

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Maria McGranaghan
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Date of last inspection	18/11/2013
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is run by a private organisation and offers care and accommodation to one young person with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties and learning disabilities.

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 **adequate**.

At the last inspection on 11 November 2013 the home was judged as inadequate. At the time the registered manager was asked to take into account a number of requirements and recommendations made to improve the quality of the service provision in the home.

The purpose of this re-inspection is to assess the progress made since the last inspection and how any progress has improved the quality of the care and potential outcomes for young people.

Young people are settled in a home that provides a relaxed and nurturing environment. Adequate progress is made in areas such as education, behaviour and emotional resilience. Likewise, the management of the home is improved. Systems required to assess and develop care planning arrangements; young people's safety and the overall monitoring of care practice including staff training and development are now in place within the home.

Young people have very good educational attendance and make suitable progress in school. They now receive the appropriate support required to maintain their placement and develop an understanding of the structure that school brings to their lives.

Care planning and placement arrangements for young people are significantly improved. Plans are developed in order to consider the individual needs of young people and the steps to be taken to address them. Consequently, placement arrangements are effective in recognising and responding to specific and individual

needs.

Young people are looked after by staff that are qualified at National Vocational Award Level three. In order to promote the continued development of staff an annual training program, coupled with targeted supervision is now developed to support and strengthen the skills and knowledge of the staff team.

The management of the home is improved. Internal monitoring systems are now in place to ensure that care is regularly reviewed in accordance with the needs of the young people. The manager has undertaken training to improve care practice, including management administration duties within the home. Admissions and discharge records are suitably updated to ensure all essential information is correctly recorded.

Young people feel safe and are protected from significant harm. Suitable arrangements are now in place to manage young people's safety both within the home and community. Young people are happy and engage well with staff forming suitable relationships.

Young people are included in the decisions made about the home. They have chosen the décor of their bedroom, the layout of the living room and make choices about meals and activities. Young people are encouraged to record their views about their care and this helps to inform the care planning arrangements for them.

Young people are supported to try out and attend new activities both at home and in the community. This encourages them to make friends and to participate in activities. Young people benefit from support that helps to maintain appropriate contact with significant adults in their lives. Consequently, young people maintain their sense of identity and belonging.

Despite the progress made in the home there are some areas for development. Specifically, not all staff have undertaken refresher first aid training. This impacts on their ability to respond appropriately should a young person fall ill or have an accident. Likewise, although plans such as residential plan, health care plan and missing from home plan are significantly improved, they are not signed by staff or the placing social worker. Consequently, it is unclear whether staff are sufficiently familiar with the plans in order to effectively implement them. Furthermore, although staff are proactive in responding to matters of bullying within the education environment, such incidents are not recorded. This means that they are not able to assess patterns and trends or to evaluate the effectiveness of strategies put into place.

Areas for improvement

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 first aid (NMS 6.7)
- ensure staff record any indications or incidents of bullying including the outcome for young people (NMS 3.12)
- ensure a system is in place to monitor the quality and adequacy of record keeping and take action when needed. Specifically staff sign to confirm their understanding about particular records and plans for young people (NMS 22.1)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people make good progress in the home that provides a nurturing and safe foundation for young people to grow. Relationships are strong because young people learn how to trust the staff working with them and this supports the continued development of their self-esteem and confidence. As a direct result, young people are able to work through some difficult emotions and come to terms with their life circumstances.

Young people's health is improved as a direct result of living in the home. Young people are provided with a range of age appropriate information that helps them to learn about healthy diets, enable them to make good food choices and the value of regular exercise in order to keep their body fit and healthy. Consequently, young people develop a good understanding of how to live and lead a healthy lifestyle.

Young people with a history of educational disruption are now placed at appropriate educational settings and enjoy school. Attendance is good and educational attainment is consistently improved. Young people are enthusiastic about their learning and spend time with staff developing their reading and writing skills. As a result, young people now view education as part of their daily lives and have developed a commitment to their individual learning program.

Young people undertake daily age appropriate activities both within the home and in the community such as, visits to the park, bike riding, youth club and attendance at the cadets. Likewise, young people really enjoy having fun with staff particularly playing chase in the park or building sand castles while visiting the beach. It is through this child centred approach that young people are supported to develop through play and to gain friendships within their community. A social worker said, 'young people experience activities they have never taken part in before. They learn so many different things. This placement is really committed to young people.'

Young people have appropriate contact with significant family members as agreed in their care plans. Consequently, young people maintain relationships with the most important people in their lives and this supports their sense of belonging and

personal identity.

Although there are no young people currently at an age to undertake independent training, the home consistently promotes personal independence. For example, young people assist to develop a daily routine that helps them to learn about personal accountability such as, tidying their bedroom, cleaning their teeth or clearing pots from the table. This enhances a young person's sense of belonging within the home and promotes a sense of responsibility.

Quality of care

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

Young people are settled and happy in a home that provides a caring, nurturing and supportive environment. Relationships between young people and staff are firmly established as young people are clearly happy and contented in the company of staff. A staff member said, 'We work hard to build up trust with young people and this can take time but it is the most important thing when looking after a child.' Furthermore a social worker said, 'I think this is a brilliant placement. I have seen such a change in the young person and this is because the staff are so consistent and really do care about them.'

Young people live in a home where education is consistently promoted and embedded in the culture of the service. Personal education plans are now developed and serve to highlight the support required to sustain positive educational experiences. Likewise, staff work collaboratively with professionals such as, special educational needs co-ordinator in order to maintain a consistent approach to the wrap-around education support package provided to young people. Consequently, young people receive the most appropriate support required in order to make progress within the educational environment.

Staff work creatively to ensure young people are provided with appropriate opportunities to have their voice heard. For example, staff undertake one-to-one consultation sessions to talk about the care they receive including contact, education and activities. Young people engage in arts and crafts and are encouraged to use art to communicate wishes and feelings, such as how they would like their room, what a special treat looks like and what makes them happy and sad. This enables young people to begin to visualise their feelings and begin to verbalise their thoughts. As a result, young people's views go some way to influence both the care they receive and the decisions made in the home.

Young people now benefit from a behaviour management plan that clearly sets out the targets for improved behaviour and how this is to be achieved. Young people engage well with staff in order to review their plan and reflect upon their behaviour suggesting further ideas and strategies they feel may help them. For example, star charts, rewards and special treats are now a consistent feature in the recognition of improved behaviour. Consequently, young people work in partnership with staff and this helps them to begin to find appropriate ways of expressing their emotions. A

social worker said, 'Staff manage young people really well. They are consistent and are great at being creative and sensitive to the young people's needs. This helps young people become really settled.'

Young people and their parents know how to complain. Information is provided in the young people's guide and organisational complaints documents. Procedures for managing complaints ensure they are handled fairly and investigated thoroughly by the manager or external nominated person. Likewise, young people are assisted to understand their rights. Information is provided in the home and this is supported by one-to-one sessions. Consequently, young people are protected by appropriate systems should they be unhappy about issues in their lives.

Placement planning is further developed. Young people are now in receipt of a comprehensive placement plan and residential care plan that clearly sets out the aims of the placement and the support the young people require in order to maximise their individual potential. Relationships with external agencies are also established and this supports a multi-disciplinary approach to the continued development and review of individual care packages. Young people are supported by individual keywork sessions which go some way in helping them to understand their personal circumstances and in turn make some positive decisions and choices about their lives. However, residential plans are not signed by all staff or placing social workers in order to confirm their understanding of the plan and the individual responsibility they have in implementing it.

Young people's individual health care needs are suitably assessed and regularly reviewed. Young people are registered with local health care professionals such as, doctor's, dentist and opticians and this ensures their physical health is suitably maintained. Up-to-date health care plans are now in place and this ensures that young people receive appropriate health checks in a timely way. However, not all plans are reviewed and signed by staff to ensure consistency in maintaining young people's health.

Young people live in a home that provides a nurturing and caring environment. Play is viewed as essential to the young people's development and is embedded in the routines within the home. Staff say, 'We want young people to experience their childhood in a happy and positive way. Play is a natural part of being a child and we ensure young people are supported to engage in as many activities as possible'.

Young people live in a home where their individuality is suitably embraced. Young people are encouraged to develop their sense of self and begin to make choices and express opinions in a safe and welcoming environment. Likewise, young people are provided with opportunities to visit landmarks, museums and cultural events in order to expand their knowledge of the world around them. Consequently, young people's cultural awareness is increased in a sensitive and age appropriate way.

Young people live in a welcoming, warm and spacious home located close to local amenities, transport links and schools. The home is very well maintained and decorated to a high standard. Likewise, young people benefit from a private

bedroom decorated in a style of their choice.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Staff have undertaken appropriate safeguarding training. Partnerships are formed with external agencies and this ensures the most appropriate action is taken to safeguard young people. Likewise, risk assessments are clear, focused and regularly reviewed with young people in order to minimise risk factors in their lives. As a result, young people are afforded the opportunity to discuss their own vulnerabilities and to understand where risks have reduced or escalated.

Young people are supported by staff who recognise the impact of bullying and take appropriate action to minimise the risk to young people. For example, where bullying has occurred in school, staff will liaise with education staff to ensure the matter is suitably addressed and resolved. However, records of these incidents are not held in the home. Therefore, patterns and trends are not regularly reviewed in order to assess the effectiveness of how matters are resolved or identify where further action is required.

Young people live in a home where their safety and well-being is protected. Staff undertake keywork sessions with young people in order that they can begin to understand about the impact of risk taking behaviour and the importance of being safe. Likewise, individual missing from home plans are now developed in partnership with the missing from home co-ordinator to ensure the correct procedures and strategies are implemented without delay. However, not all staff sign to confirm they have read and understood the new procedures, and this serves to compromise the consistency of the plan. It is noted that there have been no young people missing or absent since the last inspection.

Staff now receive appropriate training in order to manage physical intervention within the home. Likewise, staff are clear that physical intervention is only used to prevent a young person harming themselves or others. Consequently, risk assessments and de-escalation strategies implemented within the home prove successful as escalating behaviours are suitably managed without the need for physical intervention.

Staff promote young people's on-going safety by undertaking regular fire drills and service tests making sure that all faults are efficiently addressed. Recruitment and selection of staff is thorough and ensures young people are looked after by staff that are appropriately checked before they work in the home.

Leadership and management

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

Young people live in a home that is suitably managed. The home meets the aims and objectives of the Statement of Purpose and young people, parents and stake holders are clear about the care provided in the home.

The Registered Manager undertakes training to further develop her role in the home. As a result, a development plan is now in place in order to maintain the progress the home has made since the last inspection and secure future improvements.

Internal and external monitoring systems are improved and provide the home with a suitable approach to the overall monitoring of care. The manager now understands the importance of reflective practice and ensures the views of external services and families are taken into account and are reflected in the care young people receive.

The home employs a committed staff team who are suitably qualified at NVQ level three. Staff receive appropriate support from the manager. Supervision takes place regularly and serves to identify personal development targets. However, although staff undertake a range of valuable training, refresher courses such as first aid are not always completed within timescales. As a result, young people may not receive the most up-to-date immediate care and attention they require in the event of illness or accident.

The manager is aware of the procedure for notifying Ofsted of incidents under Regulation 30.

The manager and staff demonstrate a commitment to the young people living in the home and generate good opportunities to enhance the overall outcomes for young people. The manager and staff have met all requirements from the last inspection and the majority of recommendations.

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.