

## Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Inspector</b>	Jackie Graves
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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

This service is in a residential community providing accommodation for up to three young people, aged between 12 and 18 years, who require immediate accommodation due to placement breakdown or current crisis in their lives.

### Overall effectiveness

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

Young people receive a good standard of care, making considerable progress in relation to their starting points. Young people say they feel safe and that staff provide a safe environment.

This is a child focussed service, with staff who build trusting relationships with young people. Staff are able to look beyond young people's presenting behaviours and help them address this. They advocate for young people and provide a period of stability in their lives.

Social workers feel that the staff work diligently and to high standards with all professionals and bring positive change to young people's lives. They regard the service as good value for money.

Young people are listened to. They are given many opportunities to contribute to everyday life in the home as well as to their own care plans. They are encouraged to live a healthy lifestyle and develop hobbies and interests. The home encourages young people to raise any concerns or complaints. However, due to recent staff changes, there has been some delay in responding to complaints which can be frustrating for young people.

Records show that a high number of restraints are used. However, the home is working to reduce these. Records are analysed to examine why incidents resulting in the restraint of a young person occur. Young people are encouraged to comment on how the restraint was managed, to consider alternative behaviours and so reduce the need for restraint.

The home promotes high standards of care, ensuring staff are safely recruited, well trained and supported to work closely with the young people. The home has not yet obtained the amended standards, although this shortfall has not directly impacted on outcomes for young people.

### Areas for improvementStatutory 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
35 (2001)	ensure that a copy of the current Children's Homes Regulations and national minimum standards published by the Secretary of State under section 23(1) of the Act are kept in the home. (Regulation 35)	30/09/2011

## Recommendations

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

- ensure young people receive prompt feedback on any concerns or complaints raised and are kept informed of progress. (NMS 1.6)

## Outcomes for children and young people

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

Staff work effectively, with a therapist, to help young people develop a positive self view, emotional resilience and understanding of their backgrounds. Young people benefit from strong relationships with their key workers and a consistent staff team who really care about them and want to help them progress and feel safe.

Incidents of young people going missing significantly reduce when they live in this home. This helps young people feel safe and secure and reduces the risk of them being exposed to dangerous situations.

Young people benefit from the provision of a very wide range of activities and experiences, through which they can develop confidence and self esteem. They can fully participate in activities in the home, the local community and on holidays to North Wales. Staff support the concept of continuous learning in whatever activity the young people are engaged in to help young people develop.

Staff help young people to adopt a healthy lifestyle which incorporates plenty of exercise, fresh air and good quality home-cooked food. Young people benefit from eating foods from their own and staff members' cultures. Staff help to identify a suitable education setting where young people may thrive and achieve.

Staff provide outstanding support to help young people re-establish contact with families and friends, unless this contravenes their care plans. Where it is not possible

to maintain contact, young people are helped to understand the reasons for this.

When it is time to move on from the home, young people are helped by maintaining valued relationships with staff and established links with the home and local area. This helps in their transition to a new placement as well as supporting a positive sense of identity and a sense of belonging. They are helped to gain skills, during their time in the home, which may help them in their future adult lives, for example, caring for pets and helping to prepare meals.

## Quality of care

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

Young people benefit from the constructive, warm relationships established with staff. Young people feel that staff really care about them. A young person commented that staff, 'look after the kids really well'.

There is a nurturing atmosphere in the home in which young people are supported to settle and make progress in coming to terms with their past experiences and finding ways to move forward. Staff are committed to ensuring that young people experience a period of stability during their time in the home and do not experience placement breakdown. A comment from a young person was: 'If someone's struggling, they help straight away.'

Boundaries are clear. Young people are encouraged to express their feelings in a way that does not cause harm or upset to others. Restorative sanctions are used to help young people develop an understanding of the impact of some of their behaviour. For example, they may agree to help staff repair damage or write a letter of apology.

Attention is given to improving health. Staff ensure that young people receive both the basic and specialist health services they require. Staff work closely with health professionals to meet young people's changing health needs. There are effective systems in place to manage medication so that this is stored and administered safely.

Care is very much tailored to individual young people's needs, including any religious or cultural needs. Staff have a good understanding of young people's backgrounds and help them to develop a positive sense of their personal identity. Staff are aware that systems can make young people feel different because they are 'in care', for example, having to request clothing money or not seeing family members when they wish. Staff try to work sensitively around such issues to reduce any inequalities.

Young people's views, wishes and feelings are actively sought so that they may contribute to their own care planning and to everyday matters in the home. They are encouraged to raise any concerns or complaints. The home takes into account, and acts upon, any lessons learned from complaints. Young people can usually be assured of a timely response to any complaints. However, due to recent circumstances there have been some delays in completing complaint investigations, which may cause frustration to young people.

Staff actively promote young people's education. The home recognises that mainstream education may not be suitable for all young people and supports their learning in alternative provision. They work closely with school staff to support young people's educational progress.

The building is in a good location, and well maintained, to provide a comfortable and suitable home for young people. Recent developments have enhanced the quality of the living space available in the home and improved the front garden. Young people are fully involved when they wish to redecorate their rooms so they can learn useful skills from this experience, for example, how to budget for materials and furnishings, as well as decorating skills.

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

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

Young people feel safe in this home. Bullying is not an issue. Young people are confident that staff watch for signs of bullying and will take strong action to address any incidents to ensure they remain safe.

Staff recognise young people's vulnerabilities and through close supervision ensure that incidents of young people going missing from the home are very rare; no incidents are reported since the last inspection. This ensures that risk to young people is minimised.

Staff meet regularly to focus on how to work as a team and support individual young people and help them manage emotions which may be expressed in negative behaviour. Behaviour plans identify triggers to help staff anticipate how a young person may behave. Young people feel the staff are 'doing a good job' at helping them manage their behaviour. Social workers observe that staff reinforce positive behaviour with lots of praise to encourage progress.

The number of restraints is high, although social workers regard these as reducing for some young people, which shows progress in how staff manage challenging behaviour. The home records and classifies all physical contact so that the level of restraint may be monitored and a more proportionate view of the relatively high number of restraints obtained. Management monitors restraint to ensure that these are always used appropriately. Discussion with the young person concerned helps them to reflect on the behaviours which led to the restraint and to learn from this.

A very robust, recruitment system ensures that prospective staff are thoroughly vetted before starting work in the home. Young people are involved in the recruitment process and their views on prospective staff are carefully considered before appointments are made. This ensures that only staff who are skilled at engaging with young people are employed in the home.

Staff demonstrate a good understanding of safeguarding which ensures they know

how to report concerns, or allegations, and promote young people's safety. The home's safeguarding policy is effectively applied so that any investigations or allegations are handled swiftly and fairly and provide appropriate protection and support for those involved. Lessons are learned from any incidents so the staff team can improve their practice.

Young people can be assured that all checks for the physical safety of the home are undertaken regularly. These include regular checks of gas and electricity systems and appliances. Fire equipment is checked and young people and staff are fully involved in fire drills so they know how to respond in an emergency.

## **Leadership and management**

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

This is a well managed home, conducted with the best interests of young people at its core and delivering some very good outcomes. Management and staff successfully explore how young people can overcome any disadvantage and discrimination they may face due to their status or backgrounds, so they might go on to achieve and have more choices about their future lives. Staff described the best thing about the home: 'Being able to give the children something they haven't experienced before and the progress they have made.'

Young people benefit from being looked after by a stable, staff team consisting of both genders. The skills, experience and backgrounds among the staff team are diverse. Staff are able to provide young people with different cultural experiences. There are sufficient staff who feel well supported by open, approachable management. The high priority given to staff training, development and support ensures that the staff team are able to provide good quality and safe care to young people. Staff particularly value the thorough induction given to new members of the team and the in-house training which focuses on the care of individual young people.

Social workers report that the staff team work effectively with them and other professionals who are involved in the care of young people. They say staff communicate clearly and provide good quality, timely reports which keep them informed about all aspects of young people's lives. Social workers feel the home is effectively managed and that staff are committed and 'will not give up' on the young people they look after.

Monitoring of the service is effective, helping management understand the strengths and weaknesses of the home and identify areas for development. Monitoring includes seeking the views of young people to make sure they can comment on the service they receive.

Clear, accessible information is available on what the service provides. The home meets the aims and objectives of its Statement of Purpose, with both staff and young people clear about what services and facilities are provided.



Management usually keeps up to date with new legislation and practice developments but has not yet obtained the amended standards and regulations. However, this has not unduly impacted on the service young people receive.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.