

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Louise Redfern
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This home is privately owned and registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three young people who 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**.

Young people placed in this home consistently make good progress in all aspects of their development. The progress they make is largely attributed to the personalised and nurturing care that staff are able to deliver. Individual needs are well met and young people thrive in a consistent and respectful environment in which staff are child-centred, attentive and responsive to their needs.

Staff have a robust knowledge and understanding of safe working practices and young people say they feel safe in the home. Boundaries are consistently and reasonably reinforced by staff. Staff are competent in managing the behaviour of young people, using verbal de-escalation and positive praise. Young people have sound relationships with staff which means physical restraint is used only as a last resort. Furthermore, young people fully engage in discussing the incident and working with the staff team to reduce further incidents. Young people are clear about the expectations of the home and have a considerate approach to the staff.

All staff are highly committed to the young people in their care and create an environment which is caring and encouraging. Staff have high aspirations for young people. Social workers give an indication of the high regard in which they hold the home by saying, 'The staff have done an amazing job with X, they have made huge progress in managing X's behaviour and developing X's understanding of being safe.'

The Registered Manager is experienced and has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the home. However, a number of minor shortfalls have been identified. These include some records that are missing, records of physical intervention not fully completed and notifications not always made in a timely

fashion. Additionally, not all staff are qualified or regularly supervised. The requirements and recommendations raised from the inspection are currently having no apparent impact on young people.

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, a written record is made including the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure (Regulation 17B (3)(f))	28/08/2013
28 (2001)	ensure that the Registered Person maintains in respect of each child a record in permanent form which includes the documents specified in Schedule 3. This specifically relates to health examinations conducted with respect to the child and any statements of educational need (Regulation 28 (1) schedule 3 (12) (23))	28/08/2013
30 (2001)	ensure that if any event listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 5 takes place, the registered person shall without delay notify the persons indicated in respect of the event in column 2 of the table. (Regulation 30(1))	28/08/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure that all existing care staff have attained a minimum level 3 qualification and that new staff are working towards the Diploma within six months of confirmation of employment (NMS 18.5)
- ensure that all staff are provided with regular supervision and a written or electronic record is kept by the home. Ensure that the record is signed by the supervisor and member of staff at the end of the supervision. (NMS 19.4 and 19.5)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people's outcomes are good because staff are persevering, supportive and demonstrate a clear investment in helping young people achieve their potential. Young people gain an understanding of their backgrounds and past experiences. This has helped them develop a realistic understanding of their own identity and an increased awareness of their strengths and weaknesses. As a result, young people become more resilient and feel empowered to overcome the challenges they face in life and plan positively for their future.

Young people take responsibility for their health. Some young people show understanding about the importance of healthy lifestyles and are making good choices to this effect. Young people say this is because they are provided with good information, advice and support to enable them to make informed choices about their health.

Young people's attendance and participation in education is varied. One young person spoke positively about their aspiration to join the army. Since living in the home the young person has become engaged in post-16 education, to achieve his aspiration. Staff are sensitive to the difficulties some young people face in the classroom setting. They work closely with education providers to ensure academic achievement is secured through supporting a programme of home tuition, provided by the placing education authority.

Some young people are involved in a range of community activities that ensure they make a positive contribution to their local and wider community. For example, a young person has joined a local church and church youth group. This has enabled friendships to be developed and sustained.

Young people confirm they are provided with opportunities to develop their independence skills. This includes learning how to manage tasks around the home, such as buying food, cooking, doing their own laundry and keeping their bedrooms tidy.

Quality of care

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

Young people comment, 'The home is mint; before I came here my life was going downhill. Being here has given me time to sort my life out.' Young people benefit from good relationships with individual staff members. This promotes a sense of trust and security. A caring environment with clear rules, leads to constructive relationships between staff and young people. One young person commented, 'I like the staff here. I am treated different from the other young people, but in a good way.'

Young people benefit from individualised support that helps them to build self-esteem, grow in confidence and address challenging behaviours. Young people are systematically encouraged to contribute to their care planning. They are involved in discussions about their risk assessment management plans and internal placement

plans on a regular basis. This leads to young people developing a sense of personal responsibility for their behaviour.

Young people's views are regularly sought through daily conversations, one-to-one direct work sessions, young people's meetings and statutory review meetings. Young people feel listened to and can recognise the occasions when their views and choices have been acted upon. The home has a comprehensive complaints procedure in place. Complaints are fully investigated and actioned. As a result, young people feel they are listened to and feel confident in raising their concerns. Partnership arrangements are extremely effective. Social work professionals describe the staff as, 'Very good at passing information over'.

The home provides a healthy environment where young people access services and support to meet their physical, emotional and psychological health needs, both in the home and in the local community. Young people engage in positive activities in the community such as playing football in the local parks, going to the local swimming pool and attending local church youth groups. This encourages them to engage in physical activity and positive social interaction in the community.

Staff promote education in the home. Young people are making good progress to access education and are making significant improvements given their individual starting points. One young person commented, 'I am making the right choices now, I am back in education and focused on my future.'

Young people benefit from living in a house that blends into the neighbourhood and resembles a family home. They have a strong say in the décor of the home and are encouraged to personalise their individual bedrooms.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people say that they feel safe living at the home. The home works co-operatively with a range of external agencies to minimise risk for young people, for example, The Children's Society. Staff receive a range of training linked to safeguarding matters and have an excellent understanding of their role, duties and responsibilities. They work proactively both within and outside the home to reduce opportunities where young people could expose themselves to harm, thus promoting young people's welfare positively. Effective risk assessment management plans support young people and staff to identify risks and protective factors to reduce the levels of risk.

There is a calm and effective approach towards behaviour management. Staff make good use of individually tailored incentives and rewards to encourage and reinforce positive behaviour. Young people confirm that when sanctions are used they are proportionate and fair. The use of physical restraint is reducing. All staff receive training in behaviour management, including de-escalation and physical restraint. However, records do not fully meet the regulations because the effectiveness of

physical restraints are not routinely evaluated.

There are robust procedures in place for when young people go missing from the home. The frequency of which young people go missing is minimised and is continually reducing. A social worker commented, 'X's running off has significantly reduced, X is making huge progress in understanding the risk associated with being missing from the home. I can see real progress, through the support from the staff at the home.'

All staff are selected and checked through the organisation's robust recruitment procedures. The Registered Manager takes an active role in recruitment and ensures the safe recruitment of staff that are able to meet the young people's specific needs. Effective health and safety risk management ensures the home is well maintained. The home provides for a safe environment for the staff team and the young people. Young people practice fire drills. This means they have a clear understanding of what to do in the event of an emergency.

Leadership and management

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

The home is run by a committed, enthusiastic and well established Registered Manager. The staff team are an established team who are balanced in terms of age, gender and experience. The home is well resourced to meet the needs of the young people with adequate staffing levels in place. Any shortfalls in the rota are covered by existing staff doing extra hours or with a small number of staff from within the company. This ensures a level of consistent care to meet the needs of the young people.

The Registered Manager has a good approach to identifying young people's individual needs. Effective individual placement plans are established to enable young people to make progress and achieve their full potential. The Registered Manager can clearly demonstrate the impact and value that living at the home has had on young people's lives and how their life chances have improved over time. For example, this includes young people's behaviour stabilising, developing an understanding of safe behaviour and building trust to enable them to have free time with friends in the community.

The staff team are well-trained professionals committed to improving the outcomes of young people. However, two members of staff have not enrolled on the Diploma, despite being in post for over six months. Their performance continually improves with well-planned team meetings, effective handovers between shifts and annual appraisals that young people contribute to. However, not all staff receive regular supervision. Staff who have supervision do not regularly sign and receive their notes at the end of each supervision. However, due to regular de-briefs and on shift support from the Registered Manager and senior members of the team, there is no current impact on the welfare of young people.

The Registered Manager undertakes regular monitoring of the quality of care. Monitoring provides for formal consultation with young people, parents and placing authorities. No recommendations or requirements were raised at the previous inspection.

Records are maintained, confidential, stored correctly and contribute to the understanding of the young person's life. However, one young person's statutory medical examination record and one young person's statement of educational need was not available at the time of inspection. Staff are clear about when to make notifications of events, in accordance with Regulation 30, to the relevant agencies. This means appropriate action following any incident is taken to keep young people safe. However, on one occasion there was a significant delay in notifying HMCI. As other agencies confirm they were notified on this occasion this did not impact on the welfare and safety of young people in the home.

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.