

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Anna Williams
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The service is a privately-run children's home providing care and accommodation for up to three young people between the ages of 10 and 17 years, who may have emotional 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 provides an outstanding quality of care to the young people it accommodates. Young people benefit from a well-managed, enthusiastic and caring staff team. All aspects of care planning are highly personalised to meet the individual needs of the young people. Educational attendance and achievement far exceeds expectations. Young people's self-esteem, confidence and independence skills have significantly increased since the time of their placement.

A major strength of the home is the incredibly positive and constructive attachments that have developed between young people and the staff. These relationships are key to the success of the young people's placement and subsequent achievements. Young people say they feel safe living in the home. Family members and external professionals give overwhelmingly positive feedback about the significant impact the home has had on young people's lives.

Shortfalls identified within this inspection do not compromise the direct safety and well-being of the young people. Safer recruitment practice was not followed with regard to ensuring all prospective staff provide a full employment history. This was immediately and fully addressed during the inspection. One significant event was not notified to Ofsted as required, although appropriate action had been taken. Measures of control logs do not currently capture debriefs with staff. However, such debriefs are taking place verbally and consistently. Supervision occurs on a monthly basis. However, recording is limited and records are not signed by both parties at the end of the supervision meeting. Staff do not have medication training as part of the home's training programme. However, staff administer prescribed medications safely.

Staff do not have easy access to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board's (LSCB) safeguarding policy and procedures and the latest version of Working Together to Safeguard Children. However, this was addressed immediately during the inspection.

Leaders and managers have a strong commitment to ensuring, and are extremely successful in achieving, positive outcomes for young people. They understand the strengths and weaknesses of the home and have development plans in place.

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
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, restraint or discipline, a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose which shall include, confirmation that the staff member using the measure of control has been spoken to about the use of the measure (Regulation 17B (3)(h))	03/06/2013
26 (2001)	ensure that a full and satisfactory information is available in respect of each of the matters specified in Schedule 2, and in particular employment history, together with a satisfactory written explanation of any gaps in employment prior to a member of staff starting work (Regulation 26 (3)(d))	03/06/2013
30 (2001)	ensure that Ofsted are notified of any events listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 5 without delay. (Regulation 30 (1))	03/06/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure staff receive sufficient training on health and hygiene issues, with specific reference to guidance on medication administration (NMS 6.7)
- ensure the supervision record held for each member of staff, including the registered person, is signed by the supervisor and the member of staff at the end of the supervision (NMS 19.5)
- ensure access to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board's current procedures and the latest version of Working Together to Safeguard Children are easily available to all staff. (Volume 5, statutory guidance, para 2.71)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **outstanding**.

Young people receive outstanding levels of close, individual support. Young people benefit from regular key work sessions which cover a wide range of topics, such as supporting young people through change in their lives. These sessions provide young people with a safe forum for discussion and learning. Young people develop emotional resilience and a more positive self-view because they receive highly effective emotional support. Where appropriate, they are actively engaged in exploring what holds them back from being confident. Young people make significant progress in all aspects of their lives. A family member commented: 'The home help [the young person] to understand the family situation and explain what is happening in a really kind way.'

Young people receive excellent support to lead a fit, active lifestyle. Some young people are eating a more varied and healthy diet since living in the home. All young people receive outstanding individual support to encourage them to eat healthily and to participate in physical activities. Comments from young people include, 'The staff encourage us to eat more vegetables,' and 'I like going for walks with the staff.'

Young people have developed a positive view of education. Young people who historically have not engaged in formal education are supported to re-engage through creative, individual educational transition plans. All young people now attend an education placement. Young people's educational attendance and progress is exceptional. All young people have received positive education reports about their progress, behaviour and achievements. These are well celebrated within the home. A parent commented, 'Everything has improved for [the young person]. I am amazed with all the progress.'

Young people benefit from rich opportunities to socialise and learn from a wide range of leisure opportunities, which they engage in well. Activities and resources include local community groups, going to the cinema, trips to the beach, swimming and youth clubs. This means young people have opportunities to try new experiences, meet new friends and learn new skills.

Where appropriate, young people maintain contact with their families and people in their lives who are significant to them. The staff team understand each young person's family history and experience. This enables tailored responses to any fears and worries young people may express. Case records detail individual contact arrangements and staff demonstrate extensive knowledge of individual's circumstances. As a result, young people have sustained, positive contact which develops their self-esteem and understanding of their background.

Young people learn independent living skills through undertaking regular tasks around the home and receiving guidance on money management. Young people learn how to budget for a meal, go shopping for ingredients and cook their own

meals, with suitable staff supervision. Young people have developed confidence in travelling independently in the local community and use these skills to meet with friends. Detailed case records are maintained, which describe the progress young people make in developing these skills. Their overall progress, as they move toward adulthood, is regularly reviewed at internal care planning meetings. This means that young people are supported to develop skills and build confidence around daily living tasks to prepare them for adulthood.

Quality of care

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

Young people benefit from extremely positive relationships with experienced and committed staff members. A young person commented, 'The staff are great, they listen to me and help me.' Staff work with young people from their individual starting points and build upon their existing strengths and help them develop new ones. Small achievements and progress are openly praised. A family member commented, 'I feel the staff at the home are very devoted to the job, it's a vocation, they really care for children.'

Young people discuss their feelings and views about the running of the home through house meetings and individual key work sessions. A young person commented, 'My key worker is special to me, they listen and talk through important stuff with me.' Monthly questionnaires also capture young people's views and feedback on the quality of care given. Through these forums, young people have seen changes in menus, activities and the décor of the home. Young people are made aware of, and have some engagement with, independent advocacy services. This demonstrates to them that their views are valued and listened to. Young people know how to complain. Any complaints are thoroughly investigated, and the home reflects on and learns from all feedback given.

Extensive information and individual support is provided to young people on issues such as illegal drugs and sexual health. This information is shared sensitively and in line with each young person's development and understanding. This means young people gain appropriate knowledge to help them keep safe and make informed choices. The home works in close partnership with a broad range of health professionals and advisors to ensure that young people access the services they need. The staff team maintain detailed records which demonstrate how hard they work to meet and further improve the health needs of young people. Arrangements for the administration of medication within the home are safe and effective.

Staff value and respect the individual differences of young people and are sensitive to issues of disability, beliefs, age and gender. Care plans contain excellent detail on each young person's specific needs and are up dated regularly. They also contain clear aims which are translated into a child-friendly format. Young people are supported to understand their care plans and sign them. This means that young people are actively involved in the planning of their care. A professional commented, 'The staff team have shown a really excellent understanding of the individual needs

of [the young person] and been patient and creative to meet them.'

Staff support young people to take part in a wide range of purposeful activities, including after-school clubs. This enhances their personal and social development. Staff use highly effective strategies to support educational achievement and celebrate young people's success. The home provides young people with suitable space to complete homework. The home's approach has been exceedingly successful in engaging young people in education.

The accommodation provided is of an excellent standard. The home is located near to local facilities and public transport links. Young people have their own bedrooms which they personalise with posters, artwork and photographs. Young people can reflect on recent activities through looking at photographs around the home. A young person commented, 'My room is my space, and I relax and chill here.' Some young people have small animals which they take responsibility for and care for. This provides a comfortable and homely environment for young people to live in. Comments from family members include, 'I find the house really homely and welcoming, a really nice environment,' and 'The home has a very positive atmosphere.'

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people say they feel safe and secure in the home. Staff demonstrate excellent awareness of the needs and particular vulnerabilities of the young people. A family member commented, 'They keep [the young person] safe and help them understand how to keep safe too, like in the community.'

Staff knowledge of safeguarding procedures is good. They work closely and effectively with external professionals to ensure the safety of young people. Individualised strategies are created and agreed through a multi-agency approach. These address young people's specific and complex vulnerabilities and provide effective protection. However, the home did not have the most recent copy of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board policy and procedures and the recent version of Working Together to Safeguard Children for staff to access. This was addressed immediately during the visit to ensure staff refer to the most up-to-date child protection guidance.

Young people have grown in confidence, which has had a positive impact on how they manage difficulties, tackle disappointment and promote themselves in group situations. Informative risk assessments, reflective practice and specialist behaviour management training ensures that staff manage challenging behaviour well.

The strength of the relationships between young people and staff keeps any difficulties in perspective and allows challenging periods to be used positively. As a result young people learn more positive ways to express their emotions, resulting in a decreasing number of incidents and physical interventions. Comments from family

members include, 'The home has had a really good impact on [the young person],' and '[The young person's] behaviour is a lot better, in fact they have completely turned them around for the good.'

There have only been two episodes where a young person has gone missing. Appropriate procedures were followed to safeguard them. Staff sensitively reflect with young people to understand the triggers for their behaviour. This has dramatically reduced this risk taking behaviour.

Measures of control used are recorded in a suitable volume. Following all incidents, young people and staff consistently receive debriefs. However, for staff these meetings are not recorded within the log books as required. This does not evidence clearly that staff are being appropriately supported to reflect on the use of a measure of control.

Young people are protected by safer recruitment procedures. These include all staff undertaking enhanced disclosure and barring service checks, and providing at least two satisfactory references, which are all verified. Although, the recruitment practice is generally robust, some staff had not provided a full written explanation for gaps in their employment history. This was fully and immediately addressed during the inspection.

Young people are protected by good health and safety routines and equipment is maintained at the required intervals. Young people know what actions to take in case of fire or an emergency.

Leadership and management

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

The home has a Registered Manager in post. This offers the young people and the home stability and consistency. The Statement of Purpose contains a good description of the facilities and services available at the home. Young people receive guidance about living in the home in a child-friendly format. This ensures that young people, placing social workers, parents and staff are all clear about the aims and objectives of the home.

A previous requirement to ensure that records relating to measures of control are completed within 24 hours has been fully met. This supports the effective monitoring of young people's care. Young people now consistently record their personal views on measures of control within the home's records. This provides young people with an additional voice. The record of homely remedies administered to young people is now consistently completed with reasons why such a remedy is given. This further promotes young people's good health.

Staff are sufficient in number and receive regular supervision. Supervision recording is limited, and records are not signed by both parties at the end of the meeting. This makes it difficult to evaluate the quality of the supervision. However, staff report

feeling very well supported by the whole management team.

The small number of staff who do not hold a relevant childcare qualification are currently working towards it. An on-going training programme covers topics such as first aid, safeguarding and behaviour management techniques. However, the programme does not include the administration of medication, and the home is caring for young people who are prescribed medicines. Although the administration of medication is safe, the staff are not supported to gain relevant knowledge around the safe handling of medicines.

Young people's case records are stored securely. Entries are clear and sensitively written and the young people are encouraged to add their views and comments appropriately. Consequently, the documents provide a detailed record of the young person's life within the home.

One significant event was not notified to Ofsted as required, although appropriate action had been taken. Notification to Ofsted would have confirmed that correct procedures to safeguard the young person had been followed. Internal monitoring reports are completed within required timescales, contain feedback from young people and drive forward standards within the home.

Leaders and managers demonstrate a pro-active approach to promoting excellent outcomes for all young people within the home. Development plans in place identify improvement areas for the home, which focus on further improving outcomes for young people.

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.