

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC397092
Inspection date	15/12/2011
Inspector	Martin Thomas
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	22/03/2011
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2011

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

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

The home is privately owned by Bryn Melyn Care Limited and is registered for up to two children with emotional or behavioural difficulties. The home has access to the company's educational services.

Overall effectiveness

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

The home provides highly effective individualised care for young people with high levels of need. Young people are valued as individuals and their success and heritage is celebrated. Care is based on a therapeutic model of understanding the causes of behaviour and seeking strategies to develop young people so that they can lead successful lives. The quality of relationships is outstanding. Consistent and sensitive staff enable young people to grow and succeed through positive relationships.

Young people are safe and feel safe. They make significant progress during their time in the home. They develop hobbies, learn new skills and succeed in education. Their self-esteem is developed which is evident by changed and more positive behaviours. Young people are fully engaged in the home, the contribution of their views is encouraged and they are involved in the daily running routines.

Strong management together with a very capable staff team have created a home that is child centred. Staffing levels allow for individualised care. Key workers recognise and develop young people's strengths enabling success in their lives. The home provides a nurturing environment. Very homely and well maintained surroundings symbolise the value placed in the young people.

One recommendation is made from this inspection to ensure that the records of sanctions and restraint are maintained in a form that can not be tampered with after the event. This has no direct impact on the care 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 records of sanctions and restraint are maintained in a form that can not be tampered with after the event. (Volume 5, statutory guidance, Para 2.91)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people have made exceptional progress in all areas of their lives. They have developed a positive view of themselves built through successful activities achieved in the home, and positive relationships with staff. Young people have made exceptional progress in developing patience and tolerance and social skills.

Young people regularly attend school or college, some times from very limited previous attendance. Attendance is achieved through a culture of staff expectation, ensuring regular sleep patterns and positive reinforcement and support and encouragement in the school setting. They make exceedingly good educational progress, in some cases substantially closing the gap between their attainment and their chronological age.

Young people lead healthy lives and their health needs are rigorously pursued. Young people have gained a very clear understand of medical conditions and take appropriate action to remain healthy and are supported to manage routine medical procedures. Young people understand issues of smoking, drug abuse and sexual health. Reduction in smoking and the use of illegal drugs has been impressive. Young people enjoy healthy diets and gain skills for future independence in cooking and catering for themselves as well as other independence skills, such as DIY in the house or doing their laundry. They care for their bedrooms and take a pride in their appearance.

Young people contribute to the house through daily chores and maintain their own areas. They engage and are supported in charity events through their school and are supported by staff at these events.

Young people's family contact is supported and they appreciate this. They are assisted to maintain and understand meaningful relationships and are supported if these are not successful.

Quality of care

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

Young people achieve through the consistently high aspirations that staff hold for them. Staff demonstrate a genuine commitment to and understanding of young people; care is highly individualised and nurturing. Staff and young people enjoy each others company and share daily activities, recreational times as well as the challenges of life together. Relationships are mutually respectful. One young person when asked what was good about the home replied, 'everything especially staff'.

Young people are enabled to follow and develop their interests and skills developing confidence and self-esteem alongside acceptance and understanding of others.

Hobbies pursued included mountain biking and overseas holidays. Young people talk with pride in their accomplishments. One young person gained appreciation of one financially challenged country, appreciating the difficulties others face in life and demonstrating empathy for them.

Staff implement positive and skilfully assessed responses to behaviour. Staff have been presented with challenging behaviours; however they look to understand the triggers and underlying causes so that responses are creative and lead to sustained change in behaviour. Sanctions when used are always relevant to the issue, for example damage to policy is met with the 'pay or repair' policy. Sanctions are seen as fair by young people and their usage is kept to a minimum. Behaviour management is embedded in all aspects of life in the home with staff giving clear messages through modelling behaviours and building on young people's strengths through their interests.

Young people are involved in planning wherever possible and are always engaged in care planning and encouraged to attend reviews. Daily life in the home is arranged through constant discussion with young people. A book of comments from young people is maintained; when young people's wishes can not be fulfilled they are explained to them.

Care plans are extensive and comprehensive and include a briefer 'hint and tip's' summary for quick reference. Health, education and developing social and emotional skills are well developed. There is close working with partner agencies, for example young people are supported daily in their education setting and there are good links with medical consultants, nurses and teachers ensuring a consistent approach and that support services are used to the maximum benefit of young people.

School and college courses have been supported. School attendance has greatly improved through ensuring good routines in the home and ensuring young people are ready for the day ahead.

Young people enjoy a range of activities in the home and externally. One-to-one support is provided so that young people can engage in wide range of individual activities from outings to the cinema to cake decoration or cycle rides. Activities develop young people's interests and skills building self-esteem through success and give life skills to young people.

Young people's heritage is celebrated, national emblems are proudly displayed, and national days have been celebrated.

The accommodation is maintained to very high standards creating a warm nurturing homely environment. Numerous pictures and ornaments, some created by young people, give a lived in family atmosphere. The home is well equipped with games and books, including cookery books. Individual wall planners give young people a sense of security in knowing what the day ahead has for them. Communal accommodation and bedrooms are spacious giving a range of space to be together or alone. Young people have very individualised rooms which reflect their

personalities and interests. There is ample outdoor space and sheds for outdoor equipment. Good relationships have been developed with neighbours with gifts exchanged at Christmas and neighbours offering to share activities.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are safe and say they feel very safe in the home despite at times presenting some very challenging behaviour. There is a clear understanding of risks for young people and they are helped to understand risks that they might present for them selves and others.

There are clear and creative management strategies devised, discussed and adopted by the staff group and with young people. Behaviour is understood and pragmatic practices are adopted. For example a period of young people missing from the home has been resolved through safely managed contact for that young person with the person they were running to; while key workers discussed other safety and legal issues with young people. Staff have a clear understanding of the local procedure for missing young people and good local liaison with the police is established. Staff take appropriate and decisive action to prevent young people putting themselves at risk by going missing and have appropriate responses to young people missing from care and on their return. When young people return they are welcomed and their welfare is of paramount consideration.

Positive behaviour is promoted through appropriate relationships with staff and their dedicated commitment to the welfare of individual young people. The therapeutic approach to understanding young people's background and the underlying reasons for behaviour leads to staff to work consistently and in partnership with young people. Sanctions when applied are seen as fair and relate directly to the issue. However, through skill and trusting relationships use of sanctions is kept to a minimum. Restraint has not been required in the home. The record of restraint and sanctions is recorded as required. However, the complaint and restraint records are not in a form that cannot be tampered with after the entry is made as it would be possible to extract pages from the binding.

Proactive work with young people to develop assertively assists in preventing them from potential for bullying. Relationships between young people are very good and young people said bullying was not an issue. Staff are alert to the possibility, both in the home and at school.

Staff recruitment ensures that proper checks are carried out so that only those suitable to work with young people are employed. Staff understand child protection responsibilities and how to respond in the event of an allegation or issue.

The home provides a safe environment that is free from hazards, there are regular safety checks and fire drills are carried out at different times of the day and night. All

staff have a first aid qualification.

Leadership and management

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

The home benefits from highly effective management. The manager has high expectations of staff and the development of the home and works effortlessly to achieve very positive outcomes. A very clear ethos and culture of putting young people at the centre of the service has been established by the manager which is communicated with energy and enthusiasm. Staff constantly focus on young people and seek to understand them as a guiding principle to bring about sustained change in behaviours. The Statement of Purpose is an accurate reflection of the provision. Very good and comprehensive records are maintained to support care practice.

Staffing levels meet the needs of young people providing one-to-one staff ratios with sleeping in staff; additional staff are provided for waking night cover if young people's needs require this. Staff rotas enable consistency for young people and usually a gender balance of staff on duty. Staff are frequently out engaged supporting young people in the community, for example with contact meetings, activities or at school.

A comprehensive and thorough development plan guides continuous improvement of the home. The plan was developed by the manager who was registered in June 2011 so is relatively new and is kept under review. However, timescales for completion are open ended and not time limited. Routine monitoring of the home is robust and undertaken in line with the requirements of the regulation. External monitoring on behalf of the organisation while comprehensive had limited commentary and analysis. The one recommendation of the last inspection has been completed.

Staff development and support is given a very high priority. Staff feel exceptionally well supported by the manager who sets very high expectations of staff performance. Regular staff meetings, supervision, support and training all focus on the homes purpose and the therapeutic model of care. The manager is very well qualified for her role and the staff team has a good range of experience skills and qualifications. Newly appointed staff complete the Children's Workforce Development Council's induction and follow on with the level 3 qualification. All staff have completed or are on course to undertaking a level 3 qualification after the induction. Established staff undertake further training with two staff due to undertake further training courses at the Northern School of Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy. In addition, staff undertake mandatory training for example in health and safety and therapeutic crisis intervention.

The home has a very strong capacity for continuing improvement. This comes from: the manager's very sound leadership, the skills and attributes of the capable staff team, the excellent track record of improvement success and planning for future development.

Equality and diversity practice is **outstanding**.