

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Martha Nethaway
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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 children's home offers placements for two young people who may have a combination of mental health, psychological, emotional or complex care needs that present challenging behaviour. The service is designed to offer medium to long-term care placements. The home's programme of care generally incorporates a structured balance of education, recreation and therapeutic interventions tailored to meet individual needs although the small scale of the home permits sufficient flexibility to adjust to changing placement circumstances.

Overall effectiveness

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

The effectiveness with which the home provides personalised and planned care is good. Staff strive to promote positive outcomes for young people. Young people are making secure attachments and are being provided with safe and effective care. Young people are making good progress in relation to their personal development, education and achievement. This is as a result of the good quality support, help and guidance provided which are viewed as essential to young people's progress. This is underpinned by the therapeutic input from professionals including psychotherapy and psychology.

The views of young people about the quality of care in the home are regularly sought. Young people are fully engaged in sharing their opinions and views about their experiences at the home. The quality of the relationships between staff and young people in the home are good. Young people's achievements are recognised and celebrated. Young people are safe and feel safe. This is a stable environment for young people with difficult behaviour and is an appropriate placement which has the capacity to meet their current and future needs.

As a result of this visit, one area for improvement has been identified. It relates to implementing a development plan for the home. This is an administrative area for improvement and does not adversely affect the continued good outcomes that young people are achieving.

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 the home has a written development plan. (NMS 15.2)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people are beginning to develop a positive self view and confidence in their skills. Young people benefit because the home provides a safe, nurturing and caring environment with realistic goals. This specifically relates to setting good boundaries and a predictable environment. The young people are making good progress in relation to their outcomes and are beginning to express their emotions more positively with adults and their peers. This is helping to increase their confidence and self-worth.

Young people's health including physical, emotional and psychological health is being addressed. All young people attend regular appointments with their doctor, dentist and optician. Young people's physical health is further bolstered because they regularly go for walks in the woods. One young person commented, 'I love collecting conkers and playing with them later with my friend.' In addition, young people have access to mountain bikes and this means that they regularly cycle. All this allows young people to achieve good levels of physical fitness. This helps to promote positive health outcomes for young people.

Young people's education is progressing. Some young people are accessing a bespoke education which includes tutors visiting the home. Young people's school attendance is good. Young people are motivated to achieve because staff place a strong focus on education and help young people when there are problems. One young person commented, 'I am now going to school where as before I missed a lot of my education.' Young people's interest and aptitude is being well supported.

Young people are making a positive contribution to their home and the wider community. Young people are able to make an individual contribution to the day to day living at the home. For example, they regularly meet with staff and share discussions about their involvement in the home. At a practical level, young people are involved in making the decisions about activities and improvements to their environment. This demonstrates that staff take time to listen to the 'voice' of the young person. Young people are benefiting further because they have made a number of close friends locally. This is because staff have supported young people's choice of friends and welcomed them into the home. As a consequence, young people's social skills and self-confidence is growing. This inclusive approach helps improve young people's personal life experiences.

Young people benefit from appropriate contact with family and friends and this is encouraged within the placement. Young people have scheduled visits which include personal meetings. Staff provide sensitive and discreet support to young people before, during and after contact visits. Young people also use telephone contact and email to help them maintain appropriate contact with their family and friends.

Safeguards are in place to ensure that the welfare of young people is promoted at all times.

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy positive and constructive relationships with staff and their peers. Young people are encouraged to form supportive relationships with staff. Staff manage challenging behaviours successfully because they are trained and consistently use positive strategies. The outcome for young people is that they learn about their rights, responsibility and how to respect one another.

Young people feel that their views, wishes and feelings are actively sought and that they influence the running of the home. For example, young people's involvement is encouraged through attending house meetings. This provides young people with a clear opportunity to provide feedback about the quality of care and types of activities available. Staff help young people to understand why it may not be possible to act upon their wishes in all cases.

Young people understand how to make a complaint because the home's complaint's process is easy to use. Young people confidently express their views when they are unhappy. Records show a professional and sensitive approach is taken. The outcomes for young people are that they are getting the best support for their needs and staff uphold their rights.

Young people are cared for in line with their individual placement plan. The contribution of the home to the plans is of a good quality and involves young people. Young people's needs in relation to their health, education, safety and welfare are actively addressed and promoted. The outcomes for young people are that the qualities of the relationships with staff are good. Young people are progressing and enjoying a stable environment. The home provides a healthy environment where young people are able to access the services and support they need to meet their physical, emotional and psychological health needs.

Staff are proactive and consistent in supporting the educational achievement of young people. Staff are supporting young people effectively with links from the home's tutors and educational staff. Young people are benefiting from the good focus that the staff give to art, literacy and maths. One young person commented, 'I like doing art work and I am doing an art project at the moment and really enjoying it.'

Young people enjoy a range of purposeful and enjoyable activities. Young people are tangibly being engaged with activities such as, ice-skating and cinema. One young person commented, 'I love saving up and doing big activities like going to theme parks.'

Young people's needs relating to their cultural background and personal identity are

identified and positively addressed in both daily living and care planning. Young people's holistic needs are being given good consideration by the home. Staff seek to break down the barriers and respond positively to the diversity of young people's needs. This inclusive approach is collaborated with support between the staff and the management team that promotes equality and participation for young people.

The home is appropriately located, designed and maintained. Care is provided in a terraced cottage-style house in a semi-urban location. It has the benefit of easy access to the comprehensive range of recreational and leisure amenities locally and in the expanding new town. The house has been modernised and refurbished to offer a good quality living environment with individual rooms for young people.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are safe and feel safe. Young people feel protected and their welfare is being promoted. The home recognises its responsibility to safeguard young people at all times. This is achieved through good observation, monitoring and staff training. Staff ensure that young people are not a target for bullying. There is a clear stance taken that if bullying takes place positive behaviour is maintained and supported at all times. The outcome for young people is that they live in a safe and secure environment where they can be happy. One young person commented, 'There are two members of staff that I can name that I get on really well with.'

Young people do not go missing. This is as a result of the excellent level of engagement with young people who are not placing themselves at unnecessary risk. The outcome for young people is that no disruption is taking place in terms of their education, health and social networks.

Young people's positive behaviour is promoted and restraint is rarely used. Young people receive regular praise and rewards for positive behaviours. Poor behaviours are challenged and discussed. Young people over time develop more positive relationships because boundaries are set which are realistic and sensitive. Staff spend good quality time with young people which lets them know the importance and value that is placed on everyone being happy and safe.

Staff working with young people in the home are properly selected and vetted. This is underpinned by the home's good recruitment policy, recruitment techniques and procedures. The home is satisfied that the staff employed at the home are suitable to work with vulnerable young people. Young people benefit because the turnover of staff is low and this allows for good continuity of care, support and guidance.

The environment is physically safe and appropriately secure, taking account of the needs and characteristics of the young people cared for. All young people have in place a documented risk assessment which is reviewed as circumstances change. Young people are additionally protected because they regularly participate in fire evacuation drills so that they know the correct steps to take in the event of an

emergency.

Leadership and management

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

The home is effectively and efficiently managed. The home is adequately resourced, indicating the financial viability of the provider. The management team work cohesively and seek to achieve good outcomes for young people. This is underpinned by good assessment and care planning which illustrate that progress and achievement is being made for young people. The company provides professional support through psychotherapy and psychology resources so that the most appropriate interventions are taking place. This results in young people getting the correct help to deal with issues that affect their welfare and well-being. This inclusive practice means that the holistic needs of young people are being supported.

The home demonstrates the capacity for continuing improvement based on its track record since its previous inspection. This is evidenced through the monitoring and reviewing of record keeping and encouraging staff performance to improve. This is being achieved through staff training related to recording and report writing.

The provider meets the aims and objectives in the Statement of Purpose and strives well to meet the needs of young people with a combination of psychological, emotional and behavioural support. The young people, staff and the placing authority are clear about the aims and objectives of the home and what services and facilities it provides because information is published and shared openly. The registered person actively and regularly monitors the quality of care provided, including consultation with young people about their welfare. Staff are supported and guided to fulfil their roles and provide a good quality service to young people. The outcome for young people is that the care, support and guidance is being provided in a safe and nurturing environment. This helps to protect and promote the rights of young people.

The management team understand the strengths and weaknesses of the home and have development plans in place. However, the current annual development review is at a strategic operational level and does not relate to the day to day operation of the home. This results in staff not being provided with an opportunity to contribute to further development. Similarly, young people are not involved in defining outcomes and setting standards.

The home employs a sufficient number of staff who are effectively supervised and supported. Just over half the team are qualified. The remaining staff are enrolled to complete this training. Staff receive good quality training to enhance their individual skills and to keep them up-to-date with professional and legal developments. Young people benefit because the right values are being promoted in the training of staff and the quality of the training meets the needs of young people.

Young people's records are clear and contribute to an understanding of the young

person's life.

All significant events relating to the protection of young people accommodated in the home are notified by the registered person of the home to the appropriate authorities and appropriate action is taken following the incident. The outcome for young people is that their welfare is being actively promoted at all times.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.