

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Trevor Hall
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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 home is part of a large private children's care organisation and is registered to accommodate up to three young people, who have educational and behavioural difficulties.

Overall effectiveness

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

Young people experience outstanding care from a staff team that provide consistency, stability and commitment. Staff are well trained and experienced to meet the diverse needs of the young people. The home works exceptionally hard to ensure young people receive effective healthcare, assessment, treatment and support to reflect their individual needs. All these aspects of care are captured in highly personalised placement plans. The utmost priority is given to helping young people develop a sense of self-worth to help them face everyday challenges.

The home is particularly resourceful in managing a clear framework for behaviour while celebrating and encouraging the individuality of all young people. Young people are treated with a high level of respect and every effort is made to ensure their wishes, feelings and views are heard and included in the running of the service. Young people's behaviour, health, education, social and safeguarding needs are effectively supported. They live in a vibrant, proactive and structured environment and develop new skills, improve behaviour and grow in confidence.

Safeguarding is placed at the highest priority both in terms of the environment's health and safety and promoting the welfare of young people. The fire risk assessment, however, is not currently up to date. Monitoring processes provide continuous quality assurance to maintain excellent standards and further develop improvements in the running of the service.

Young people value the care they receive highly. This extends to viewing the staff as a major strength within the home. The relationship between young people and staff is trusting and sincere. Records and documentation are well maintained and contribute to the ongoing care and support young people receive. The home has an experienced and well qualified manager, who leads by example, he is ably supported by motivated and hard working staff, who are dedicated to achieving the best possible outcomes for the young people in their care.

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 risk assessments of the whole children's home environment are carried out, to identify any potential sources of harm to the children are recorded in writing and regularly reviewed. (NMS.10.8)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people thrive, develop and progress in this service. They make exceptional progress due to a clear and sensitive behaviour management framework coupled with a clear assessment and celebration of each young person's needs and individuality. Young people are assisted to nurture a positive self-worth, gain emotional resilience and to develop confidence in their skills and abilities. Young people feel safe, valued and protected. Young people achieve positive outcomes and are provided with high quality care within a warm and caring environment which provides them with firm and consistent boundaries.

Care staff take great interest in the welfare of young people supporting them gently through significant events in their lives. Young people receive exceptional help to identify how they feel about what has happened to them and what they want to achieve in the future. They are confident that their views are heard and any decisions made are explained to them. Young people have excellent opportunities to influence decisions that have an impact on their future.

Young people's health including physical, emotional and psychological health is actively supported. Young people attend regular appointments with their dentist, optician and doctor. Young people are encouraged to be fit and healthy. Young people are encouraged to develop self-awareness about the benefits of good personal hygiene. This helps to increase young people's self-esteem and self-image.

Young people are given maximum support to re-engage in education where a full range of opportunities are given to bridge the gaps from previously missed opportunities. Young people make good progress and achievement with their education. The home has established good levels of communication with the schools and educational units that the young people attend. Staff encourage good attendance and encourage young people to value their education and celebrate their successes.

Young people have substantial help in planning a successful transition to adulthood that takes into account their very complex needs, in which their views are always listened to.

Young people benefit from appropriate contact with family, friends and other people who are important to them. Young people are able to meet with their family at the home and other visits are arranged at convenient locations so that contact is actively supported.

Quality of care

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

Young people receive an outstanding quality of care due a highly dedicated and proactive staff team who consistently implement the caring framework. The needs, safety and individual potential of each young person are placed central to all practice in the home. Staff work hard to provide a vibrant, energetic and proactive environment for young people to thrive in.

Young people feel that their views, wishes and feelings are actively sought and that they influence the running of the home. Young people are encouraged to participate in weekly house meetings where issues can be discussed with staff. Young people are central in planning for their futures, they are actively encouraged to participate in the development of their health and care plans. These plans include their individual assessments based on their needs and where appropriate, a detailed transition plan that takes into account specific emotional and mental health needs. There are excellent links with education services, health care and transitional support that help to coordinate a package, reflective of each young person's needs.

There is a strong identification of individuality, difference and promoting equality. There are clear procedures for supporting the young people who live at the service and there is a clear focus on how their privacy is promoted and respected. Staff have an in depth knowledge of the personalities of 'their young people', this knowledge is particularly beneficial in managing behaviour and in encouraging young people to participate in daily living tasks, leisure activities and new opportunities.

Young people understand how to make a complaint because staff clearly explain how accessible and child-friendly the process is. Young people are confident about making a complaint and know that their concerns will be addressed and resolved without delay. As a result, young people know how to report a concern and who they would ask to help.

The home is appropriately located, designed and maintained. Young people benefit from an extremely comfortable environment which is maintained to a high standard. All young people have their own bedrooms which promotes their personal space and right to privacy. Young people have access to a garden area which includes outside activity games.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

The staff are very clear about their responsibility to protect young people. Safeguarding is placed as a high priority. There are clear child protection procedures in place that provide step-by-step guidance on what action must be taken when there are concerns about young people's safety or welfare.

There is an effective and well developed recruitment process that includes a comprehensive check on all staff applying to work at the setting. The careful selection, recruitment and retention of staff helps young people feel secure and to have a consistent team of staff that know them well. Visitors are checked, vetted and monitored. There is a substantial commitment to working and engaging constructively with internal and external stakeholders to secure the safety of young people.

The staff promote a culture that ensures young people are listened to and respected as individuals. Young people benefit from the clear routines and structures at the home. Staff intervention strategies successfully help young people alter their risk taking behaviours. Young people feel protected and their welfare is promoted at all times.

Young people who do go missing are protected as far as possible and are responded to positively on their return. Young people know and understand that staff always take prompt and early action to ascertain their whereabouts. Staff always initiate procedures and actions that encourages young people to return as quickly and safely as possible. At all times young people are treated positively upon their return. Overall, young people rarely go missing. Young people are additionally protected because the home follows the local joint police protocol on young people missing from care.

Young people's positive behaviours are promoted. Young people understand that staff take full account of their difficult past experiences. Physical intervention is only used as a last resort and records demonstrate excellent accountability of the reasons for such action. The records are regularly monitored and provide meaningful information about trends in behaviour, including effectiveness of strategies and the progress made by young people. Young people are encouraged to act with consideration for others and themselves and they make considerable progress in this area because staff are highly skilled, helping them to strive to establish and maintain acceptable levels of behaviours.

Additionally, risk assessment and behaviour management plans are excellent. Concerns and challenging behaviours are clearly identified. Strategies to manage these concerns focus on safety but also ensure all young people have opportunities to reach their potential and achieve. Consequently, risk and behaviour management plans are implemented to ensure young people are enabled to do as much as they can rather than limit their opportunities. The staff are excellent at recognising particular vulnerabilities relating to the diverse needs of young people and take a comprehensive approach to address them. This includes reviewing the deployment of staff and resources when young people are in periods of crisis and are at high risk of self-harming.

Young people report feeling safe around staff and are confident enough to talk to them if they are feeling insecure. The strong rapport is often the only sense of security a young person has and staff are very respectful of this trust and sustain professional integrity. Young people report feeling free from bullying. Equally, there have been no reported incidents of bullying. The staff are knowledgeable about the impact it can have and know how to recognise the triggers that warn of problems emerging.

Investigations into allegations or suspicions of harm are handled fairly, quickly, and consistently in a way that provides effective protection for young people. Staff are provided with excellent high quality training. Staff are confident with making referrals related to child protection and safeguarding matters. The home has effective and well embedded procedures that promote young people's welfare at all times.

Young people live in a safe environment. Health and safety is well managed. Safety and servicing checks are carried out as required. Fire safety training, regular checks to the fire systems and fire drills ensure young people and staff know what to do in the event of a fire. The fire risk assessment, however, has not been reviewed annually as required.

Leadership and management

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

This service excels in providing young people with a high level of care and support. The home is effectively and efficiently managed. The promotion of equality and diversity is very good. There is strong, visible leadership which promotes high quality care and positive outcomes for young people. Consistent and regular supervision provide staff with good opportunities to formally discuss their role, professional development and the impact on working with children with complex needs. All members of staff spoken with gave positive comments about the manager's commitment, child centred approach, staff support and clear monitoring processes.

The provider meets the aims and objectives in the Statement of Purpose. Young people, staff and the placing authority are clear about the aims and objectives of the home and what services and facilities it provides. 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 barriers. Staff tailor support to respect the cultural, ethnic and religious needs of individuals.

Staff are provided with quality training, support and resources to enable them to understand the developmental needs of young people. Staff also receive excellent induction training which covers all mandatory areas such as safeguarding, behaviour management and first aid. The staff have a strong focus on promoting positive outcomes and to enhance the well-being of young people. The staff work proactively to help young people overcome barriers and to succeed. Handovers are comprehensive to ensure key messages are passed over, which in turn ensures staff are sufficiently informed about changes to the health and welfare needs of young people.

Joint working is common place. Multi-agency partnerships are forged with health services, placing authorities and schools, all working together in the best interests of young people. Young people confirm they are able to be involved in meetings where key decisions are made about their futures, including contributing to decisions.

Good progress has been made towards meeting the previous requirements and recommendations made at the last inspection. The administration and recording of all medication now meets the required standard and all physical interventions undertaken by staff are recorded in a dedicated log, specifically for that purpose.

The management team are excellent at monitoring and sign appropriate records as part of their internal quality assurance. Regular Regulation 33 visits take place to provide additional quality assurance mechanisms and involve consulting young people wherever possible. The management have a strong commitment to meeting young people's needs. The level of progress young people have made despite their complex needs is a testament to the impact the management have made to help young people aspire, irrespective of their ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or faith.

Records are clear, up to date and stored securely, and contribute to an understanding of the young person's life. All significant events relating to the

protection of young people accommodated in the home are notified by the registered person to the appropriate authorities and appropriate action is taken following the incident.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.