

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Suzanne Young
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Date of last inspection	26/01/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This children's home is registered to provide care to up to three young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is owned by a private limited company.

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**.

This is a good service that impacts positively on young people's lives. As a result young people are making good progress in relation to their starting points. Young people enjoy positive and constructive relationships with staff because staff work sensitively with young people and develop an environment in which they can begin to trust in adults. Young people are able to access the services and support they need to meet their emotional and psychological health needs. Staff work closely with the in-house psychologist team who are based on site to help young people develop positive attachments and behaviour.

Individual placement plans and risk assessments are of a high quality and are tailored to meet the specific needs of each young person. Equality and diversity issues are clearly identified in care planning and positively addressed in daily living.

Young people are safe in the home. Staff have a clear understanding of safe working practices and of the action to take should they have any concerns about a young person's safety or well-being. Young people rarely go missing from the home because staff work closely with the police and other professionals to help reduce the vulnerability of young people and to stabilise young people's behaviour.

The home is well managed. Managers accurately understand the home's areas of strength and where there are areas for improvement. Staff are experienced and well supported. They are knowledgeable and enthusiastic.

As a result of this visit, there are is one requirement relating to the home's duty to

notify Ofsted of significant events. There is also one recommendation relating to the deployment of staff in the home.

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
30 (2001)	notify the persons indicated in respect of events listed in Schedule 5. In particular, ensure that Ofsted is notified of serious incidents necessitating calling the police to the home. (Regulation 30(1), Schedule 5)	31/10/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure the number and deployment of staff can meet the individual needs of the young people in the home. This related to periods when staff are working alone with young people. (NMS 17.1)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make good progress in all areas of their development. Young people are able to develop in emotional resilience and self-esteem and are supported to make and sustain positive attachments. This is because staff respond sensitively and appropriately to their needs. One social worker commented 'a young person consistently told me she is happy these days'. Young people are able to access the in-house psychology team who provide therapy to help young people move forward with their lives. This helps to address and develop areas such as attachment and self-esteem to develop positive outcomes.

Young people also gain in confidence and make good progress in readiness for independence. They develop practical and life skills to help prepare them for adult life. For instance, by the time they leave the home young people are able to budget, shop and cook for themselves.

Young people achieve positive outcomes with regard to their physical, emotional and

psychological health. They enjoy good health and are supported to take responsibility for their own health. For instance young people are made aware of the importance of having a healthy lifestyle and have made significant improvements in maintaining personal care and hygiene.

Young people also make good progress in their education and achieve well in relation to their starting point. All young people currently attend the organisation's own school nearby and attendance is high. Young people who have previously had very poor school attendance are now attending and enjoying education. In a very short time young people are engaging well with staff and have increased their confidence in learning and ability to complete academic tasks. This helps to ensure they fully achieve their potential.

Young people's contact arrangements are well managed. They benefit from appropriate contact with family. This results in young people being able to maintain their relationships and identity.

Young people are able to contribute to the running of the home through planning activities, meals and decorating bedrooms and living areas. They say they are encouraged to participate in a variety of activities according to their interests such as horse riding, bowling, shopping and going to the cinema.

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy positive and constructive relationships with staff and generally interact well with them. One young person said she felt the staff are 'brilliant'. They are aware that staff are concerned about their welfare because staff listen to them and where possible act upon their wishes. For example, the home has recently purchased bicycles for the young people following their request to go cycling. Young people know and understand how to make a complaint.

Young people are able to significantly influence the running of the home. Staff routinely ask them for their views and feelings regarding aspects of their care and about issues regarding the running of the home. Young people choose their meals and contribute to the décor within the home. They are also encouraged to comment and express their views on how they would like to see the home develop in the future.

The home provides young people with good personalised care. Individual placement plans are of a high quality and are tailored to meet the specific needs of each young person. The manager and staff review the placement plans monthly to ensure they are current and demonstrate any progress made. As a result young people get a good level of support to meet their diverse needs.

Equality and diversity issues are clearly identified in care planning and positively addressed in daily living. Staff promote a positive awareness of gender, culture and

religious differences. This is demonstrated through positive role modelling and through individual and group discussions with young people actively challenging discrimination when required. Staff also encourage young people to have an awareness of their own identity by supporting them to develop a knowledge and understanding of their culture and religion.

Staff work closely in collaboration with other professionals to develop positive behaviour and to secure positive outcomes for young people. They develop an environment in which young people can begin to trust adults. Staff use individualised positive behaviour strategies to support young people to develop skills in managing their behaviour. They work closely with the in-house psychologist team who are based on site to help young people develop positive attachments and behaviour. This ensures young people are able to access the services and support they need to meet their emotional and psychological health needs.

Placing social workers are very positive about the care and commitment the manager and staff demonstrate towards the young people. One social worker commented 'I cannot fault the home or school...they leave no stone left uncovered. Staffs engagement with the young person is first rate'.

Young people are living in a home that is warm and comfortable. It is appropriately located and maintained to a high standard. All young people have their own bedroom which they can personalise to their own tastes.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are safe living in the home. This is because staff help to protect the young people in their care and provide an environment where young people generally feel safe. They work with young people to help them understand how to protect themselves from harm and do all that they can to make sure that young people are safe and feel comfortable in the home. Placing social workers state they are happy with level of safeguarding the home provides.

Placement plans are individualised and robust. They are reviewed monthly and clearly identify the risks for young people. In addition all young people have a personalised risk assessment that is regularly reviewed as circumstances change. Managers conduct assessments on a young person's admission to the home which considers the impact of other young people living in the home. These processes help ensure all those working with young people are fully informed of risky behaviours and are aware of how to address them.

Staff have a good understanding of the action to take should they have any concerns about a young person's safety or well-being. They receive regular safeguarding training and the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures are accessible to them. This ensures that staff are fully informed of current and new practice that enables them to safeguard young people effectively.

Young people very rarely go missing from the home. Staff work closely with the police and other professionals to help reduce the vulnerability of young people and to stabilise their behaviour.

There is very little use of physical restraint within the home. This is because staff promote positive behaviour whenever possible through encouragement and rewards. Staff treat young people with respect and are able with time to develop good relationships with them.

Young people live in an environment that is safe and takes account of their needs. All health and safety checks, environmental risk assessments and fire checks are completed appropriately. Fire risk assessments are individualised to each young person taking into consideration their specific needs and requirements. There are clear and robust procedures for the recruitment of staff which prevents unsuitable people from being recruited.

Leadership and management

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

The home is effectively managed with a permanent Registered Manager in post. The recommendation from the last inspection has been acted upon. The manager and staff team demonstrate a genuine interest and affection for young people and are committed to achieving positive outcomes. One independent reviewing officer commented 'the team are very knowledgeable and experienced and practice care in a very child centred manner'.

The home has an up-to-date Statement of Purpose and a young people's guide which is clear and accessible to all. The Registered Manager understands the strengths and weaknesses of the home. There is a development plan and good systems to monitor the quality of care provided to young people. These are constantly reviewed and demonstrate the home's capacity for continuing improvement.

The home employs a sufficient number of staff to meet the needs of the young people. The home is staffed on a one-to-one ratio with young people. There is currently one full-time vacancy which is being filled by deploying staff from other nearby homes within the organisation. This helps with consistency of staffing as the young people know the staff members and staff are fully aware of the organisation's policies and procedures.

There are periods of time where staff work alone with young people. These are usually for short periods of time while young people are engaged in activities. However on one occasion one member of staff worked alone for a full weekend. This arrangement has not always considered the impact for staff. All instances where only one member of staff is on duty, however, are fully risk assessed. Back-up staff are available in other homes close by to assist if required. The organisation also has a

robust on-call management system available if needed to provide assistance. This helps to ensure young people's safety.

Staff receive regular supervision and are well supported. One member of staff commented 'I love working here this is one of the best homes I have work in'. Another member of staff stated 'I am proud to say I work for this organisation. This is the most supportive job I've ever had.'

Staffs' individual training needs are met as they receive training which enhances their individual skills. This ensures that staff are able to provide good quality and safe care for young people. The manager ensures staff keep up-to-date with legislation and practice developments through discussions about good practice in supervision and team meetings.

Young people's needs, development and progress are well recorded and contribute to an understanding of the young person's life. These are stored securely and are updated on a regular basis. All significant events relating to the protection of young people accommodated in the home are notified by the registered person of the home to the appropriate authorities and the required action is taken following the incident. However, there have been occasions when the police have been called to the home by the young people following disagreements. These incidents have not always been notified to Ofsted as required by regulation.

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.