

Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Inspector</b>	Paul Taylor
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<b>Provision subtype</b>	Children's home

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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 setting offers care and accommodation for up to six young people aged from eight to 17 years who display emotional and behavioural difficulties. Children and young people are normally placed at the home for medium to long-term periods, although emergency and short-term placements are also provided.

### Overall effectiveness

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

This is a highly effective service that positively impacts on the young people's lives. The young people receive an excellent standard of care and highly personalised support from a committed and caring staff team. Young people make significant progress in all areas, particularly when taking into account their starting points when they are admitted to the home.

Young people say that they feel safe, cared for and respected. The staff team receive regular training and guidance and advice from the home's psychologist. This enables them to develop their knowledge and understanding of the needs of the young people. Effective management ensures that the home is monitored robustly and that practice is reviewed with a view to improving outcomes for the young people. Young people influence decision making. The management team are aware of the home's strengths and areas for development.

Shortfalls are minor and have minimal impact on the quality of care. The young person's guide needs to include details about how they can contact the Children's Rights Officer and Independent Reviewing Officers. Some reports have omitted minor details although the information has been included elsewhere. Young people's views are not routinely included in reports written after an incident of physical intervention has occurred.

### Areas for improvement

#### Recommendations

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

- encourage young people to have their views recorded in records of restraint (NMS 3.18)

- ensure the young people's guide to the home includes details on how they can contact the Children's Rights Director and their Independent Reviewing Officer (NMS 13.5)
- ensure written records are clearly expressed (this is with regards to ensuring that all the necessary details are included in incident reports). (NMS 22.4)

## Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people benefit from highly individualised support which helps them develop their life and social skills and their educational achievements. Detailed planned support from the staff team enables the young people to achieve goals and targets and to develop their feelings of achieving something positive. Young people report that they can share their feelings and worries with members of staff. 'They give me time and listen' was a comment made by a young person. Young people's preferences with regards to activities and interests are known and in turn they are offered excellent levels of support. As a result of this and the highly individualised care they receive, young people are able to enrich their life experiences and to develop their self belief and confidence.

Young people benefit greatly from living in a home where the value of education is promoted. All young people receive carefully thought out support which not only enables their attendance but promotes their educational achievements. Outcomes are excellent, particularly when considering their starting points when they are admitted to the home.

Young people benefit from having their health needs promoted to an excellent standard, particularly their emotional well-being. They receive support from the home's psychologist as well as the children and adolescent mental health service if needed. The key worker system enables young people to focus on their individual concerns and to develop strategies to help them cope with their difficulties.

Young people receive excellent and carefully thought out support to develop their independent living skills. Individual programmes are put in place which encourages the young people to develop their living skills at a pace they can handle and at a level commensurate with their understanding. Targets are set for the young people to achieve which are related to developing their life and social skills. The young people are fully aware of what they need to do in order to progress and are involved with their key workers in deciding what their targets should be.

Overall, outcomes for the young people are excellent. They receive carefully and sensitively delivered support. This ensures that they are able to develop their social and life skills in a caring and nurturing environment and at a pace commensurate with their cognitive ability.

## Quality of care

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

The young people enjoy excellent supportive relationships with staff that are based on mutual respect. Interaction is supportive, good humoured and appropriate boundaries are maintained. One young person reported that 'the staff are here to support everyone, I'm glad I'm here.'

Consultation empowers young people enabling them to influence decision making. Young people's views are promoted and seen as central to running the home. They benefit from numerous opportunities, both formal and informal, to consult with members of staff and to voice their feelings and opinions. The young people are routinely consulted on day-to-day matters including menus and activities. They are actively involved in the development of their care plans and negotiate agreed goals and targets with their key workers. This approach ensures that they have an investment in their care and feel involved in the process.

Young people benefit from care planning which clearly outlines their needs in detail. Young people contribute to their individual care plans, sharing their likes and dislikes. The plans highlight young people's uniqueness and the overall aims and objectives. Young people's records detail their religion, disability, ethnicity, faith, gender, sexuality and cultural needs. Staff effectively respond to the individuality of each young person in a detailed and personalised manner. The approach to promoting each young person's uniqueness and individuality ensures that equality and diversity is promoted to an excellent level.

Young people benefit from living in an environment where education is valued, promoted to an excellent standard and seen as an opportunity to enrich the young people's lives. High levels of support are given to the young people in attending their educational placements, whether these are school or college. Members of staff will also advocate for the young people if they are experiencing difficulties at their placement. The level of support and embedded culture of promoting education, has enabled young people to take their exams and progress to an excellent standard, especially when considering their starting point on their admission to the home.

Staff promote a healthy and active lifestyle. Young people are learning to understand the nutritional value of eating a healthy diet. They choose and plan their menus with staff support. This approach ensures that they are encouraged to eat a healthy and balanced diet. Exercise is promoted, with young people being assisted by members of staff in joining a gym and in taking part in active lifestyles. Support offered by the staff in the area is carefully considered and ensures that each young person's programme is paced at their level of understanding and ability to cope with being prepared for independence and looking after themselves.

Routine health matters such as dental and medical appointments are offered to the young people. The young people's emotional and psychological well-being is promoted to a particularly high standard with carefully and sensitively delivered support. The support is overseen by the visiting psychologist who offers advice and guidance to members of staff as well as the young people themselves. One young person said 'They have really helped me learn to calm down.'

The standard of care in the home enriches the young people lives and encourages success and the opportunity to make positive decisions with a view to improving life chances.

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

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



Young people confirm they 'feel safe' and that there are no issues with bullying. There are very good arrangements for safeguarding young people. Policies related to protecting young people comply with regulations and refers to the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Staff receive ongoing training and the induction for new staff covers child protection and safeguarding and they know who to inform if they have concerns about a young person's well-being. A robust recruitment procedure ensures that all members of staff have their backgrounds and suitability to work with young people assessed prior to their employment. This ensures that only adults with suitable life and employment histories are employed.

Each young person has an individual protocol in place as to what course of action needs to be followed in the event that they are missing without permission. Records maintained of incidents where young people have been missing are very clear and include how the young person was supported on return to the home. The individual protocols ensure that police officers have a good knowledge of each young person's vulnerabilities. Members of staff diligently contact young people when they are away from the home without permission. This not only ensures that the young people's welfare is being checked upon but also shows the young people that the staff are concerned about their welfare and want them to return home.

Young people reside in a home which is physically safe and appropriately secure. Health and safety certificates verify the safety of the environment and the young people participate in regular fire drills. Risk assessments comprehensively identify different areas of risk. The risk assessments include assessments of the premises and activities in which the young people participate. This ensures that all risks are managed and that the young people are assisted to take part in activities with acceptable levels of risk, for example, adventure days which include activities such as abseiling and climbing.

Young people are making good progress regarding their challenging behaviour. Staff effectively manage incidents. Young people report that sanctions are generally fair and that restraint is a rare occurrence. Young people also confirm that if they have had to be physically controlled then it is done safely and without causing pain. Young people's views are not included in the record of restraints although they are included in other reports related to the incident. This shortfall in no way impinges on their safety or well-being. There have been occasions when members of staff have not sufficiently checked their recording after an incident and so some minor details in reports have been inaccurate. This shortfall has not had an impact on the young people.

The staff team are very aware that the young people for whom they are caring are vulnerable and will sometimes take risks due to their troubled backgrounds and erratic and unsafe experiences as younger children. Every effort is made to ensure that the young people experience a culture where they are valued and that the adults caring for them are very concerned about their safety and well-being. The culture embedded in the home ensures that the young people benefit from a robust and rigorous approach which treats the young people's emotional and physical safety as paramount.

## Leadership and management

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

The home has a Statement of Purpose which describes the aims and objectives and services provided so that placing social workers and families have an idea of the environment the young people are living in. Young people also have a guide which explains the routines and rules of the home. This document does not yet include details on how the young people can contact the Children's Rights Officer or arrangements to contact Independent Reviewing Officers.

The home is very effectively managed and monitored. The manager evaluates and checks key records. Monthly visits are undertaken by the Responsible Individual and the reports written as a result of these make recommendations about the practice in the home. The manager records how the recommendations have been addressed. Regular team meetings discuss the well-being of the young people and any practice issues. This approach ensures that the conduct of the home and effectiveness of the care provided is being constantly assessed.

Young people are provided with consistent and excellent standards of care from a competent and well-trained staff team. Sufficient staff ensure that both group and individual needs are met. Staff are deployed in a manner that provides the young people consistency and continuity in their care and management. Staff are well supported and receive regular supervision enabling them to reflect on their practice and relationships with the young people. Staff undertake regulatory and service specific training which provides them with skills, knowledge and competencies required to meet the demanding needs of the young people. The structure of the duty roster enables all members of staff to have a chance to achieve excellent opportunities for information sharing so that every one is up to date with each young person's progress. The effect of this approach is to enable young people to grow in confidence and to have a safe and secure environment in which they can reflect about their past and plan for their future.

Equality and diversity practice is **outstanding**.