

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Gaynor Moorey
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This secure unit is managed by a county council. It provides secure accommodation for up to five young people and education is provided on site.

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 **good**.

The unit provides care for a small number of young people who display a range of particularly unsettled behaviour. The comprehensive assessment and planning in operation ensure that individual needs are identified and the work required to address these is carried out. There is a clear emphasis on seeing each young person as an individual and ensuring that they develop emotionally, socially and educationally.

Relationships between staff and young people are positive and the manager and team have created a culture of support and nurturing which is recognised and valued by the young people. Robust and detailed systems are in place to assess, monitor and review care needs ensuring that care delivered is of a good standard. Young people say they feel safe within the home and that their opinions are respected and valued. Education and enriching activities are promoted to an excellent standard. Young people have achieved successes especially when bearing in mind their starting points when they were admitted.

Quality of care in the home is subject to thorough and robust monitoring. A stable and committed staff team examine their practice constantly with a view to improving the service that they offer to the young people.

Two recommendations are made at this inspection regarding the need to update specific areas of training including self-harming and to ensure that all young people's files contain their 'looked after children' documentation.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure training is up to date for all specific areas of the young people's need including self-harm (NMS 18.1)
- ensure that statutory 'looked after children' documentation is in place for each young person. (NMS 25.2)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people benefit from individualised support which helps them grow in confidence and to understand their past. The key-worker system enables young people to focus on their goals and progress. Regular key work sessions provide an avenue for them to discuss their feelings. Staff are aware of young people's strengths and vulnerabilities and help to nurture their talents and interests. This approach ensures that each young person feels valued and that the care and support they receive really helps them make positive choices in their lives. One young person said, 'because of being here I have been helped to look at my behaviour and where sometimes this has been hurtful to others.'

Young people enjoy a variety of activities. These include computer games, dance and exercise, cooking, art, sports outside in the open areas, use of the sports hall and gym. Young people on an agreed mobility programme have access to additional activities outside of the unit.

Young people benefit from very well planned health services which include access to psychological and psychiatric assistance if required. The young people particularly benefit from having their emotional health and well-being promoted to a high standard by the staff team. Young people receive comprehensive advice and guidance on issues such as sexual health, drug awareness and other areas such as sexual exploitation and self-harm.

Young people benefit from a good standard of education and the opportunities to experience this as a positive part of their lives. All young people resident at the time of the inspection attend education and have over 90% attendance. They receive excellent levels of support and benefit from members of staff encouraging them educationally especially when taking into consideration the young people's experiences and attendance levels before they were admitted to the unit.

Young people receive comprehensive and carefully thought out support to develop their independent living skills in conjunction with their age. Support offered to young people when in transition and preparing to move on is very good with staff finding the right level of support for each individual young person's needs. One young

person said the staff had helped her manage her emotions around moving on and were a support to her in the visits and transition period.

Quality of care

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

Young people benefit from a good quality of personalised support and care provided by the staff team. Good positive relationships with clear boundaries enable the young people to develop self-awareness and feel safe. One parent said 'our child feels safe in this environment.'

The young people's views are promoted and valued to a high standard. There are numerous forums both formal and informal to enable young people to voice their feelings and opinions. Forums include unit meetings and key working sessions. There is a culture of promoting young people's rights and encouraging them to voice their feelings and opinions appropriately. Young people are able to influence decisions relating to their daily lives, such as independent living and transition planning.

The complaints process is easy to understand, readily available and used by the young people. They are aware of the system and know the various adults and organisations to whom they can complain. The manager addresses complaints promptly and ensures that the young people are happy about and understand the resolution to any complaints they have made. Young people are observed to be confident in expressing their feelings and opinions. Any neighbourhood concerns and complaints are responded to quickly and efficiently.

Young people's comprehensive care plans clearly identify their individual needs, although some 'looked after children' documentation was missing from one file. However, there was evidence of staff following this up with the social worker. Good monitoring enables staff to evaluate young people's progress. This process in turn positively contributes to statutory reviews and means that reports and staff input accurately reflects each young person's progress and areas of concern.

Healthy lifestyles are encouraged by the staff guiding young people in choosing healthy menus and by encouraging them to partake in physical exercise and activities. Staff awareness of each young person's background and vulnerabilities ensures that the young people's emotional well-being is promoted to a particularly outstanding standard.

Young people are enabled to follow their individual needs including cultural and spiritual. The staff organise, with the young people, different themed activities such as Japanese and Mexican nights. Other events include wheelchair use and disability, and teenagers and their behaviour. The staff also arrange celebration of religious festivals and sporting events such as Wimbledon. The culture of the home ensures that education is promoted and highly valued. Progress is good, with young people achieving some goals and success that they may have never experienced prior to their admission to the home.

Young people benefit from living in a home which is adequate and maintained to a good standard. However, developments are taking place in the grounds which has reduced the outside space for the young people.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people report that they feel supported cared for and protected in the home. They feel that they can share any fears or anxieties with the staff and that these will be treated seriously and acted upon. Members of staff are aware of what to do in the event that they have concerns about a young person's well-being. Records indicate that action is taken effectively and promptly and that the manager robustly checks and monitors any records in relation to safeguarding issues.

Young people spoken with confirmed that bullying is not a problem. Young people are advised and informed about the issues of bullying and understand that it is not acceptable in the home.

Each young person has an individual protocol in place as to what course of action needs to be followed in the event that they are missing without permission.

The effective management of the young people's behaviour is a strong aspect of the unit and situations are dealt with through discussion and communication. The young people said that the rules in the unit are fair and understand their purpose. Positive relationships between staff and the young people ensure that the use of physical restraint would only be used as a last resort. Records of restraints, single separations and sanctions are detailed and are very well maintained. Records of restraints and single separations cross reference with correctly and the Registered Manager and Regulation 33 visitor sign and comment on records held. The Local Authority Designated Officer reviews any restraint or incidents related to events at the home to ensure an independent overview and to further safeguard the young people.

The home has a robust recruitment policy which ensures that only adults who have been assessed as suitable to work with young people are employed. Young people are involved in the interviewing process of new staff.

Risk assessments and safety checks of the premises and fire equipment ensure that the young people live in a safe environment. Fire drills are undertaken at regular periods to ensure that everyone is up to date with emergency procedures. The systems operated in the home and attention to detail each young person's needs and vulnerabilities help ensure that safety is promoted to a good standard.

Leadership and management

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

A comprehensive Statement of Purpose is available at the home. The children's guide is produced in an excellent, appropriate format which has been designed by two young people who were previously placed at the home. Young people spoken with confirmed they were supplied with a copy on arrival. The Statement of Purpose is available to social workers, parents and carers. The home operates in line with its stated objectives and is efficiently and effectively managed.

Young people benefit from a unit which is very effectively and consistently managed. Robust monitoring and reflective practice ensure that manager and assistant manager communicate an expectation to the staff team that care given to the young people is of a very good standard. Members of staff report being very committed to the well-being of the young people and very well supported in their role by good management. This approach is underpinned by having thorough systems to monitor the quality of care.

Regular training and supervision practice is of an adequate standard and young people benefit from a consistent, supported lifestyle at the home. However, more specific up to date training in areas such as self-harming has not taken place.

The unit had no previous recommendations or requirements from the interim inspection. Good compliance can be seen in the use of the Regulation 33 reports and how these have been used to further improve practice and meet any areas of weakness. Clear comprehensive Regulation 34 reports are undertaken by the manager. New developments are being implemented such as a care plan developed by the young people so they can keep up to date with what is happening for them and a new visual format for the young people's guide.

The staffing complement ensures that there are always sufficient staff on shift to be able to respond to young people's needs. The low staff turnover and the stability of the staff team ensures that the young people benefit from consistent care by a motivated staff team.

Records are clear, up to date and stored securely, and contribute to an understanding of the young people's lives. All significant events relating to the protection of children accommodated in the home are notified by the registered person of the home to the relevant authorities and appropriate action is taken following the incident.

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.