with structure and boundaries, without stifling individuality.

Young people report that staff are caring and approachable and are interested in them as individuals. They feel able to discuss sensitive issues, such as sexual health, gender identity and relationships with staff, confident that they will be none judgemental and supportive.

Young people are successfully encouraged to express their feelings and emotions. The home promotes a positive ethos that fully embraces diversity and difference; as a result, young people learn to appreciate the significance of differing values and cultures and to have respect for other people. This ethos also promotes positive behaviours and assists young people to understand the consequences of their actions. Staff expectations of what young people can achieve are high and the boundaries they place on them for their behaviour are thorough and individualised.

Care planning is very detailed and is reviewed regularly. Staff are very knowledgeable about the individualised needs of each young person and staff know what the aims are for each individuals progress. Young people's needs and development are reviewed in the light of the care they receive and as a means of acknowledging the progress they have made. Staff, young people and where

appropriate; their families are assisted to contribute effectively to such case reviews. This promotes positive relationships, good understanding and nurtures young people's sense of self-worth. As a result, young people receive very consistent care and a very clear message that they are valued as individuals and that everyone is working together for their good.

Young people live in a very healthy environment where effective services meet their identified needs. Care files contain health information and details of the young person's General Practitioner, dentist and optician. Staff support and encourage young people to access external health professionals in line with their individual needs. Staff help young people to understand what is said to them, and are assisted to take control of their own health. Staff are all trained in first aid and follow clear health plans and risk assessments for young people. Robust arrangements are in place for the safe storage and administration of medication. This ensures accurate and up-to-date records, which evidences safe practice.

Risk assessment and care planning are excellent, which ensures that staff have good up-to-date information about the young people in their care. The staff group provides the right balance between nurturing and enabling young people to develop appropriate self-reliance. Young people have their individual cultural, religious, language and racial needs identified and addressed effectively. They have regular meetings with their key worker to discuss progress and any issues of concern. Young people state that staff are approachable and acknowledge their rights and truly value their contributions.

The home works effectively with schools and other agencies to help young people get the education they need. Young people are supported and encouraged to attend regularly and to achieve to the best of their ability. Staff have high expectations of young people and this encourages young people to have high, but realistic aspirations. Staff provide structured support with young people's education including helping with homework. This helps support the impressive educational successes being achieved by the young people at the home. Young people speak positively of their education and the support and encouragement they receive. They are actively encouraged to pursue their own particular interests, or to try new activities. This increases their experiences and helps them to develop confidence in their social skills and abilities.

Young people live in a bright, well-maintained home that provides sufficient space to meet their needs. All parts of the home are decorated to a high standard and young people have good quality furniture in their bedrooms and ample storage for personal clothes and belongings. The home enjoys good links to local facilities and is within easy reach of good transport links. The home has a vehicle that means that young people have convenient transport for activities, shopping and contact visits with family.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

The home's arrangements for keeping young people safe are good. This is because staff who work with young people are knowledgeable and clear about their roles and responsibilities. Young people say that they feel safe at the home and they are happy that the staff promote their safety. The home has a comprehensive set of individualised assessments of risk for the young people in residence. These cover aspects of their potential behaviour, the environment and the activities they wish to undertake. Risk assessments are proactive, identifying potential risks and providing effective strategies to help to minimise these.

Young people say that they can talk freely with staff if they have problems. The use of sanctions is fair and consistent. Staff work hard, guided by other relevant professionals, enabling young people to moderate and improve their behaviour. There is an emphasis on recognising and rewarding positive behaviours, rather than purely punishing those behaviours identified as being unacceptable. This enables young people to develop more socially acceptable behaviour and better prepares them to interact more positively with the wider community. Young people understand that the boundaries in place are there to ensure their safety. They are invited to sign all records relating to the use of sanctions, which helps them develop understanding and responsibility.

Incidents of young people damaging property or displaying aggression towards themselves or others have reduced significantly. Incidents of young people absenting themselves from the home without permission are minimal and the home's arrangements when this occurs are robust. This represents good progress over the period of time that the young people have lived in the home. When incidents do occur staff respond helpfully and enable young people to move forward positively, make reparation and recover their dignity. Staff members' empathy arises from a good understanding of each young person's background and their individual difficulties.

Young people confirm that staff use physical interventions only as a last resort and only when necessary to ensure the safety of all. Young people also confirm that the use of physical interventions is very infrequent. Most issues are resolved by the application of skilful staff support and the sensitive application of conflict resolution techniques. The home's manager monitors any interventions, ensuring that they are necessary, applied correctly and comprehensively recorded. The manager also ensures that young people are aware of their right to complain, receive any medical attention if required or requested and that social workers and, where appropriate, parents are fully informed.

Staff receive regular and wide ranging training in safeguarding. As a result, they demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the action they should take should they have any concerns about a young person's safety or well-being. Effective working with external partners, such as the Local Authority Designated Officer, means that staff knowledge and understanding of child protection are constantly developing. Clear boundaries are set and included in each young person's behaviour management plans. Staff are aware of these plans and follow them consistently.

The home has a good range of detailed policies and procedures covering aspects such as prevention of bullying, complaints, safeguarding and behaviour management. These policies are well known to staff and are effectively implemented. Staff receive comprehensive training with regular updates in all these areas, which enables them to protect young people from the risk of harm and abuse. The regular and effective monitoring of the home's records and staff practice contribute to ensuring that young people receive safe care in line with their individual needs.

Young people live in an environment which is physically safe and appropriately secure. Locks and alarms are used appropriately and as is consistent with a domestic setting. Young people are living some distance from any public transport links, but staff ensure that they are able to gain access to community activities and all contacts which are important to them.

The home has a good health and safety regime, which ensures that all fire precautions, drills and equipment servicing are conducted routinely, consistently and within timescales set by the relevant regulations. Good staffing levels further help to keep young people safe and reduce any risk of harm. The organisation's effective recruitment procedures ensure the careful selection recruitment and retention of staff. This ensures young people are safe and have a staff team who know them well. New staff are comprehensively vetted prior to their deployment in the home and before having unsupervised access to any young person. This ensures young people are safe and have a staff team who know them well.

Leadership and management

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

The home's Registered Manager provides excellent leadership and support to the staff group. The complete focus on the quality of care and outcomes for young people maximises the effectiveness of the home. This ensures that a high quality of care is delivered to the young people living in the home and provides support and guidance to the staff group.

Staff and managers have excellent insight into how well young people's needs are being met and the outcomes being achieved. This is because the team is well established with very few changes occurring in the last year. Parents and professionals are very positive about how the service works in partnership with them and how all young people are fully included and involved in the life of the home.

All staff enjoy consistent supervision, coupled with regular team meetings and receive good training, which is refreshed frequently. Staff feel appropriately supported and have regular opportunities to discuss their role and their professional development inspired by the manager. Staff absence levels are low and young people enjoy very consistent levels of care. Open and honest dialogue helps young people learn from their mistakes. Consequently, young people make significant changes in the way they react to others and in the choices that they make. There is

strong, visible leadership which promotes high quality care and positive outcomes for young people.

The home has a clear accessible and comprehensive Statement of Purpose and young person's guide giving young people, their families and placing authorities good quality information about the services offered by the home. The home is well resourced, indicating the financial viability of the provider. The staff treat young people with the utmost respect and dignity and support them in overcoming significant and complex issues.

New staff are provided with an appropriate induction and further training which covers all mandatory areas such as safeguarding, behaviour management and first aid. The staff team have a strong focus on promoting positive outcomes for young people and to enhance their well-being. Good communication between staff ensures that young people's individual needs are consistently met.

Young people take an active part in the running of the home and they are encouraged to make their views known through discussions with staff and by attending house meetings. Staff ensure that a safe, secure and nurturing environment is maintained which assists young people to make real progress and to fulfil their individual potential.

Clear lines of accountability in the home ensure a stable and structured environment for young people. All staff members comment positively about the manager's commitment, child-centred approach, staff support and clear monitoring processes. The manager invests time in reviewing and checking the quality of reports and plans, to ensure that they support effective and high quality work with young people. It is clear that all reporting systems are regularly checked and comments made if any record fails to meet either the home's policies and procedures or national regulations. Staff duty rotas and staff deployment confirm that the home keeps sufficient staff on the duty rota at all times.

The home has a very good complaints system, young people confirm that they know how to complain and are confident that any such complaint would be dealt with effectively.

The manager has established good internal quality assurance monitoring systems; these reports help the home to develop its practice and ensure that young people are receiving the care and support they need. Regular external monitoring visits take place each month to provide additional quality assurance mechanisms and involve consulting young people wherever possible. Reports are produced of these visits, however, these have not always been sent to Ofsted as required.

The home has comprehensive development plans for continuing improvement based upon its record of accomplishment, continual staff training and ensuring that the physical environment is maintained to a high standard. Records are clear, up to date and stored securely, and would contribute significantly to the young people's understanding of their life in care, if they chose to access these documents. The

home notifies all required agencies when significant events relating to child protection occur and appropriate action is taken following such incidents to ensure the safety 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* and the evaluation schedule for the inspection of children's homes.