

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Seka Graovac
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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 is a private home. It is registered to accommodate up to three children and young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties. The home's stated purpose is to play an active part in the partnership of care of children and young people. The overall aim of the home is to provide a safe, nurturing, caring and homely environment for each child or young person where issues and concerns affecting both their past and their future can be positively addressed.

Overall effectiveness

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

Children and young people and their social workers are exceptionally positive about the quality of care that the home provides. Children and young people receive highly personalised support that holistically addresses all their diverse needs. They enjoy having trusting relationships with the management and staff. They feel very safe at the home.

The home works in effective partnership with health and social services and education to achieve positive outcomes for children and young people to enable their optimum life chances.

The service strives for continuous improvement and has improved in some aspects since the last inspection. However, the management and staff are not familiar with the new National Minimum Standards and amended Children's Homes Regulations that came into force in April 2011. The inspection also identified some gaps in record keeping. The areas for improvement are listed below. However, these weaknesses have not had a negative impact on the children and young people.

Areas for improvementStatutory 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
29 (2001)	keep a record in the form of a register in respect of each child accommodated in the home (Regulation 29.1 Schedule 4.1)	31/10/2011
29 (2001)	keep a record of all visitors to the home and to children accommodated, including the names of visitors and the reasons for the visit. (Regulation 29.a Schedule 4.13)	18/10/2011

Recommendations

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

- keep staff and management up to date with professional and legal developments in line with the legal obligations of the home. (NMS 18.1)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Starting from very low points, children and young people are making satisfactory progress to develop a positive self-view, emotional resilience and more constructive behaviours. They either enjoy good health or receive appropriate medical and therapeutic support to achieve better health. They are making satisfactory progress with regards to being able to engage in education and work towards gaining educational achievements. However, for various reasons, this is very difficult for them. They have good opportunities to acquire practical life skills and achieve smooth transition into independent living. They regularly receive their financial entitlements and make savings. They benefit from having appropriate contact with family, friends and other people who play important roles in their lives.

Quality of care

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

Children and young people enjoy having very positive relationships with staff and management of the home. Children and young people say that they know that the staff and the management always have their best interests at heart and are trying their best to help. Children and young people receive highly individualised support of the exceptionally high standard in line with an excellent care planning system. The home's holistic approach to care encompasses fully all children and young people's needs including those arising from their cultural background and personal identity. Although, for various reasons, children and young people are not always able to respond positively to the support provided, they value the service highly. They rate the service they receive as outstanding. Social workers have also made highly complementary comments about the quality of the service and the values it fulfils. Staff and management proactively engage in working together with other professionals to promote the best outcomes for children and young people.

Through various opportunities, staff and management empower children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings. They consistently encourage children and young people to see different points of view and make more mature and better choices for themselves. Staff help children and young people understand

the importance of education, ethical behaviour and the community in one's life. Staff have consistently high aspirations for all children and young people. Staff and management proactively and consistently challenge any barriers to children and young people's progress. Children and young people are given excellent opportunities to learn and engage in various enjoyable activities. For example, the home supported a young person financially to have a holiday abroad with their parents and the extended family. Children and young people know that they are taken seriously and respected for who they are. They can safely raise any issues through a clear and effective complaints procedure. They benefit from having access to a professional legal support through various advocacy services, when they need it.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Children and young people live in an environment that is physically safe and emotionally nurturing. The premises are welcoming, appropriately located, furnished and maintained. They provide children and young people with security, as well as with privacy and freedom of movement. Children and young people know the house rules and are given the responsibility for adhering to them. Staff and management provide children and young people with a clear structure and boundaries. Children and young people receive consistent messages and support. Children and young people's files contain clear risk assessments and protective strategies to minimise those risks. They have their constructive and safe behaviours encouraged, promoted and rewarded and their unsafe behaviours appropriately discouraged, challenged and appropriately managed. No physical interventions have been used in the home. Management and staff work in close partnership with the social services, youth offending professionals and police to support children and young people in developing more constructive behaviours.

There is evidence that the frequency of children and young people being absent from the home without authority is reducing. Children and young people report that they feel very safe at the home. One young person said to the inspector: 'I go to different places and it is OK, but this is my own safe place. Nobody can touch me when I am here.' Children and young people, as well as staff receive clear information on child protection. This promotes appropriate reporting of any safeguarding concerns. The home's policy on safeguarding children and young people is effective.

Leadership and management

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

Children and young people live in the home that is effectively and efficiently managed. They and the placing authorities are clear about the home's aims and the facilities it provides. They report that they are very satisfied with the quality of the service and how it fulfils its declared Statement of Purpose. The responsible individual is also registered as the manager for the service and closely involved in all aspects of the service planning and delivery. Children and young people receive the

service that is monitored effectively.

At the last inspection, no requirements or recommendations were made. The service has continued to realistically self-evaluate and improve, in consultation with children and young people. For example, a systematic and more comprehensive induction programme for children and young people has been introduced. The quality of the care planning has been enhanced. The service is also spearheading an apprenticeship scheme with a local college leading to a care qualification. It is offered to young adults who used to live in a children's home.

The registered person is able to create a working culture in which facilitating progress of children and young people has a central place. The home also has a very strong anti-discriminatory ethos that is integral to all its practice and relationships. Children and young people receive outstanding support from the highly motivated and stable staff team. Children and young people have excellent opportunities to develop trust and form appropriate attachments with adults who look after them on a professional basis.

Staff receive good support, supervision, appraisal and training. However, neither they nor the management are familiar with the current National Minimum Standards for Children's Homes and the updated Registered Home's Regulations. This has not had a negative impact on children and young people. Many of the aspects of the service remain outstanding. However, without keeping up to date with the legal developments, there is a risk of the service falling behind its legislative obligations and isolating itself from the current professional framework within the children's residential care field.

Children and young people's personal histories, the progress made and the plans for the future are clearly recorded on their files. However, there are some gaps in some of the other records required to be kept by the home, such as children's register and visitor's book.

Equality and diversity practice is **outstanding**.