

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Judith Longden
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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 children's home is run by a local authority. It is registered to accommodate up to six young people of either gender. The home provides care and accommodation to young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties on a long-term basis.

Overall effectiveness

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

The home provides good quality, personalised and well planned care. Daily care reflects the individual needs of young people and helps them to develop confidence and selfesteem. Health outcomes are good for young people but some young people are not achieving to their educational potential. Young people are involved in the running of the home and in planning their care. Regular house meetings are held but there is irregularity in key work sessions.

Young people say they are well cared for and have good relationships with staff. Young people are kept safe through good policies and procedures. Restraints are rarely used and recording of incidents is good. Young people are not routinely offered medical checks following restraint.

Two requirements are made as a result of this inspection. These relate to improving the educational outcomes for young people and ensuring all relevant contact information is available on care plans. Three recommendations are made. These are to ensure medical checks are offered to young people following restraint, to hold regular key work sessions and to ensure supervision records are maintained appropriately.

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
18 (2001)	promote the educational achievement of young people by ensuring that young people make use of educational facilities (Regulation 18. (1) (a))	30/11/2011
28 (2001)	maintain records for young people as specified in Schedule 3 in respect of name, address and telephone number of any school or college attended by the young person. (Regulation 28. (1))	25/11/2011

	(a))	
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Recommendations

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

- ensure the views of the young person on their care are sought regularly in respect of having regular key work sessions (NMS 1.4)
- ensure where there has been physical restraint young people are given the opportunity to be examined by a nurse or medical practitioner (NMS 3.16)
- ensure supervision records are signed and record the time and length of supervision. (NMS 19.5)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make good progress in developing their confidence and self-esteem. They are helped to understand their background and why they are in care. A culture and environment of respect and individuality nurtures and supports young people to develop self-awareness and emotional resilience.

Young people are involved in developing a menu that provides a healthy balanced diet and also includes their favourite food. Menu planning together helps young people learn to compromise and take on board other people's preferences. They help with the preparation and cooking of meals. This means they benefit from a healthy diet while developing skills and confidence. Young people are helped to understand their needs and how to maintain a healthy lifestyle. They are able to self-medicate if suitably risk assessed and there is safe storage for their medication in their bedrooms. Health and beauty projects help young people develop confidence and promote their self-esteem. Outdoor activities and exercise are also encouraged in order to promote healthy living. Their health is further promoted by the implementation of daily personal hygiene routines.

Young people are involved in designing a full activity programme that meets their needs and interests. Staff encourage young people to engage in a variety of activities and try different challenges. This promotes their confidence and self-esteem. Young people are involved in the Looked After Children council making a positive contribution to the lives of all young people in care.

Young people are attaining inconsistent achievements in their education and attendance is irregular. Despite staff proactively encouraging and supporting a range of educational opportunities some young people are not attending education. Young people attend meetings in relation to their education and put their views forward.

Home-based education projects have been provided by staff but young people are reluctant to progress their learning. As a result some young people are not attaining the levels of achievement appropriate to their age and ability. Other young people are attending school or college and achieving well.

Young people benefit from appropriate contact with their parents, family and friends. Where contact is not appropriate or arrangements are changed this is explained to young people.

Young people develop skills to enable them to live independently. They learn to budget, plan menus, shop and cook. They also learn food safety, safe storage of food and nutritional information. Staff help young people to develop skills in household management, bill paying and chores such as laundry. Young people have satisfactory relationships with the leaving care team and pathway plans are developed with young people. This means young people are prepared and supported for adulthood.

Quality of care

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

Young people benefit from good relationships with staff. Young people say they feel cared for and are kept safe. One said, 'There are good rules and boundaries, staff are really good and work with you not against you.' And another, 'I feel safe here, staff are always here for me.' Young people interact well with each other most of the time. Group dynamics mirror many teenage relationships with conflict and friendships within group living.

Young people participate in regular house meetings and also informal meal time discussions. At these meetings young people help plan menus and discuss activities. They also deal with any issues and concerns they may have. As a result young people are actively engaged in how the home operates.

Young people are aware of how to complain and are supported in making their complaint heard. Complaints are promptly addressed demonstrating that young people are listened to and their concerns are taken seriously. This enables young people to gain confidence and skills in communicating their opinions and views.

Young people contribute to their care plans and attend review meetings. They also attend specific meetings in relation to their health and education. As a result they are able to express their feelings, share their views and voice their opinions in all aspects of their care. However key work sessions are not held on a consistent basis and as a result the one-to-one support for young people is not regularly maintained.

Good placement plans are in place for young people that identify the individual needs of the young person and how these can best be met. Some plans do not have all the required contacts and telephone numbers for college. Excellent residential care plans indicate how the young person is cared for, their daily routines, likes and dislikes,

behaviours and how to minimise risks. As a result the day-to-day care of the young people reflects the individual requirements of their placement plan. Specific emphasis is placed on cultural and identity needs. Staff have supported a young person with a hearing impairment ensuring sufficient lighting for them to have a clear view to enable them to lip read. Staff also moved furniture to ensure young people were able to face each other when talking. The home has information about the various cultural, dietary and ethnic provisions in the local area. Staff ensure young people 'are not compromised by being in the care setting.' They are aware of the inequalities young people in care face and challenge discrimination and barriers to equality.

Young people benefit from good health care plans that focus on meeting their holistic health needs. These are constantly reviewed to ensure young people's health needs are met. Young people have access to various medical professionals including sexual health nurses, psychiatrists and drug and alcohol specialists. Staff support young people to attend appointments. Staff are trained in first aid and in administration of medication. Healthy living, diet and exercise are encouraged. Good monitoring of food consumption ensures young people follow a healthy diet. Support is given to young people to explore health topics such as sexuality, relationships, smoking and alcohol consumption. As a result the physical, emotional and psychological health of young people is promoted.

Young people live in a home that is safe but also provides a warm and homely environment. The rooms are well decorated and furnished. As a result young people respect their environment. Young people have space to be on their own as well as areas where they can socialise. The home is close to local amenities and leisure facilities providing a range of opportunities for young people.

Staff are proactive and imaginative in encouraging young people to engage in a variety of activities in and outside of the home. Events are planned by staff and young people and all young people's interests are considered. This enables young people to develop a wide range of skills and enhance their confidence.

Staff maintain good links with various education providers and the inclusion team. The home has a designated education link worker. This ensures young people are supported to attend education. However, young people are not always engaged in education. Staff are supported to look creatively at how young people can be educated. Various schemes and alternative education programmes have been implemented to encourage young people to achieve their educational potential.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Staff and young people enjoy good relationships based on mutual respect. This provides a foundation for the development of positive behaviour. Staff have been trained in positive behaviour management and appropriate use of restraint and work closely with young people to consolidate ways of managing behaviour in a positive

way. As a result the use of restraint has reduced significantly. Restraints and incidents of physical intervention are recorded well but young people are not routinely offered a medical check following restraint.

Sanctions are fair and mostly relate to repayment in respect of misuse of fares or damage to property. The manager, staff and young people are implementing different sanctions reflecting reparation and reducing the number of financial sanctions. As a result young people are learning consequences to their behaviour.

The home has a broad range of policies and procedures for safeguarding practices in respect of child protection, handling allegations, young people going missing or being absent without authority, recruitment and countering bullying. Staff are trained in safeguarding, clear about their role and responsibilities and competent in implementing procedures in order to safeguard young people. This protects young people from potential hazards and harm. Young people say the home has good rules and boundaries that enable them to 'do their own thing but remain safe' on young person said, 'staff have done a lot of work to keep me safe and learn to keep myself safe.' Staff work closely with other agencies to protect young people from sexual exploitation and the staff have received an award for their work in keeping young people safe.

The home has a good missing from home and absent without authority procedure and protocol. There is good recording of incidents when young people go missing and staff actively look for young people. Young people have access to independent visitors to discuss reasons for absence and where they go when they are absent. This means there is work being undertaken to reduce the likelihood of repeat incidents.

Bullying has been an issue in the past but young people say it is not now an issue. A social worker said the staff had managed incidents of bullying really well in the past. Young people have been involved in developing the anti bullying policy. Comprehensive risk assessments are undertaken specifically for bullying risks in the home. As a result young people are protected from bullying.

Young people are protected from unsuitable visitors to the home by good monitoring systems and the robust checking of visitors. There have been no staff changes since the last inspection. The recruitment process is thorough and all the required information in relation to recruitment checks is available to the home. As a result young people are protected from unsuitable persons in the home.

Regular fire drills are held and fire alarm systems are checked as required. There is a comprehensive fire risk assessment and health and safety assessment for the building and equipment. Regular maintenance checks are performed. This ensures the building is safe and appropriately secure.

Leadership and management

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

The home has a history of meeting previous requirements and most of the recommendations and as a result the service for young people has improved. The previous requirement in relation to recording restraints in a bound book has been met. However the recommendation to ensure all young people subject to restraint are offered a medical check has not been met and is restated. This is to ensure young people are kept safe and protected following any restraint. Recommendations relating to absences from the home and risk assessments for bullying have been met. The home has good links with the 'safe at last' organisation who attend the home to discuss incidents of absence with young people and discuss reasons for absence. The home has a specific bullying risk assessment that identifies the times and locations where bullying may occur. As a result of recommendations being met young people are kept safe.

Staff and young people are clear about the objectives and ethos of the home. Staff provide a good quality service for young people in line with the home's Statement of Purpose. The home provides a safe and nurturing environment and long-term care for young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The home has very good procedures for monitoring the quality of the service provided and the welfare of the young people. The registered provider undertakes visits to the home in accordance with regulations and carries out checks to ensure the welfare of young people is monitored. The registered provider consults with young people to identify any areas for development to improve the quality of care provided. The manager monitors records kept by the home to identify any concerns, patterns or trends. Records are stored securely and information sharing is in accordance with data protection. All significant events relating to the protection of young people in the home are notified as appropriate and actions taken as required. As a result young people are consulted about the quality of care they receive and how effectively their needs are met and their welfare and protection is monitored.

Young people benefit from good planned introductions and are provided with very good information about the home and a welcome pack. As a result young people feel valued and welcomed into the home. Young people are encouraged to take an active role in all aspects of their care including plans for moving on. As a result young people feel involved in their placement and leave the home in an appropriate manner.

The home is provided and managed by suitable personnel who are qualified and experienced. The staff team have a variety of skills and experience and bring different strengths to the service. The staff rota ensures young people's needs are met through the provision of sufficient staffing.

Staff benefit from an excellent induction process and are able to continue to develop their knowledge and skills through a variety of training opportunities to improve their competency and ensure young people's needs are met.

Staff receive good quality regular supervision and annual performance reviews. The

recording of supervision does not indicate the time or length of supervision and some records are not signed; although this does not have an impact on young people, it reduces the level of accountability. Staff meetings are held on a regular basis. As a result staff feel supported to continue to provide a quality service for young people.

Equality and diversity practice is **outstanding**.