

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC367551
Inspection date	19/12/2011
Inspector	Amanda Ellis
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	09/02/2011
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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 service is a children's home that is registered to care for three young people who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is managed by a limited private company.

Overall effectiveness

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

Young people within this home thrive. They learn to gain control of their lives and develop in positive ways. They feel safe and well cared for. The home provides outstanding individualised care, which takes into account the diverse needs of young people. This child centred and individualised planning promotes exceptional outcomes.

Young people are fully involved in planning and reviewing their care. They are consulted in the running of the home and daily care. They achieve improved outcomes and are supported by a motivated and committed staff team. Relationships between young people and staff are exceptional and young people are consistently positive about the home, staff, manager and quality of care. Young people are safe and feel safe.

Leaders, managers and staff undertake rigorous monitoring and are ambitious and enthusiastic for continued improvements. There are no requirements and one recommendation as a result of this inspection.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure children have access to independent advice and support from adults who they can contact directly and in private about problems or concerns, which is appropriate to their age and understanding. (NMS 1.5)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make excellent progress to develop a positive self view and emotional

resilience. This is because staff are knowledgeable and well trained and provide effective support to young people. One social worker commented 'They used a partnership approach to enable the young person to develop attachments and to move to a foster placement. This was a considerable outcome for the young person who had a history of breaking down placements.' Staff understand young people's needs and issues. Young people thrive and achieve because they are given positive and purposeful opportunities to develop and reach their full potential.

Young people's attendance within education significantly improves upon admission to the home. Young people are encouraged and supported to engage in structured educational activities. Young people enjoy consistency in their education because the service liaises well with education providers. The home provides additional educational tuition to support young people with individual learning needs. As a result, young people are prepared to integrate into mainstream education and participate at a level similar to their peers. This results in young people achieving better outcomes and their life chances improving. The progression and achievements of young people in education is impressive with all young people engaging in education.

Young people understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle and are fully involved in their assessment of health needs and plans. Young people learn to take responsibility for their own health and development because of the positive role modelling within the home. Relevant health professionals are available and involved as appropriate. Young people enjoy good health because a nutritious diet is encouraged and a strong emphasis is placed upon the benefits of physical exercise and activities. The individual health needs of young people are met because there is good and effective consultation with young people, professionals, parents and families.

Young people benefit from contact with family and friends as appropriate. Young people are encouraged to develop positive friendships. They are able to welcome friends to the home and develop relationships within the community. The staff team engage very well with family and friends and have good relationship with parents. Young people are helped to understand why there may be difficulties in some contact arrangements. The staff team work with young people to assist them to understand their family dynamics and relationships. The provision of a therapeutic service enables maintenance of family relationships through direct work with young people. Young people become established within the home because of the clear promotion of positive relationships.

Young people are supported and encouraged to develop independent living skills to prepare them for adult life. Young people undertake a diverse range of activities to prepare them for independent living. These include domestic tasks and the transition to mainstream education. The acquisition of such life skills provides young people with improved outcomes to live independently. Staff contribute to the transition process by supporting young people and contributing to future planning. Staff remain in regular contact with young people who have moved on from the home and have made a successful transition.

Quality of care

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

Young people benefit from excellent, positive relationships with the staff and with each other. Staff provide outstanding role models and as a result young people learn to develop their skills and knowledge. The home promotes an approach of enabling positive behaviour with strategies of reward and positive reinforcement. Young people say they feel safe and protected within the home and that the care provided ensures that they are safe from harm.

Young people take an active role in the running of the home and their views and feelings are integral to their planned care. The home provides each young person with an informative young person's guide. In addition the service provides regular monthly meetings for the young people. Young people confirm that they are consulted through these meetings and key worker sessions to influence the running of the home. Young people know to whom they can complain and are well supported to easily access advocacy and their independent reviewing officers. This involvement ensures that young people invest in their care and feel listened to and valued.

Young people's care is in line with their individual placement plans. Placement planning is organised in advance of young people staying at the provision. The planning is inclusive of young people and a wide range of associated professionals. Plans are up to date and reflect continued excellent working relationships with allied professionals. As a result, young people benefit from outstanding levels of consistency, which supports particularly improved outcomes in young people's education, emotional health, independence and behaviour.

Young people receive a high quality service that is clearly focused on their social, emotional and psychological health needs. The management and staff team have a good knowledge of services available to young people within the community. They act as advocates for young people in relation to accessing a range of services and promote a variety of opportunities for young people. The service commissions independent professionals to deliver educational and therapeutic support. Young people flourish because their wide ranging needs are met by appropriate services.

Young people's individuality is valued and their identity needs are met. Diversity and difference are embraced and young people are accepted. For example, preferences, choices and cultural needs are included in the care planning and the provision of care. Young people's identity is valued because staff understand a range of issues which impact on young people and know how to provide appropriate information and resources to meet these needs.

The home is situated within a residential location and is conveniently located for access to public transport, leisure, health services and education. Young people benefit from living in an environment which enables them to access and participate in a wide range of recreational activities. This provides opportunities for young

people to develop and maintain relationships with friends in the community. The home is well maintained and the décor is of an exceptionally high standard. Young people's bedrooms are individualised and decorated and furnished to the highest standard. The home is spacious and offers opportunity for both privacy and social engagement. The home has a relaxed and pleasant feel to it and resembles a large family home. Young people benefit from living in a domestic setting which blends into the community.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are safe and feel safe within the home and outside in the community. The experience and skills of the staff team combined with the robust procedures and policies of the home protect the young people from harm.

Young people say there is no bullying at the home, but feel able to talk to staff if they have ever felt unsafe or threatened.

Young people rarely go missing from care. This is because staff implement effective and clear communication arrangements to monitor young people when they are away from the home. The home has worked with the police to produce an excellent missing person procedure and they have a thorough system for managing unauthorised absences. The staff and young people have excellent relationships with the local police.

Young people have a significant input into their behaviour management plans and risk assessments. Risk assessments are comprehensive and reviewed regularly to protect young people. Young people receive opportunities to discuss restraint after an incident. Restraint is used appropriately and as a last resort by trained staff. Accountable records, including those about sanctions used are maintained and regularly reviewed by the manager.

Staff are subject to a robust recruitment process and are well trained in safeguarding and fully understand child protection procedures.

Young people live in an environment which is physically safe. Health and safety is managed very well and safety checks are carried out as required. Fire risk assessments are completed and reviewed and fire drills take place to ensure young people know what to do in the event of a fire.

Leadership and management

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

Young people benefit from a home that has progressed consistently high standards since the last inspection. The previous recommendations have been met. The service

continues to improve and expand and this is reflected in the home's development plan for 2011/2012. There is an ethos of continual improvement of the service to enable young people to achieve improved outcomes.

The home's Statement of Purpose is comprehensive and accurately reflects the aims, ethos and facilities offered to young people and their parents and carers. The Statement of Purpose, policies and procedures have all recently been updated to reflect current regulations, standards and legislation on equality and diversity. This is indicative of a service which is in tune with developments in child care and adapts the service to provide improved outcomes for young people.

Young people, placing authorities, professionals and parents are provided with a clear and comprehensive overview of the home's aims, objectives and services. This is secured through a detailed range of documents. The home consistently communicates and updates social workers, parents and professionals. Notifications are carried out as required and appropriate actions taken. In addition, complaints are taken seriously and answered robustly. This efficient practice provides young people with a transparency of care and improved overall outcomes. One social worker commented about the care delivered to one young person 'They are doing very well in terms of his overall development and working with the assessment framework. They have been excellent in supporting him to overcome his trauma, development, educational and social needs.'

Young people benefit from effective management and monitoring of the home. The Registered Manager undertakes thorough and regular monitoring to maintain the high standards of care provided. Young people are consulted and their views are central to the delivery of care. This ensures that young people consistently receive the highest standards of care and safety.

A key strength of the home is the outstanding contribution which the staff team make to the delivery of the service. The home is managed and staffed by personnel who are well trained and have a high level of experience in working with young people with challenging behaviours. The staff team are well established, dedicated and have significant experience. This means that young people are provided with sound and safe care. Staffing levels are well managed and the management team provide a consistent presence. Supervision is regular and of good quality covering professional development and the care of young people at the home. Young people benefit from a staff team who are well motivated, supported and trained.

Young people and staff records are excellent, clear and up to date and stored securely. The records contribute to a young person's understanding of their life. This ensures that young people have accurate records of their time within the home.

Equality and diversity practice is **outstanding**.