

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	14/01/2014
Inspector	Carole Moore
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	10/01/2013
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This is a children's home run by a local authority. It provides care and accommodation for two young people between 10 and 18 who may have 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**.

This home is highly effective in delivering care that meets the complex needs of young people. They make exceptional progress, from their starting point at the time of placement. This is because staff have a very good understanding of the individual needs of young people and have the skills, experience and competence to meet these.

Young people are influential in the way the service operates. Staff consistently achieve high levels of engagement with young people and their views are central to how the home operates. A young person commented that, 'I have a say in the decoration of both my bedroom and the other rooms in the house.' Staff also empower young people to have a voice within the local authority by encouraging their participation in looked after children councils.

The staff work really hard to keep the young people safe. There have been some challenging issues within this group of young people, but the committed staff team has the knowledge and the ability to initiate safe working practices.

The manager understands the strengths and weaknesses of the home and has established good systems to monitor and review the quality of care to young people. Administration difficulties has prevented reports being sent through to Ofsted.

As a result of this visit, two requirements and two recommendation have been made in relation to sending reports into Ofsted in a timely manner, formalising consultation with young people, their parents and other professionals and ensuring the young

people's guide has all the correct telephone numbers. These do not have an immediate impact on the young people placed.

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
33 (2001)	ensure a copy of the Regulation 33 report is supplied to HMCI (Regulation 33(5)(a))	24/02/2014
34 (2001)	ensure the registered person supplies to the HMCI a report in respect of any review conducted in relation to schedule 6.(Regulation 34 (2))	24/02/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure the views of the child, the child's family, social worker and Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) are sought regularly on the child's care (NMS 1.4)
- ensure the young person's guide includes how a child can contact their social worker and Independent Reviewing Officer. (NMS 13.5)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **outstanding**.

Young people make exceptional progress to develop a positive self-view, emotional resilience and a knowledge and understanding of their backgrounds. They achieve this because they make and sustain very positive relationships with the adults caring for them and are supported to have meaningful contact with their families.

Young people respond positively to the high aspirations that staff have for them. This is particularly true of educational outcomes, in which young people make tremendous progress from their starting points on admission. Attendance at school and college, is exceptionally good. All young people strongly agree that 'Staff make sure I go to school every day.'

Young people are being well prepared for their transition into independence. Young people become confident in the community because, they routinely travel, manage

money and shop with the support from staff. The Local authority have a training flat which prepares young people for independence and helps them to understand the importance of preparation before they really do have to move into the adult world.

Young people have a number of hobbies and interests that they are supported to pursue by staff. They enjoy swimming, football, pool, riding bikes, roller discos and going to the cinema.

Young people are enjoying good health and benefit from good nutritious meals and plenty of physical exercise, thus learning what contributes to a healthy life style. They visit their doctor, dentist and optician so that no health matters are going unchecked. Young people have the opportunity to attend weekly appointments with the child and mental health services (CAMHS) so that they get the help and support that they rightly need.

Young people feel valued because they are encouraged to express their views, feelings and wishes. They plan activities, menus and influence the design and decoration of the home. They also play an active part in their reviews so they can influence decisions about their care and future. Young people know how to complain. They feel listened to because key workers and staff make time to talk about their interests and concerns on a daily basis. Young people are encouraged to be part of the children's council and their wishes and feelings are fed in to staff's appraisals. This ensures that the voice of young people remains at the heart of the work of the home.

Young people benefit from family contact that is well supported. In all cases contact is carefully considered so that contact is always in the best interest of the young person. Young people get emotional support so that contact is positive with their family. This helps young people to maintain cultural ties and family contact.

Quality of care

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

The staff provide a very nurturing environment for the young people living in the home and have really high aspirations for the young people living there. They develop and maintain extremely positive and constructive relationships with them. The staff know the young people very well and constantly assess their progress through a variety of means, such as daily handovers, supervision and one-to-one sessions. This detailed knowledge of the young people ensures they receive very good individual support and guidance. When young people experience differing emotions and unpredictable behaviour, staff are there to support them. As a result, young people begin to develop positive social behaviours.

Young people are offered a diverse range of educational, leisure and recreational opportunities which stimulate and challenge them. Through their enjoyment and successes in these areas young people gain confidence and improve their self-esteem.

Young people's cultural background and personal identity are positively addressed in both daily living and care planning and their rights are respected and promoted.

Young people respond to the strong emphasis that is placed on education and to the clear expectation that they maintain regular attendance at school. They benefit from a day which provides structure and routine. The home's incentives scheme rewards regular attendance and this strategy is extremely successful and popular with young people. Staff actively promote the importance of education and help young people to achieve well.

Health care plans are comprehensive, effectively implemented and contribute to the overall well-being of young people. Multi-agency working is a real strength of the service and there are very strong links with services that support young people's health and emotional well-being, such as with the looked after children's nurse and with the child and adolescent mental health service.(CAMHS)

The manager pays particular attention to planning and coordinating young people's support to ensure that positive progress is achieved. Risks are assessed regularly and reflected in written information that staff use to guide the way they work each day. Consequently, staff are able to adapt and change the way they work quickly to ensure risks are managed effectively. The home is excellent at tailoring the service to ensure it carefully meets individual needs. A social worker said, 'Staff go above and beyond to ensure they meet the young people's needs.'

Staff work with young people to understand the risks associated with smoking, alcohol and drug use. Key work sessions are utilised to discuss these health issues and in addition young people are supported to explore their past and emotional well-being. This means young people understand the importance of a holistic healthy lifestyle and begin to take responsibility for their own health. As a result, risk taking behaviours of young people are decreasing.

Staff work proactively and positively with parents and family members and this promotes positive outcomes with most young people developing improved relationships over time.

The home is appropriately located on the outskirts of a city. It is maintained and decorated to a very high standard and provides young people with a homely environment. Young people invest highly in the home and show great respect for their surroundings. This is because they are able to influence the décor and facilities provided. Their bedrooms are decorated to their own taste.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are safe at this children's home, and their attitude towards staff indicate that they feel safe and secure. Young people are well protected from

bullying, accidents, going missing, or other forms of harm because the staffing ratios are appropriate, and thorough risk assessments identify clear ways of preventing potential incidents which may put young people at risk.

Staff demonstrate an excellent knowledge of safeguarding procedures and are very clear that the safety of young people is their paramount consideration, showing due regard to the particular vulnerabilities of the young people they support. For example young people are safer because staff set clear expectations regarding mobile phone use and this provides young people with an extra level of safety when out in the community. The staff have ready access to written procedures and take part in relevant and regular safeguarding training. Regular monitoring further protects young people, as staff practice is regularly overseen by the manager.

Young people's safety is further promoted by a range of effective measures. These include the appropriate vetting of staff and the implementation of effective and consistent behaviour management strategies, which recognise young people's particular vulnerabilities and difficulties. Clear expectations, underpinned by positive supportive relationships, assist the effective management of behaviour. Individualised behaviour management plans advise staff how best to support and influence young people. The home's effectiveness in addressing difficult behaviour is principally the result of assisting young people to establish and maintain routines that bring about gradual improvement and change.

Young people benefit from the home being physically safe and secure. The environment is maintained well and regular safety checks ensure that equipment and utilities work safely. Fire prevention equipment is in place and serviced according to professional guidance. Internal fire drills and fire equipment checks are regularly undertaken to ensure everyone can respond appropriately in an emergency.

Leadership and management

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

The Statement of Purpose clearly sets out the aims and objectives of the home. It has recently been reviewed and forwarded to Ofsted. Young people receive a young person's guide which contains information relating to expectations of behaviour, their responsibilities, as well as their rights during their time in the home. This means that everyone can be clear about what to expect at the home. Although the guide is good in that respect, it does not include information such as how to contact the independent reviewing officer. The recommendation made at the last inspection has been met.

The home's quality assurance programme is good. Monitoring, both internal and external, is rigorous and effective in driving improvements. The manager undertakes the quality assurance of the home and this has provided a good analysis of the current systems but they are not fed into the six monthly report to Ofsted. The regulation 33 reports are also not being sent into Ofsted within sufficient timeframes. The Registered manager is well aware of the strengths and shortfalls in the home

and can demonstrate the impact that living in this home has had on young people's lives. Consultation systems have not yet been developed to include formal consultation with young people, parents, and stakeholders.

Competent and knowledgeable staff are committed to promoting outstanding outcomes for young people in their care. The staff are managed in a way that encourages regular reflection of their work, which in turn helps identify ways of improving the service. The staff attend regular staff meetings and receive one-to-one supervision and appraisals. All staff members either hold or are enrolled on the children and young people's workforce diploma. Staff members report that they receive strong peer and management support.

The home has a clear working development plan for continuing improvement based upon its record of accomplishment. Records are clear, up to date and stored securely and would contribute significantly to the young people's understanding of their life in care, if they choose to access these documents.

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 the inspection of children's homes.