

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Caroline Jones
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This is a private children's home that provides care and accommodation for up to four young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

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 receive high quality care that supports them in making good progress across all aspects of their development. This is underpinned by effective care planning and practice that is tailored to meet the individual needs of young people. Notably, young people's attendance and achievement at school have greatly improved as a result of the support from staff. Championing young people's education is a key strength of the home.

Staff know young people very well and have forged trusting relationships with them, consequently, they remain settled and feel safe in the home. Young people comment, 'I like staff, they are the best thing about the home, I'm safe.' Staff work constructively with partner agencies and young people's families to gain the support and services required for young people to succeed.

The home is effectively and efficiently run by a suitably experienced and qualified Registered Manager. Rigorous monitoring scrutinises the quality of care to inform and develop practice further. A shortfall was identified in relation to gaining feedback from young people's families and partner agencies about the quality of care to continually develop the service. A further shortfall relates to recruitment practices, in which a record of the interview was not on file to demonstrate a thorough selection process.

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 a record of the interview and selection process is available (NMS 16.2)
- ensure that the views of young people's families, social workers and independent reviewing officers are sought regularly on young people's care, unless in individual cases this is not appropriate. (NMS 1.4)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make good progress across all aspects of their development which helps them grow in confidence. They are developing a positive self-image and an understanding of their backgrounds which helps them to move forward in life. This arises as a result of the close working between staff and professional therapists. Staff promote young people's independence and encourage them to take risks and responsibilities appropriate to their age and understanding. Young people are learning skills such as money and household management to aid their transition to independent living in the future.

Young people have a good understanding of healthy living. They engage regularly in direct work sessions to gain insight into risk taking behaviours, including smoking, sexual health matters and unsafe situations. As a result most young people do not engage in risky behaviours. Staff are proactive and take part in regular physical activities with young people including, swimming, horse riding and bicycle riding. Young people are registered with general medical practitioners, dentists and opticians and have individual plans to target their health needs. All staff receive suitable training to support health and well-being and have a first aid qualification to ensure safer caring of young people.

Young people benefit from full-time education that is targeted to meet their individual needs. They have an excellent record of school and college attendance and make progress. School reports highlight: 'Much improved in all areas of behaviour.' Staff value young people's educational advancement and assist them with homework and learning opportunities outside of school to ensure they succeed.

Staff provide effective support to enable young people to take part in community activities, including police academy. This enables young people to make a positive contribution to their local area. Young people have regular contact with family and friends who also visit the home. This reinforces young people's support networks and provides a personal understanding of their background and identity.

Quality of care

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

Young people continue to grow in a supportive and child-centred environment. Staff demonstrate a clear commitment to young people and this is evident in the excellent relationships that have been established. Young people actively engage with staff and they take part in activities together including cinema trips, walking, ice skating and holidays. These strong relationships are the foundation for managing young people's behaviour successfully and contribute to the stability of their placements.

Young people are central to care planning and young people's placement plans are tailored to meet their individual needs. Detailed care planning and proactive relationships with partner agencies ensure that young people's changing needs are consistently identified and met. Although, communication with young people's families and partner agencies is good, their feedback about the quality of care received by young people is not routinely sought. This means that suggestions for improvement to the service are missed.

Staff work directly with young people and complete life story work to ensure they have a good understanding of their backgrounds and identity. This inspires pride and value in their heritage. There is a culture of promoting young people's rights in which their views are sought and responded to regularly in the daily running of the home. Young people know how to raise a complaint; one commented, 'I think staff listen, I've not needed to complain.' The children's guide is available and includes information on how to access advice and support from independent sources.

Young people live in a healthy environment where their physical, emotional and social well-being is promoted. They engage in physical and social activities with friends and have easy access to health care services to meet their individual needs. The home encourages a healthy diet and young people assist in the preparation of the home's menu and food which improves their understanding of nutrition.

Staff champion young people's educational needs through proactive partnerships with teachers and social workers. They attend school and college regularly and make progress. Staff recognise young people's achievements in the home and celebrate these through awarding certificates and prizes. These practices help young people to experience success and encourage their self-belief.

Young people live in a homely environment which blends seamlessly into the residential area. They have their own bedrooms that reflect their interests. Young people are involved in plans for decoration of the home which promotes ownership and responsibility. They have space and privacy to see their friends and family and to do their homework. This affords respect and dignity to young people.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are safeguarded and protected by staff who fulfil their duties very well. Young people commented, 'I feel safe here, they care.' Staff also work with them

individually to address any vulnerabilities and risks, as a result risk taking behaviours, including incidents of young people going missing from home have reduced over time. Agreed protocols are in place with local police, and staff work well within the protective network of professionals to safeguard young people. Robust care plans and risks assessments provide a sound mechanism for responding to young people's needs for protection.

Positive relationships between staff and young people provide the basis for managing behaviour effectively. There has been a significant reduction in restraints and staff are clear that this is only used as a very last resort to prevent harm to young people. Staff focus on de-escalation and re-direction techniques and engage individually with young people in order to assist them in working through their frustration. Rewards and incentives are used to encourage young people's positive behaviour and assist them in accepting responsibility for their actions. Staff reinforce an anti-bullying culture and young people do not identify this as an issue.

Young people live in a physically safe environment in which health and safety matters are fully considered to protect them. The Registered Manager confirms that staff carry out routine health and safety checks around the home. Safety and insurance certificates are up to date and regular fire drills take place to ensure young people and staff are aware of an emergency evacuation route in the event of a fire. Staff take appropriate steps to verify visitors identity to ensure young people are protected.

An improved recruitment process takes place in which young people are involved in the interview process to ensure their views count in the decision making process. However, a record of the interview is not contained on file for the newly appointed member of staff. Moreover, Criminal Records Bureau and reference checks are all undertaken before any appointment of staff is made to ensure the safety and protection of young people.

Leadership and management

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

The home is efficiently managed and effective in meeting the Statement of Purpose. A clear vision of child-centred practice is prevalent within the home's ethos. The Registered Manager works with young people and staff to rigorously monitor young people's welfare, which ensures the high standards of care and the safety of young people. The Registered Manager provides effective leadership and accountability, therefore, staff fully understand the roles and responsibilities delegated to them.

Young people's care is examined through quality assurance systems which include monthly management monitoring. Trend analysis systems are in place to learn and improve practice further, for example, this has been successful in reducing missing from home incidents and restraints. All significant events are notified to the relevant authorities and appropriate action is taken to protect young people. The Registered Manager is well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the home and

developmental plans are currently under review to ensure continual improvement.

Staff are very well supported by a Registered Manager who is hands-on and communicates high standards of care through regular team meetings, supervision and training. Staff are suitably qualified and the team remains stable which provides consistency and predictability for young people. Young people are also involved in the performance assessment of staff to ensure their views count. Staff confirm that the Registered Manager is available to them and that they enjoy the work they do.

Recording of information is generally good and provides a picture of young people's daily lives. Information is securely stored and shared confidentiality to protect their safety and privacy.

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* and the evaluation schedule for children's homes.