

Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Inspector</b>	Deirdra Keating
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## 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* (March 2011) and the evaluation schedule for children's homes.

### The inspection judgements and what they mean

**Outstanding:** a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

**Good:** a service that exceeds minimum requirements

**Satisfactory:** a service that only meets minimum requirements

**Inadequate:** a service that does not meet minimum requirements

## Service information

### Brief description of the service

The home is privately owned. It is registered to look after a maximum of six young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. There are education facilities within the grounds of the home.

### Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be **good**.

Young people make good progress in relation to their individual starting points. They feel safe and secure in a supportive environment where there are consistent boundaries. Young people enjoy taking part in the activities provided by the home and have made good relationships with the staff. Their views are valued and actively sought regarding relevant aspects of their care. The home works flexibly to meet the needs of young people's placement plans as identified by local authorities. The home supports young people to achieve positive moves to independence, supported accommodation or alternative placements. The senior staff identify areas for improvement and comply well with regulations. There are some areas of shortfall in relation to new national minimum standards. These include staff training and joint protocols for young people missing from home. These have little impact on young people and do not affect the overall good judgment.

### Areas for improvement

#### 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 (NMS 18.5)
- ensure that following any sanctions, disciplinary measures or restraint used, children are encouraged to have their views recorded in the records kept by the home (NMS 3.18)
- ensure the procedures for children missing from care have regard to Runaway and Missing from Home and Care protocols and procedures managed by the police or local authority. (NMS 5.6)

## Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for children and young people are **good**.

Young people benefit from individual support which helps them grow in confidence and expand their experiences. High staff ratios mean that young people benefit from lots of one to one time with staff. Young people enjoy healthy outdoor pursuits including horse riding and kayaking. Young people report that they thoroughly enjoy these activities with staff and this has helped them develop several new skills. For young people who do not have a positive experience of education this means that they can enjoy challenge and achievement in other ways.

Staff support young people to have contact with their families where appropriate and possible. In some cases this means staff speak to family members every week and report back to the young person. Young people are able to use social networking and make contact with family members where agreed. Young people know that their families are valued and welcomed by staff at the home. They are given good support by staff regarding complex family dynamics and subsequent feelings surrounding these.

Young people do attend education that is provided on site and have achieved periods of sustained attendance. This is an area in which staff are trying hard to help young people improve. Young people have earned awards and made good progress during periods of attendance. They are offered a monetary reward incentive scheme by the service and at times this works well.

Young people are becoming increasingly independent and staff help and encourage this. Young people are able to cycle to local appointments independently and also undertake community reparation work. They make good use of the local amenities but find socialising in the community can lead them into criminal activities. This has improved with young people spending more time with staff from the home who provide good role models. The young people are expected to develop practical life skills while at the home. These include laundry, changing sheets and cleaning communal areas. Young people complete these domestic chores with support and encouragement from staff.

## Quality of care

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

Young people get on with staff and say that they trust staff and know who to approach with any concerns. Young people generally form sound relationships with one another; they behave well and are polite and helpful to visitors and staff. Staff provide behavioural boundaries resulting in both negative and positive consequences. This works well and young people are able to earn money by completing tasks such as washing the car. Negative consequences are documented and are monitored. However, reports of these do not include the young person's views of the consequence. Staff do seek young people's views in other aspects. For example, young people choose holiday destinations and regularly contribute towards menu planning. Staff try to gain their views and ideas in a natural and spontaneous way.

There is a complaints' procedure and young people say that they know how to use this. The system works well with one complaint in the last year demonstrating a clear investigation and outcome for the young person. Care plans provide a good picture of each young person and set out how their unique individual needs will be met. Health needs are identified and appointments are made, although, despite trying hard, staff are not always able to get young people to attend. Staff monitor young people's health and talk to them about the importance of using health appointments to maintain good health. Staff promote a healthy lifestyle and young people are starting to understand the benefit of a balanced diet. Fast food is offered once a week and staff prepare food and make meals and snacks using fresh healthy ingredients.

Staff work well to support young people and help them try new pursuits and outdoor activities. Staff are able to use their interests and skills to help develop young people's confidences and experiences. Teaching staff and care staff work well as a unified team. This means that young people are consistently encouraged to attend school and barriers to attendance are addressed by the staff team.

Young people live in a residential area of a large town. The property blends well into the community resembling a large family home. The property has been refurbished throughout and promotes a neutral and relaxing comfortable home with good facilities. Young people have their own bedrooms which they have personalised. There are several modern refitted bathrooms and a large open-plan lounge with access to the garden. Young people looked relaxed and comfortable as they enjoyed a film with staff as part of their curricular programme. The service is well-maintained with a good commitment to promoting a pleasant and homely environment.

### **Safeguarding children and young people**

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

Young people report that they feel safe at the service and that there are no incidences of bullying. There is a telephone for young people and this is freely available when agreed on individual placement plans. Young people are not in the habit of going missing from the home and are given freedom to go out and return. Staff stay in contact by telephone and remind young people about keeping to agreed times. This helps young people consider their personal safety. There is a record for incidences of young people going missing from the home, although this has not been used recently. However, there is no agreed missing from care protocol with the police and local authority as required.

Young people are encouraged to behave in a way that is socially acceptable and put their personal safety first. There have been past incidents when young people have been out in the community and engaged in criminal behaviour. This is no longer the case and young people's behaviour and contribution to the local community has improved significantly. There has been no physical restraint and staff only use this as a last resort. However, they are trained to do this and previous reporting is good.

Young people benefit from a stable staff team who are recruited safely. There have been no new recruits since the last inspection. Visitors to the home are monitored and supervised to ensure young people's safety and well-being. The house is kept secure and safe. Maintenance is undertaken quickly and fire prevention equipment is checked regularly. This ensures that young people are in an environment that is physically safe.

### **Leadership and management**

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

The registered person and Registered Manager work closely to ensure that objectives set out in the Statement of Purpose are met. The service is relatively new and there have been a few placements, although currently numbers are low. This has been beneficial in promoting positive outcomes for young people. The atmosphere is calm and settled and there are high numbers of staff. In addition the staff team have had time to develop and recognise their strengths and weaknesses. There are clear plans for development with the registered person taking on new expertise and advice to compliment the existing team and provide a more holistic approach to young people's care. The service has addressed the number of recommendations raised at the last inspection and there has been marked improvement in these areas.

The registered person is regularly involved in the service, spending two days a week there. This, and regular monitoring visits, ensure that areas for improvement are identified quickly. Young people are also able to talk to adults who are not directly connected to the staff team. The staff team are established and undergo a full induction prior to starting work. This ensures that they meet the diverse needs of the young people in their care. A number of staff have started their Children's Workforce Diploma and have completed their induction to this. However, existing care staff are not qualified to level 3 as required.

Records and confidential information are stored carefully and securely. Files holding personal information about young people or staff are locked away. Staff are given regular supervision by line managers to ensure they are guided and accountable for all areas of their practice. This ensures that the quality of care is closely monitored.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.