

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Jennie Christopher
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is managed by a 'non profit' organisation, which is a registered charity and was set up in response to the needs of local families and the local community.

The home provides a respite service for five children and young people with learning difficulties, sensory impairment, physical disabilities or a combination of these.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service that exceeds minimum requirements

Adequate: a service that only meets minimum requirements

Inadequate: a service that does not meet minimum requirements

Overall effectiveness

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

Staff have very high aspirations for all young people in its care and outcomes for young people using the service are excellent. Staff have reciprocal relationships with parents, carers, education and health professionals. These ensure continuity of care and a complementary approach to placement and health care planning alongside target setting of life skills. Young people really enjoy staying at the service where they can relax, have fun and socialise with friends. The highly effective and enthusiastic staff team meets individual health and care needs well. Parents say that the staff are committed, caring and competent with one commenting the service provides 'amazing quality care'.

Young people have excellent relationships with the staff and feel they support them and encourage them to be as independent as possible. They feel listened to and parents feel staff are thoroughly investing in their child's progress. Young people benefit from the consistency of staff approach ensuring they benefit from smooth transitions between school, home and the service.

Young people and their families are actively involved in service development through questionnaires, meetings and creative consultation, such as food tasting sessions. Parents suggest that if there is something they would like more help with the service 'always provides a workshop about it'. As a result young people and their families are better equipped to manage aspects of their lives, such as transitions to adult services.

The manager and senior team are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the service and strive continually for improvement. The team are highly effective in staff motivation and training, which is evidenced in the commitment and quality of care experienced by young people. The only recommended area for improvement is one bathroom is tired and in need of repair and redecoration.

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 home is well maintained and decorated, this is with specific regard to the bathroom. (NMS 10.3)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make excellent progress in multi-professional identified and agreed areas of their lives. They receive highly individualised support, enabling them to have improved confidence, self-esteem and have a positive understanding of their abilities. Consistent, targeted support from staff enables young people to challenge themselves and strive for greater independence. Each young person is unreservedly valued and respected as an individual. Promotion of all aspects of physical and emotional health ensures young people have an understanding of healthy lifestyles and what this means for them. Young people's health needs are addressed with close consultation with medical professionals which form very high quality health care plans.

Attendance at school is excellent and young people are progressing, and achieving in line with their peers. Those who have reached school leaving age are considering their next steps while attending post 16 education. Close working with education staff ensures continuity in social learning for young people. An education professional suggested the service is 'keen to ensure a robust link' with school.

Young people enjoy socialising with friends while using the service and benefit from strong links with the local community through activities such as going to the park and meals out. While using the service young people develop a wide range of practical skills for independent living. Young people help with daily chores and cook meals alongside learning essential self-care skills. A robust and comprehensive independent living plan supports young people who are moving onto adult placements. This, alongside staff supporting parents with the transition process, ensures as stress free as possible transition to adult services.

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy positive and constructive relationships with staff who are concerned for all aspects of their welfare. Listening to and letting young people express themselves is entrenched in the ethos of the service. Young people are supported by individual communication aids where needed, for young people to make choices and communicate their views and wishes. Young people are routinely consulted on areas for improvement. The consultation has taken many forms including food tasting, staff observation of likes and dislikes and direct consultation through questionnaires and young people picking symbols. Furthermore, parental consultation aids the process to ensure all young people have their ideas listened to and when appropriate acted upon.

Staff consistently have very high aspirations for the young people with social workers and independent reviewing officers suggesting there is great consistency for young people and that they offer a very good service. Staff support their educational placements with incredibly robust communication between the service and school. As a head of one school suggested, 'excellent attendance at reviews', which extends to hosting reviews at the service for those parents who struggle with education environments. Young people who are at, or approaching school leaving age are encouraged into further education to improve their outcomes and life chances. Once again staff maintain superb links with local colleges, who suggest they have 'good, helpful relationships with the staff'. There is continued access to a wide variety of support from outside agencies to meet individual educational, social and emotional needs and formation of short break, health and care plans. Changing needs of young people are continually monitored and plans updated by staff in consultation with parents and health and other professionals.

Medication is stored appropriately and there is a thorough system to ensure safety when administering. Young people also benefit from trained nursing staff being on site to support specific health requirements and in case of emergency, there are several qualified first aiders on site at all times.

The well maintained building has accessibility and safety in mind. Bedrooms are customised daily to individual tastes to encourage a home-from-home feel. However one of the bathrooms is well used and is very tired as a result. Otherwise the building is decorated well with many seating areas for privacy or group interaction. Young people know how to make complaints and who to complain to. Where to access advocates is clearly displayed at young people's eye level. There are excellent anti-bullying procedures in place with posters to which young people have contributed.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people say they feel safe while using the service and that staff keep them

safe. Their welfare is actively promoted and staff protect them from abuse or harm. Staff are confident in processes to follow should they be concerned for a young person's safety or welfare and are aware of the services and local child protection procedures. Policies within the service are proactive and updated in response to lessons learned nationally. An example is the policy of no mobile telephones to be used in the building as a result of concerns in other settings. Young people do not go missing from care but staff are aware what to do should this happen and files contain up-to-date photographs of young people in case of emergency. The company's recruitment policy is thorough and ensures young people are protected from harm by robust personnel checks.

Individual plans promote and reward positive behaviour. Young people are encouraged to reflect on their behaviour and consider how responses could be different in line with their individual plans. Young people benefit from a positive approach to behaviour management meaning sanctions have not needed to be used. Robust and creative plans ensure that young people rarely require restraint. Young people are safe from fire and other hazards as a result of thorough checks and procedures, including minibuss evacuations. Risk assessments are robust and thoughtful to ensure young people are able to enjoy age appropriate activities.

Leadership and management

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

The provider meets and exceeds the aims and objectives that are set out in the Statement of Purpose and staff fully understand the functions and ethos of the service. The young people's guide provides clear information in a friendly and adaptable format.

The highly committed and experienced manager, who is continually striving to improve the service, effectively runs the service. The service demonstrates excellent multiagency working to improve outcomes for young people. The management team actively source external support to ensure the best possible care and outcomes for young people.

Young people benefit from being cared for by a consistent and incredibly enthusiastic staff team who are positive about their roles and enjoy their work. The staff team receive high quality and comprehensive training with needs identified in yearly appraisals. Staff receive quality and evaluative supervision. The management team expect a high degree of commitment and professionalism from the staff and one staff member commented they 'very proud to be part of the team'.

The manager and the senior team have an excellent understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the service through effective and evaluative monthly monitoring of the building and records and the impact this has for the young people in their care. The manager actively seeks the views of young people, their families and other stakeholders via questionnaires, meetings and a successful parent's forum to consider new ways of improving the provision. Robust plans for future development

ensure young people continue to benefit from an ever evolving and improving service.

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.