

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Russell Shackford
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This privately run home is registered to provide care for up to two young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties and/or with learning disabilities.

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**.

Young people living in this home benefit greatly from an experienced staff group who enthusiastically demonstrate their commitment to addressing welfare issues.

Outcomes for young people are outstanding because staff are persevering and energetically supportive, creating opportunities for young people to reach their full potential across all areas of their welfare and development.

Young people confirm that their views are genuinely sought and acted upon. The staff encourage them to make decisions about their lives and influence the way that the home is run.

Staff try to ensure that young people are looked after in a way that is particular to how they are and want to be. Educational needs are very well met with young people making exceptional progress. The young people benefit greatly from the vigorous efforts of the staff to promote the value of education and good attendance.

A notable area of strength is the staff's ability to work closely with other services and support young people to engage with them. Placement planning is good and it is well recorded and reviewed. The facilitating of contact is very good.

Good risk assessing and fire safety practices help to keep young people safe. Staff are experienced, well trained and competent.

The monitoring of the quality of care at the home is only adequate and needs to improve.

There are some recommendations for improvement. These are about the safe storage of medicines, risk management, staff training and the monitoring of the quality of care at 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 that children's safety and welfare is promoted in the home whilst creating opportunities for young people to go outside in a safe way (NMS 4.1)
- ensure that all medicines, in particular controlled drugs which are kept in the home are stored safely (NMS 6.13)
- ensure that all staff attain a level 3 Children and Young People's Workforce Diploma (NMS 18.5)
- revise and amend the home's statement of purpose to ensure that it is up-to-date and accurate, in particular to show details of staffing levels in the home, the correct age range of the children upon admission to the home and comments relating to the confidentiality of records (NMS 13.3)
- ensure that effective systems are maintained for monitoring and controlling the activities of the home (NMS 21.1)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people's progress and outcomes are outstanding because staff are persevering and energetically supportive of them. Staff support young people well, using talking and stimulating interactive activities to build relationships with them. As a result, young people gain good knowledge and understanding of their own background, they adapt well to new situations, make strides towards their personal targets and their view of themselves is very positive.

Young people enjoy very good health because their health needs are effectively identified and services are provided to meet them. They are encouraged and supported to attend routine appointments with dentists, doctors and opticians, and where appropriate encouraged to take some responsibility for managing their own health needs. The young people's health is closely monitored and record keeping is good, enabling staff to inform medical professionals of health progress. Specialist health workers are involved where appropriate to promote good physical and emotional health. Young people do not engage in risk taking behaviours.

Young people regularly engage in activities such as gym, swimming, football and fitness club activities which help them to stay fit and healthy. Very good health

outcomes are supported because staff educate young people about eating healthy foods and snacks. Individual preferences are catered for and specialist needs associated with health, cultural or religious dietary requirements are well met. Young people enjoy mealtimes which are social occasions and allow for positive interaction with each other and staff. They are encouraged to express their preferences, plan menus, eat healthily and try new foods. Young people confirm that they are involved in planning, shopping for and cooking meals. As a result they learn about healthy eating options.

Young people have unfaltering attendance at college and they are making exceptional achievements in their education taking into account both their attainment and their progress from their starting point at the time of their placement. The staff have worked in a determined manner to ensure that appropriate placements are sourced quickly and as a result, young people's education is disrupted as little as possible in order that they can continue to attend and achieve.

Young people confirm that they are helped to keep in touch with people that are important to them and that they can have friends and family come to visit them. This is supported by staff who promote contact and facilitate visits very well. This is done safely and sensitively.

The home has their own life skills plans for young people. These are implemented according to the level of maturity and understanding of the individual. Young people learn skills through taking part in the tasks of running the home, such as kitchen safety, cleaning and laundry. Young people are also supported with social skills, cooking skills, budgeting, clothing care, travel safety and shopping. Therefore young people receive care which prepares them well for adulthood.

Quality of care

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

Young people living in this home benefit greatly from an experienced staff group who demonstrate enthusiastically their commitment to addressing young people's care and safety needs. Staff say, 'the best thing about my work is being with and around the young people' and 'the best thing about this home is the young person centred, homely feel.' Young people enjoy warm relationships with staff in the home and there is good rapport between them. Young people confirm this, saying, 'I get on well with the staff and there is always someone to talk to if you want.'

The manager has systems for seeking the views of young people and others about the quality of care provided and the way that the home is run. Young people confirm that their views are sought and acted upon. Staff provide opportunities for daily discussions and frequent one-to-one key worker sessions. Quality assurance monitoring includes opportunities for young people to comment upon the quality of care at the home. One young person said, 'I helped to choose colours for the décor in my bedroom. I also choose activities and meals.' Young people say that they are confident to complain and understand how to do so because staff talk about what to

do in young people's meetings.

Admissions to the home are usually planned and the young person and their family, where appropriate, are involved in that planning. Young people can visit the home before they move in to meet people and get information about the home. Staff find out about young people's differences, routines, likes and dislikes, strengths and needs. Staff are well aware of young people's assessed needs and records relating to health, care, education and behaviour management are good. This helps existing and occasional workers to provide agreed ways of individualised care and support to young people. Statutory case reviews take place within the required timescales to inform relevant people of the progress made by young people.

Good policies and practice around the handling, administration and disposal of medication safeguards young people's welfare. However, the security of medicines in the home is potentially compromised because they are not always stored in line with best practice guidelines.

A notable area of strength is the staff's close communication and support of other professionals working in education to sustain and increase the young people's time in the provision. The highly effective communication systems and vigorous efforts and support from staff result in outstanding education attendance and achievements. There are space, resources and facilities at the home to enable the completion of homework. A computer is available for the young people to use for educational purposes and well-monitored internet access is available.

Young people are able to pursue their particular interests and are supported enthusiastically by staff to engage in leisure activities. Staff enable young people to socialise and to build their esteem and confidence by supporting their individual choices. Examples of organised activities include arts and crafts, shopping trips, football, wildlife park trips and youth club. There are also a good range of books, DVDs and games available in the home for education and entertainment.

The young people live in a home that is very well located near to shops, leisure, education and employment opportunities. It is on the main bus route to the nearby town centre. The interior and exterior of the home are in a good state of structural and decorative repair. One young person said, 'I like my bedroom, staff have helped me to make it how I like it and encourage me to keep it clean and tidy.' There is a good maintenance and repair programme for the building, furniture and equipment. The garden is well maintained and safe. The home is clean and there are homely touches throughout. However, routine domestic security arrangements include the use of dead locks on all of the peripheral doors. This potentially compromises young people's liberty and safety in the event of a fire at the home.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people say that they are safe and feel safe. One young person said, 'I feel

very safe here, the staff talk to me about how to keep safe.' Staff describe a variety of activities done with young people around keeping safe such as stranger danger, internet safety, road safety and safe travelling. This develops young people's understanding of the reasons adults are concerned. Where particular risks are identified, consistently well-written risk assessments are recorded to help the staff understand what action to take to minimise the identified risks.

The provider has very good safeguarding systems and procedures for staff to follow in the event of any allegation or suspicion of abuse. The manager and staff have received child protection training which includes elements of dealing with child exploitation and online protection. Staff demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of the safeguarding procedures to promote and protect young people's safety. Anti-bullying training is provided for staff and effective policies and procedures support staff to deal with this. Young people say there is no bullying at the home but it is discussed regularly. There is good written guidance for staff to follow in the event of unauthorised absence. This is supported by individualised risk assessment records.

It is rare that sanctions are used to manage behaviour at the home. Alternative strategies such as negotiation, positive reinforcement and rewards have been successfully employed. Record keeping is good and there is evidence that it is monitored well to identify patterns or trends that can be used to support young people further. Staff are trained in the provider's incident de-escalation policy and authorised physical intervention techniques.

Regular fire safety checks, general checks and maintenance arrangements ensure the home is physically safe and is kept safe. All staff have received fire safety training to enable them to minimise the risks to young people in the event of a fire at the home. Staff and young people take part in fire drills at regular intervals to make sure they know what to do in the event of a fire.

All staff are appropriately recruited and undergo suitable Criminal Records Bureau checks to ensure that they are suitable to work with young people.

Leadership and management

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

A Statement of Purpose is available to inform professionals and members of the public about how care is provided at the home. However, there are omissions and inaccuracies relating to the age of young people upon admission, staffing levels and record keeping. There is a good children's guide to the statement which is appropriate to the age and understanding of the young people accommodated. Young people receive a copy of it before they come to live at the home so that they know what to expect if they choose to live there.

There is a consistent core staff team which is supported, when necessary, by occasional workers employed by the provider. Staff describe how they have received

good quality induction training before commencing work with the young people. Staff refer to written guidance frequently during discussion and give examples of how it is implemented in practice. Management support and supervision are described as 'consistently supportive and helpful' by staff who clearly value the beneficial contributions of the manager.

All staff are trained in a wide variety of safety and childcare subjects. An on-going programme of regular refresher training is provided in a range of subjects to enhance the staff team's competency to meet the needs of the young people. Staff speak very positively about the quality and quantity of training opportunities. All staff are registered on an appropriate course at level 3 in caring for children and young people to help ensure that young people are receiving care from competent staff that are appropriately trained to meet their needs. However, not all staff have completed the course.

The manager has a system to monitor, report and evaluate the administration systems of the home. However, the recordings are brief in detail and do not fully aid evaluation of the findings. Therefore, there is only adequate monitoring of the quality of care for the young people in the home.

Young people's general case file records and other written documentation are of a good standard. This facilitates good communication with other professionals as well as ensuring young people have a permanent and secure record of their history. Young people's individual case files are confidentially stored and are arranged in a manner that makes them useable by staff and yet accessible to young people. The young people know that they can have access to their records. The young people's individual case records reflect their development and progress.

Action has been taken to address the previous recommendations made. Staff have received specialist training relating to young people with learning disabilities and other complex needs of young people receiving a service. However, not all staff have completed an appropriate course at level 3 in caring for children and young people to help ensure that young people are receiving care from staff that are appropriately trained to meet their needs.

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.