

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Wendy Anderson
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This home is run by a private provider and is registered to provide care and accommodation for two young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties and/or learning 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 make good progress in all aspects of their care from their starting point on admission. This is due to the individualised care that they receive from a well trained and experienced staff team.

The staff team demonstrate a good understanding of the homes policies and procedures; especially safeguarding. The team receive a good standard of training and are well managed by the Registered Manager.

Consultation with young people is key to the way the home works with the young people and influences not only the young people's development, but that of the service as well.

The staff team have very high aspirations for the young people educationally. Staff provide young people with very good support so they re-engage with education, maintain attendance and achieve their educational goals.

There are some minor shortfalls in the quality of the recording, evidencing the chasing of review meeting minutes and ensuring that risk assessments connected with positive handling include how any identified risk will be minimised.

The manager is aware of these areas and is committed to further improving the outcomes for the young people and in providing a high quality service.

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
25 (2001)	ensure that there is at all time a sufficient number of suitability qualified, competent and experienced persons working at the home. In particular the staff rota must demonstrate who actually worked each shift (Regulation 25)	31/12/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure methods to de-escalate confrontations or potential violent behaviour are used wherever appropriate to avoid the use of physical restraint. In particular the risk assessment relating to positive handling should include what strategies will be used to minimise the identified risk (NMS 3.13)
- ensure that children's safety and welfare is promoted and that the homes' policies and procedures includes guidance for staff in relation to child exploitation (NMS 4.1)
- ensure a written or electronic record is kept by the home detailing the time and date and length of each supervision held for each member of staff. In particular ensure these notes are of a good quality, are detailed and reflect the discussion and topics covered in the supervision (NMS19.5)
- ensure all statutory reviews and reviews of placement plans are recorded on the child's file. In particular the home evidences it's work in ensuring these reports are obtained promptly. (NMS 25.8)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **outstanding**.

Young people make exceptional progress from their starting point on admission to the home. They make good personal development in all aspects of their lives, including education, and develop a positive self-view, self-esteem and education. Due to the strength of the relationships between the staff and the young people they are able to work through, the sometimes distressing periods of their life before admission to the home, within a safe, caring and warm environment.

Linked to this, young people develop strategies which equip them to deal with difficult situations they may encounter in later life. The staff team's in-depth understanding of individual young people ensures that they all receive an outstanding quality of care. Young people said that the staff that care for them are 'great, the best people in the world'. Young people said they love their key workers and that this is a role that is very important to them.

Young people's attendance and engagement with education is excellent; particularly given their starting points; some young people had been out of education for a considerable time prior to coming here. They now speak very positively about their education due to work carried out by the team which has successfully instilled the importance of education. Staff support young people in their education by attending parents' evenings, school events and helping with homework.

Young people enjoy good health. They develop understanding of a healthy lifestyle and participate in activities which promote this. They take part in a wide range of physical activities and understand the importance of a balanced, healthy diet. All young people are registered with local health services and staff support them in attending appointments.

Young people are enabled and supported by staff to be involved in all aspects of their care. Their views are sought on a daily basis on the day-to-day events at the home.

Young people are able to access the facilities of the local community which enhance opportunities for social interaction and developing socially acceptable behaviours.

Young people are supported by the staff team in maintaining contact with their families. The staff assist with transport and where required the supervision of contact. Family and friends are welcome at the home. The staff regard it as key that young people maintain meaningful relationships with those important to them as this is part of their individual identity.

Quality of care

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

Young people receive outstanding quality of care from a stable, experienced and child-centred staff team. The young people and staff have built strong appropriate relationships which form the basis for all work undertaken and with the well-being of the young people being central to all aspects of their practice. This view is supported by placing social workers who said 'I have witnessed a brilliant relationship develop with the young people. There is a mutual respect and understanding, coupled with fun and genuine warmth and affection which makes the young people's time spent at the home enjoyable and productive'.

The team have consistently high expectations and aspirations for the young people they care for and support and enable them in striving towards these. The staff team

works with young people on an individual basis and because of this young people develop skill and strategies for managing their own behaviours; develop positive relationships, improve their individual identity and self-confidence. The young people's care is enhanced by the staff team being of mixed age, gender and ethnicity.

The staff team demonstrate a clear understanding of the young people's individual needs and this is supported by effective individualised care and behaviour planning and strategies. This is enhanced by these plans being frequently reviewed and updated. Young people are fully involved in all aspect of their care and plans for their future. This approach builds on the young people's self-esteem and confidence. It also empowers them as their views are sought, valued and, where possible, acted upon.

Young people are also supported in looking at the reason and events which brought them into the home. Because of this they develop an excellent understanding of their personal and family history, its impact on their current situation. This helps them to develop and enhances their future outcomes.

Staff actively promote education and have high aspirations for the young people in this area. Where young people have been out of education for some time, staff implement a structured day so as young people get into the good habits and routines prior to enrolment at a school.

Transition back into education is well managed to ease the stress this may cause the young people. Young people may have introductory visits to the school prior to the start of term that they are familiar and relaxed in their new surroundings. This supportive and enabling approach has led to the young people making excellent strides in their education from their starting point on admission. Young people have up-to-date personal education plans in place.

Consultation with young people is at the heart of the homes ethos. This is achieved through house meeting; key worker sessions; young people's participation in their review meetings and discussions over meal-times. Young people said, 'staff ask us all the time about what we want and what we think of things'.

The home has a participation file in which staff and young people complete write ups on how an activity has gone and anything which could be improved. Young people said they are fully involved in activity choices and arrangements.

The home has a clear policy and procedure for dealing with complaints; which is adhered too in practice. Young people were clear about what to do if they had a complaint and said they felt very happy either talking to staff about this or the service manager who has a high profile in the home. Since the last full inspection there have been no complaints. The home has the appropriate policies and procedures in place of addressing any concerns raised.

The staff team and, in particular, the Registered Manager have excellent working

relationships with external professionals. Feed-back from external professionals has been very positive, complimenting the Registered Manager and the team on the quality and frequency of their communication and their commitment to the young people they work with.

The health care and medical needs of young people at the home are well managed. Young people attend all health related appointments as required. The home has a clear system for the storage, administration and recording of medication. Young people are encouraged to pursue healthy lifestyle choices including a healthy diet. This approach helps young people become aware of health matters and make positive choices about their personal health.

Specialist intervention services are provided to meet the specific needs of some young people. Young people are able to access equine therapy during their time at the home. This provides them with an opportunity not only to care for another living being and develop but to take responsibility for part of their care. The horses used in this have themselves had troubled lives which in some incidents reflect the young people. This can lead to young people opening up about their own past and working through this with staff.

Young people are enabled to take part in a wide range of activities both in the home and in the community. These enable the young people to have new life experiences and develop new skills. Young people said the activities were 'brilliant' and talked excitedly about what they did during the holidays and evenings.

The home's location and design is domestic in style and suitable for purpose. The accommodation is homely, welcoming and provides young people with a relaxed environment in which to develop and grow. It is extremely well furnished internally and in very good decorative order.

Young people are provided with their own bedrooms which are personalised to their individual tastes. The home provides young people with a good level of communal space. There are good bathing and toilet facilities. Externally there is a spacious garden and additional space for the young people to play and enjoy. Young people said they love the rural location of the home as it gives them so much space to play in.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people said they feel safe at the home and feel well cared for by the staff team. Young people are protected by safeguarding policies and procedures which are adhered to in practice. Staff members demonstrate a good understanding of these policies and their importance. Regular updates on safeguarding form part of the staff team's mandatory training. The Registered Manager has developed good working relationships with local safeguarding professionals.

The main focus of behaviour management within the home is of positive reinforcement. The home has appropriate policies and procedure in place for behaviour management including how to manage bullying. Each young person has an individual 24 hours therapeutic management plan which is linked to their care and placement plan. This covers all aspects of their care, including how their behaviour is to be managed.

Staff are trained in the home's chosen method of positive handling and receive regular updates; which ensures that staff training and practice is in line with current guidance. Positive handling is used only as a last resort. The main focus is on identifying triggers and developing strategies, with the young people, to help them manage their own behaviours. This approach has been very successful.

Where positive handling or sanctions are used appropriate records are maintained and monitored by the manager; this ensures appropriate use and consistency of behaviour management methods. Young people reported that sanctions are rarely used and where used they are fair. Young people's behaviour during the inspection was exceptionally good.

Bullying is not an issue at the home. However, young people and their key workers discuss this at key work sessions so as to keep it on both parties' agenda.

Young people are further protected by the use of risk assessments. Although these are current and comprehensive the exception to this is the positive handling risk assessment which very clearly identifies the risks and who is affected but does not clearly and consistently identify what measures the home will take to minimise the risk. This could potential lead to an inconsistency in staff methods.

There have been no incidents of young people going missing from care since the last inspection. The home has policies and procedures in place which include individualised plans for young people. This and the safeguarding policy, currently has limited information on child sexual exploitation which means the home is not able to fully evidence how it protects young people in this situation.

The home has appropriate staff recruitment and vetting procedure; which is in line with safer recruitment practices. These ensure that young people are protected from unsuitable people having access to them.

The home has appropriate fire safety procedures in place; which are adhered to in practice. Regular fire drills ensure that young people and staff know what to do in the event of a fire. Risk assessments identify and reduce risks from hazards around the building, grounds and during activities.

Leadership and management

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

This is the home's first full inspection since its new registration as a stand-alone home rather than a satellite home thus there are no outstanding requirements or

recommendations from previous inspections.

The Registered Manager understands the strengths and areas for improvement in the home. The home is well managed and both the manager and the staff team are very committed to the young people they care for.

There are good staff-to-young people ratios which ensures young people receive the care they require. However the home's staff rotas do not clearly demonstrate who is on duty. The Register Manager has made clear arrangements for the management of the home in her absence. These arrangements are effective and ensure consistency of care.

The home's Statement of Purpose covers all the required areas and reflects the current practices at the home. The current development plan has recently been reviewed and now includes timescale for work to be completed.

All members of staff receive regular supervision which covers all the required aspects. Staff meetings take place on a regular basis and include staff from the managers other home. Staff say this worked well and all felt able to contribute to these meetings. Staff said they feel very well supported by their manager, their colleagues and senior management.

As well as team meeting the staff have therapy meeting with the organisations consultant psychotherapist and trainer. This enhances their practice

The young people receive excellent care from a well-trained committed staff team. This training is not only in house but is also provided by external trainers. As well as mandatory training, which ensure the staff team's practice is in line with current legislation and developments; additional training is provided where the needs of the young people require it. Staff stated that they feel appreciated by senior managers; who invest and develop in them as workers and people which in turn improves the outcomes for the young people.

All staff receive annual appraisals of their performance through which personal development plans are agreed. These enhance the practice of individuals and develop them professionally.

The manager regularly monitors and reports on the quality of care in the home, in line with Regulation 34. An external visitor also conducts a monthly quality assurance audit and reports on this in line with Regulation 33. Visits, as required, are unannounced and cover all the required areas. These processes drive forward improvement of the service; areas requiring improvement and development are clearly identified and acted upon.

External professionals are very positive about the care young people receive. They stated that the staff are very committed to the young people and are flexible in their approach, for instance, travelling considerable distances to facilitate contact with family; this ensures their needs are met. They also said that the staff are very good

at keeping them informed and updated on the young people's care and progress.

There have been no notifications to Ofsted since the last full inspection.

Records at the home are stored securely. Record-keeping is generally of a high standard. However the home is not robustly evidencing when they are chasing the review reports for young people from independent reviewing officers. This would be of concern if the home did not robustly update its own individual plans straight after the review meetings.

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.