

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Gwen Buckley
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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 is registered to accommodate three boys. Education is provided through the home's independent school and local education authority provision, when possible.

Overall effectiveness

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

Young people make significant progress and benefit from highly individualised care which incorporates their holistic needs. Care includes assessing the impact of past experiences on presenting behaviours to help young people move forward. Social workers and young people consistently and explicitly express views of how well the young people are cared for.

The staff team are excellent role models who demonstrate to young people consistent respectful relationships between themselves as well as towards young people. Young people are respected and fully understood as individuals by the staff team. They feel safe and know staff will take action to safeguard them. Young people are well supported to remain in contact with family members.

The management team continually looks at how practice can develop and the staff team feel supported in their role. The manager has been asked to ensure young people comment and sign sanction records and to review the night time fire evacuation procedures.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure the emergency escape plans consider whether young people require personal emergency evacuation plans, specifically at night (NMS 10.9)
- review the use of sanctions and ensure young people are encouraged to have their views recorded and sign the records. (NMS 3.18)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

The emotional and physical safety of young people is given a high priority at the home. Young people have been at the home for a long time and have made significant progress. They are helped to understand their feelings and responses to different situations which is helping them develop coping strategies and preparing them for the future. They develop an understanding of their backgrounds and individual situations and develop emotional awareness and resilience. This approach to care creates a stable and nurturing environment where young people know staff care and they always have someone to whom they can turn that understands their issues. Young people state 'I can't think of anything they could do better', 'staff help me a lot' and 'they are really good at helping us keep in touch with family members and supporting us with contact visits'. They rated the care they get as ten out of ten or better.

All young people are registered with a local General Practitioner and see other health professionals as required to meet their needs such as opticians, dentists and consultants. Young people's general health and medication needs are very well supported by sound administration arrangements.

The staff promote a positive ethos that fully embraces difference. Young people at the home undertake voluntary work, take part in and raise money for various local and national charities. As a result, young people begin to truly appreciate the significance of differing values and are actively learning to have respect for themselves and others.

Young people know a good education is important and attend an educational facility and make progress. Personal education plans and statements of special educational needs are known by care staff who work very well with teaching staff to ensure education meets the varied needs of young people. Staff go to exceptional lengths to ensure further education courses are accessed that meet the individual needs of young people above school age.

Pathway plans are followed by staff to help young people prepare for adulthood. Appropriate resources are available for staff and young people to use so that young people can look at what they know or need to develop. They work on developing their skills and confidence at a pace that meets their need and ability.

Quality of care

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

Positive trusting relationships between staff and young people are a particular strength of the home. Young people are extremely positive about their relationships with staff and consistently positive about the support and care they receive. Consulting and negotiating decisions, listening to young people's views and feelings are all integral to daily life at the home. A social worker comments: 'The staff regularly provide good detailed reports of progress and work exceptionally well with families promoting positive contact'.

Support provided to young people takes account of decision made at their reviews helping them cope with life and developing their confidence. Young people state 'the staff here know us, help us and give us the support we need'. Staff clearly explain the reasons why any requests by young people cannot be actioned in ways which young people accept. Concerns or complaints young people have are well managed. Young people report that they seldom need to make formal complaints as staff know them well and will take action to address any concerns they may have.

At the point of referral thorough admission assessments consider the needs of young people already in the home which helps keep them all safe. Care plans and related reports reflect young people's needs, starting points, health needs and progress. Young people are encouraged to maintain memories of events at the home which includes photographs of special events and celebrations. Staff are proactive in recognising positive behaviour and helping young people recognise their personal achievements. Staff appropriately support young people according to their individual needs and challenge any discrimination which helps their self-esteem and confidence and makes young people feel cared for and important.

Young people are positive about the activities they enjoy and feel they meet their individual interests. Young people have personalised their own rooms ensuring they have a comfortable place decorated to their individual preference. Fire equipment is regularly checked and young people are aware of what to do in the event of a fire. However, the staff have not considered if young people may need a personal emergency evacuation plan at night. Health and safety checks are completed in a timely fashion.

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. Staff spend a great deal of time talking with young people about concerns and explain the reasons why. Young people report feeling safe, they are confident staff will keep them safe and will not tolerate bullying. Staff are aware of risks young people present to themselves and others and have comprehensive risk assessments in place. Young people share any fears or anxieties with staff and are confident these will be treated seriously and acted upon. As a result young people feel cared for and protected.

Staff take a pro-active approach to putting boundaries in place as any good parent would. Young people's particular vulnerabilities are understood and staff employ vigilance and strategies in line with risk assessments. Staff are aware of child protection procedure and receive regular refresher training.

Unacceptable behaviour is challenged effectively and positive behaviour is regularly recognised and rewarded. Physical interventions have not been used at the home since it was registered. Sanctions are not over used, in the majority of cases young people are asked to contribute towards the cost of replacing or repairing damaged

property. Young people do not always sign or have their views recorded in the sanction book.

Staff are aware of the protocol in place agreed with the local social services and police on how to response should a young person go missing. However, no young people have gone missing from the home. No new staff have been employed to work at the home in the last year; a stable staff group care for the young people.

Leadership and management

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

The home provides a homely environment in which young people thrive. Staff receive support from external professionals which focuses on the often complex needs of young people and how best to care for them.

There are good numbers of staff available and flexibility in the staff team ensures young people's needs are a priority. Staff have the skills and knowledge needed to care for the young people. Staff are trained in all core areas of residential care. They attend weekly meetings with childcare professionals which enables them to focus on the individual needs of young people and helps them to understand different approaches to care. Staff feel well supported and report supervision frequency has recently improved. External professionals consider the staff team are extremely child focused and are very good at working with others to meet the needs of young people.

The majority of staff are qualified and all are experienced childcare workers. Those staff not already qualified are on recognised courses. Staff turn over is very low and no changes of staff have occurred for sometime. Young people benefit from consistency and security of care from staff they know and trust.

Regular monitoring of the home's operations ensures quality of care continues to meet young people's needs. There is a development plan in place which clearly looks to improve outcomes for young people. The Registered Manager is supported by a deputy manager who has a very close overview of each individual young person and the running of the home.

Records are generally clear and are securely stored to protect young people's confidentiality. There is some very good work to expand young people's tolerance to differences and this is maximised to full advantage when they naturally arise in day-to-day discussions and activities.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.