

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Tracy Murty
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is operated by a private company and provides care for up to three young people. The home is registered to provide care for young people with 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 **outstanding**.

Young people receive highly personalised and well planned care, from a very dedicated and skilled staff team. From their starting points, young people make significant improvements in relation to their educational outcomes and also in relation to their self-confidence. This ensures positive outcomes for them in all aspects of their lives. A particular strength of this home is how well it prepares young people for their move to independence. Young people are encouraged from an early stage to take responsibility for meeting their own needs, with staff support.

Young people understand what plans are in place to meet their complex needs. The staff team regularly supports them to read and make comments on their personal files. The views of young people have significantly influenced how this home is run and led to improved outcomes for young people over time. Young people take great pride in their home and assist with decorating and other tasks.

Young people report enjoying very positive relationships with the staff team. They engage well with them and feel supported and protected by them at all times. This is also reported from involved agencies, who consistently praise the staff team on how well they support and enable young people to have the best chance of success in all aspects of their lives.

Young people report feeling safe living in this home and are kept safe by the staff team. Very close and proactive working relationships with agencies such as the police have further enabled young people to significantly reduce any risk-taking behaviours over time. One involved agency referred to one young person as thriving in this

home. Another enforcement agency stated, 'what they do with and for young people in this home is fantastic.'

The Registered Manager fully understands the strengths and weaknesses of the home and is constantly seeking to make improvements. This has been achieved through very robust monitoring and tracking of all aspects of the care provided to young people by the staff team and by having an excellent development plan in place.

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **outstanding**.

Young people make exceptional progress while living in this home and achieve very outcomes from their starting points. They engage very well in education and have achieved a wide range of qualifications. They go on to attend further education courses, supported by the dedicated staff team. All involved agencies work closely, with the needs of the young people central to all they do. This ensures that young people have the best possible chance of succeeding in their chosen careers and interests.

Young people develop a positive self-image and gain confidence in all areas of their lives. This is achieved by the staff supporting and encouraging them to take appropriate risks and to engage fully in the local and wider community. Young people have been supported to identify part-time work opportunities in the local area and to utilise their skills and academic achievements by gaining paid employment. Young people present as confident and emotionally resilient. Involved agencies also comment on this, stating the significant developments that young people have made in all areas of their lives, since moving to live in this home.

Staff challenge any actual or perceived failure to meet the needs of the young people and evidence this exceptionally well in young people's records. Young people form meaningful attachments with the staff team and each other whilst living in this home. They take great pride in their home and assist staff to maintain it to a high standard. This promotes a real sense of achievement for them over time.

Young people engage in a very wide range of social activities whilst living in this home. This has included attendance at local gyms, regular walks in the countryside, paid part-time work in local restaurants and swimming. Young people decide what activities they wish to take part in and staff support them to enjoy a wide range of life-enriching opportunities.

Young people feel very supported by the staff team to maintain meaningful contact with family members and significant others. Placing authorities praise the entire staff team for their commitment to ensuring that young people regularly see their family. Family members visit the home and staff support contact outside of the home on a very regular basis. This enables young people to maintain positive relationships and to feeling supported by the staff to do so. Young people also feel able to have friends

over to visit them in the home. This further promotes their sense of inclusion in the local area, as peer relationships have been formed through their attendance in local educational and social provisions over time.

A particular strength of the home is its preparation of young people for their eventual move to independence. Young people purchase food and prepare their own breakfasts and lunches each day. The staff team then prepare an evening meal for them each day. This enables young people to learn how to budget, to make choices on their diet and learn how to manage on a limited income. Young people receive incentive payments for assisting with other tasks within the home. This has included assisting recently with re-painting the kitchen. This further promotes their sense of engagement and pride in their home surroundings. It also enables young people to put into practice skills they have learned through their formal education.

Young people who previously displayed concerning or risk-taking behaviours have been assisted to address these over time. One placing authority reported high levels of satisfaction at how the staff team have assisted young people to stop their offending and concerning behaviours. This was also commented on by the local police. They praised the staff for supporting young people who initially presented with highly concerning behaviours. From their starting points, young people now engage positively within the home and local community.

Quality of care

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

Young people engage very positively with the staff team in this home. They form meaningful relationships over time and develop a much better awareness of their own needs and issues. Very regular key work sessions with staff further enables young people to consider all aspects of their lives and develop constructive ways of dealing with any issues of concern. Young people form positive relationships with each other and support each other to lead meaningful and positive lives.

Young people's wishes and feelings are central to how this home is run. Weekly young people's meetings enable them to discuss all aspects of their care and to make any suggestions or requests. The Registered Manager and staff team consider these and respond to young people in a timely manner. Young people also record any low level issues they may have in a 'grumbles book'. This is also considered on a daily basis by the staff team and clear responses provided to young people in a timely manner. The staff team ensure that young people discuss and consider local and world events during their meetings. This enables them to develop a clear sense of the world around them and to form opinions and views about a wide range of topics.

Young people feel confident in being able to make complaints about any aspect of the care they receive. When they do so, the Registered Manager considers and responds to them in a very prompt manner. Records reflect that young people's feelings are taken very seriously and that any concerns they have are fully

investigated. Young people report satisfaction in how any concerns or complaints they make are dealt with and in being able to speak to staff about any worries they may have. The staff team support young people to make complaints about other services or agencies they may be involved in. This demonstrates their total commitment to advocating for young people at all times and ensuring that they can express themselves. Achievement files are also kept for each young person. These record social events and other achievements and include summaries by staff and photographs of the young person. This provides further positive evidence of how the staff team celebrate young people's achievements on a daily basis.

Records relating to young people are detailed, clear and provide a real sense of what the individual plans are for them. Young people are actively encouraged to contribute to the development of their plans and to read and sign them on a regular basis. This ensures that young people feel central to all aspects of their care at all times. There is excellent evidence of young people considering their files and making comments on them. This includes them being provided with written information about such things as the risks of drug use and self-harmful behaviour. Staff identify possible areas of concern for young people, provide them with information and discuss in key work sessions. Young people therefore feel central to all aspects of the care provided to them.

Young people receive the support and help they need to meet their physical, emotional and psychological needs whilst living in this home. They are supported to make their own health related appointments where appropriate. Staff maintain excellent records of how young people's health needs are met in all areas. The home employs the services of a counsellor/psychotherapist. This person reports a very positive and appropriate working relationship with the staff team. Young people have quick and easy access to such support services, which further enhances their emotional and psychological well-being over time. Staff work to support young people on specific health issues, such as substance misuse and self-harmful behaviours. Information is provided and services put in place for young people. Agencies work closely together to support young people and ensure that their holistic needs are met.

Young people enjoy a very wide range of social activities. These include swimming, cinema, go-karting, walks to local places of interest, trips to theme parks and regular holidays. Young people have weekly activity planners in place and are able to discuss with staff what they would like to do each week. This promotes a real sense of engagement in the local and wider community. It also enables young people to develop in confidence and social skills over time.

Young people do exceptionally well in relation to their educational achievements from their starting points. They achieve qualifications and go on to further education placements locally. Some young people also secure part-time work locally. Staff have formed very positive relationships with involved agencies. Police community support officers regularly visit the home, attending team meetings and being involved in social activities with young people. This enables young people to develop and sustain meaningful relationships with police, which promotes positive behaviour.

Young people live in an exceptionally well maintained home. They take pride in their home and enjoy the space and outside space that it provides for them. Young people have personalised their bedrooms and report high levels of satisfaction in how the home is presented. This is also reported on by involved agencies, who praise the staff for making the home so welcoming and homely.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people feel very safe living in this home and are kept safe by the committed staff team at all times. Records reflect the commitment to ensuring that each young person's needs are clearly known, with detailed risk assessments and plans being put in place. These are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect the changing needs of young people over time.

Young people feel supported to take appropriate risks, taking into account their ages and need to prepare them for the transition to independence. This is undertaken by consultation with all involved agencies and the placing authorities for young people. The staff team present as very confident in their awareness and knowledge of safeguarding policies, procedures and practices and apply this to their work with young people.

The incidences of young people going missing from care has significantly reduced over time and is now minimal. This reflects the work done by the staff team with individual young people to enable them to consider the consequences of such risky behaviours. Young people feel able to discuss any potential concerning behaviours with staff and to implement strategies which do not place them at risk. Detailed missing from care protocols are in place and staff understand the needs of each young person and ensure risk assessments are up to date and regularly reviewed.

There has been no recorded use of restraint with young people since the last inspection. This reflects the skills of the staff team in being able to work with young people to effectively deal with any potentially dangerous or challenging behaviours in more acceptable ways. All staff are trained to be able to undertake restraints and recording of any such incidents is detailed, clear and includes the views of young people in de-briefing and reflection sessions. Young people work well with the incentive systems in place in this home. They also understand the consequences of any negative behaviours and accept sanctions which may be imposed. The use of sanctions is appropriate and reflects the staff commitment to promoting positive and socially acceptable behaviours at all times.

There is excellent and close working and communication between the home and all involved agencies. Placing authorities, youth offending services and police all praise the staff team and Registered Manager for their proactive approach to safeguarding issues. Agencies report high levels of satisfaction at the imaginative practices of the

staff team, which has led to the elimination of many concerning and potentially unsafe behaviours by young people over time.

Safe and rigorous recruitment practices ensure that no unsuitable people work with young people in this home. Appropriate checks are carried out and are regularly reviewed and updated. The staff team all receive high quality and relevant training, which enables them to provide excellent standards of care to young people. Any allegations or complaints receive prompt attention by the Registered Manager and are resolved in a timely manner. Recording of any complaints or allegations are detailed and reflects the commitment of the staff team to ensuring that all issues relating to the care of young people are taken very seriously.

Leadership and management

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

The home is effectively managed by a highly competent and dedicated Registered Manager. An exceptionally comprehensive and detailed development plan sets out how the home seeks to improve its services for young people. The Registered Manager uses this as a real working document in the home and ensures its regular review and updating.

The home has a detailed and clear Statement of Purpose which sets out the aims and objectives for the home. Placing authorities, young people and involved agencies are all clear as to what services and facilities the home provides and feel that it does so exceptionally well. The children's guide also contains information for young people on how to make a complaint and key contact agencies, including Ofsted.

The Registered Manager works closely with the Regulation 33 visitor to ensure that the home continues to improve and provide very high quality care for young people. All actions set from the monthly visits are addressed promptly. The Registered Manager has clear systems in place for monitoring, tracking and overseeing all aspects of the care provided. Detailed graphs and charts for each young person sets out their achievements since moving to live in this home. This provides them with a clear and positive visual sense of their personal journeys and achievements over time.

No requirements or recommendations were made as a result of the last inspection and none were made following this inspection. The home is able to demonstrate a real capacity for continued improvement through the evidence of how young people have achieved such positive outcomes whilst living in this home.

Staff receive comprehensive and meaningful supervisions and appraisals. They receive a wide range of training and development opportunities to increase their skills and confidence in working with young people. They display a detailed awareness and understanding of young people's complex needs and of safeguarding issues. Involved agencies report high levels of satisfaction at how well the staff know the young people and communicate with agencies to ensure their holistic needs are

met.

The staff team all work hard to ensure that young people's needs are met and that they remain central to all aspects of the work they do. The Registered Manager is very experienced and stimulates the enthusiasm and commitment of the entire staff team. Staff enjoy working in this home and in seeing the positive changes made with young people. They take pride in their work and really celebrate the successes of young people each day.

The Registered Manager has forged very positive relationships with a range of involved agencies, which has resulted in significant reductions in concerning behaviours of some young people. The home enjoys positive relationships with its neighbours and the local community. There have been no reported complaints from either since the last inspection and young people are positively engaged with the community.

Records relating to young people are of a very high standard. They are well organised, regularly reviewed and would provide real meaning to a young person, if they were to access them at any time. The Registered Manager understands his responsibilities and ensures that all significant events are notified to the appropriate authorities. Communication is reported by all involved agencies to be a key strength of the entire staff team.

Young people live in a home which is maintained and furnished to a very high standard. The staff team ensures that they have a wide range of social and educational experiences during their time in this home. The Registered Manager takes personal and professional pride in the achievements of each young person and is able to clearly demonstrate the progress they have made. The staff team similarly have very high aspirations for the young people and celebrate their successes and prepare them well for their move to adult life.

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.