

## Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Inspector</b>	Elaine Clare
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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 accommodates a maximum of five young people in the age range of seven years to 15 years. It is close to local amenities. The home is managed by the local authority.

### **Overall effectiveness**

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

Young people make good progress in relation to their starting points and live in a nurturing, supportive environment with consistent boundaries and support. The setting provides personalised, well-planned care taking into account the individual needs of each young person. Young people are very well informed of the home's expectations and develop good and respectful relationships with staff. This is a setting where young people feel safe and are encouraged to keep safe when out in the local community.

The senior managers make good use of monitoring systems relating to the quality of care and service development. This results in improving outcomes for young people. This is a home that understands its strengths and weaknesses and is ambitious and energetic for continuous improvement.

Young people come first and this can be seen from the director to the staff team. Young people are able to form healthy attachments with staff and other professionals through individualised programmes of care. As a result young people are able to address all areas of their lives within a safe environment. Young people feel the quality of care they receive is good. There has been one recommendation made during this inspection around the use of financial debts from pocket money for behaviour that requires a sanction.

## **Areas for improvement**

### **Recommendations**

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

- ensure sanctions for behaviour are clear, reasonable and fair and are understood by all children and staff. (NMS 3.8)

### **Outcomes for children and young people**

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

Young people benefit from individualised support which helps them to grow in confidence and address challenging behaviours. As a result young people make good progress in all aspects of their lives, which they themselves can recognise. Young people can focus on achieving their goals through regular informal and formal meetings with key workers. Education is highly valued and as a result young people attend mainstream schools, college or take other in-house provision. Attendance levels range from inadequate to excellent. As a consequence, some young people can maximise opportunities, gain on lost time and achieve positive results.

Young people are encouraged to make good use of their leisure time, enjoy holidays and participate in a few activities in the local community. As a result, they develop social skills and benefit from new cultural experiences. Ample opportunities arise for young people to express their feelings and staff are at hand to support young people express concerns, anxieties and worries. The staff team have a deep understanding of each young person's family histories and experiences, which enables tailored responses to any fears and worries they express. Young people benefit from structured and agreed contact arrangements with family and significant people. Contacts are extremely well supported by staff who are very well informed of both contact arrangements and restrictions. This results in young people being able to build stronger relationships with their families and promotes young people's sense of identity and belonging. Staff provide high levels of support during difficult contact times and times of identity crisis.

Young people are encouraged to participate in group meetings to say how they are feeling and raise any concerns they may have about their day or their peers. This enables any worries they have to be addressed in an open and timely manner. Young people respond positively to these meetings as they are sensitively handled by experienced staff. As a result, young people are able to confidently and openly express their views and thoughts. Staff provide excellent support to enable young people to move smoothly onto adult provisions ensuring they have the skills needed for adult life. This is achieved through the settings preparation for independence programme. Even at times when it may be hard to motivate young people, staff do not give up and work extremely hard to engage young people.

Young people clearly benefit from a sense of belonging, being cared for and valued as an individual. As a result they progress in all other aspects of their lives, for example no longer requiring additional support in some aspects. Young people grow in confidence which has a positive impact in how they manage difficulties, tackle disappointment and promote themselves in group situations. Where young people have particular needs, the staff team ensure they do not experience disadvantage and strongly advocate for assessments and services to maximise their opportunities. Close working partnerships ensure young people benefit from a consistent multi-agency approach.

Good practice ensures young people enjoy positive health and lead healthy lifestyles.

There is an educative approach to help young people understand the benefits for them of enjoying good health, for example exercise, healthy eating and safe sexual health. Young people demonstrate good awareness of their health needs and progress in key areas in their health plans.

## Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy positive and healthy relationships with staff that are insightful, professional, sensitive and caring. Young people say 'staff are very good and really do care about us, they help us with all our problems'. Young people feel involved and consulted about all aspects of their lives. As a result they quickly settle in the home and want to stay long term, which the majority of young people do. Young people's views include, 'this home is one of the best', 'if I want something they say we will talk about it, and I will get an answer' and 'I don't need to complain'. Equally the manager and staff view young people as part of the family and have high aspirations for them to succeed and achieve. The strength of the relationships keeps any difficulties in perspective and allows for positive progress through challenging periods. As a result, young people learn more positive ways to express their emotions resulting in a decreasing number of incidents. Warm and positive responses encourage young people to behave respectfully, consider others' feelings and learn tolerance. Young people feel they are treated fairly and equally, in turn this supports them feeling tolerant to others.

Staff consciously challenge any discrimination young people may face and ensure they are not disadvantaged. Young people are assisted in addressing areas relating to gender, disability, faith and religious beliefs. They receive non discriminatory support and feel they are all treated fairly and equally. Young people feel listened to; for example after incidents they can reflect on their actions and record their views. Young people can voice any issues directly to their peers or staff in daily group meetings which is an integral part of the therapeutic input they receive. Young people know how to complain both formally and informally and are confident to do so.

Young people are cared for by staff who are skilled at applying boundaries that they feel are fair and consistent. They feel comfortable with staff and respond positively to staff intervention. Staff practice is good in dealing with very challenging behaviours and maximising immediate protection for individual young people. Sanctions and consequences are often dealt with by taking part of a young person's pocket money and moving it into a saving account. This has not been very effective and young people have little regard for their punishment. Young people know why they are at the setting and contribute to placement reviews with support from staff. Young people are supported to access appropriate services to meet their physical, emotional and psychological health needs.

Young people live in a home that is appropriately located, well designed and currently subject to some redecorating and refurbishment. The home operates from

a detached property, which has a lounge and dining area, a family room, activity room, six bedrooms, toilets and bathroom facilities. The premises include a large well-fitted kitchen, laundry and garden. Young people have chosen the colours of their bedrooms and are able to personalise them, for example with favourite personal possessions and posters. Health and safety arrangements are robust to maintain a safe living environment. Young people are encouraged, and do, report any health or safety issues for staff attention. They have a clear understanding of what it means to live in a home that is environmentally safe.

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

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

Safeguarding young people is a priority; young people's welfare is very important and central to practice. Young people are supported to learn how to keep themselves safe and learn about the risks and potential risks, behaviours and actions may lead to. Staff spend a great deal of time talking through any identified concerns to develop young people's own understanding of concerns and the reasons adults are concerned. As a result, young people's risk-taking behaviours reduce and they feel cared for and protected. In addition there are effective links with the Local Authority Designated Officer which ensures young people are protected in line with legislation. The home appropriately liaises with Local Safeguarding Children's Board to agree a locally consistent safeguarding policy.

Young people benefit from a staff group who are trained and confident in handling safeguarding and child protection concerns or allegations. If a young person goes missing staff are proactive in seeking their safe return. There has been a significant increase in the number of incidents over the last few months. Strategy meetings have been called to try and address the issue. Young people state that there are some bullying issues which are not serious, they report to staff who act immediately with very good results.

Young people's particular vulnerabilities are understood and staff employ vigilance and strategies in line with risk assessments. Regular training ensures staff keep up to date with safeguarding and protecting young people. Good multi-agency working and protocols ensure a holistic approach to safeguarding. This ensures all agencies are vigilant and work to current plans to offer protection for young people.

Further safeguards in recruitment processes protect young people from unsuitable adults working in the home. Good checks and maintenance arrangements ensure the home is physically safe and is kept safe. Young people understand the importance of the procedures and know, through regular fire drills, how to exit the home quickly in the event of a fire. Staff appropriately monitor visitors to the home to ensure only suitable and agreed people gain access.

### **Leadership and management**

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

A good Statement of Purpose outlines the aims and objectives of the service. The home is operating in line with this statement and the principles are understood by interested parties, including young people. There are good numbers of staff available and flexibility in the staff team ensures young people's needs are a priority. Staff feel supported and report regular supervision gives them opportunity to discuss their role and responsibilities. Staff are trained in all core areas. New staff experience a structured induction period with high levels of support. Staff turn over is very low which enables young people to benefit from consistency and security. The results are such that young people feel safe, cared for and develop trusting relationships with good outcomes compared to their starting point on arrival.

Comprehensive, robust and regular monitoring of the home's operations ensures quality of care continues to meet young people's needs. The quality of regulation 33 reports is good highlighting clear progress made by young people and offering staff guidance on reflective practices to individual incidents.

There is a clear management structure in the organisation that supports high staffing levels enabling children to receive individual attention at all times. The effective and efficient Registered Manager, supported by a strong deputy manager, maintains a very close overview of each individual young person and the running of the home.

Young people's individual needs in relation to their ethnicity and family backgrounds are considered enabling them to gain an understanding of their lives. There is a commitment to anti-discriminatory practice and fairness to all. Relationships between staff and children are highly professional and respectful.

Records are clear and are securely stored to protect young people's confidentiality, sensitive information is afforded additional measures.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.