

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Susan Mullin
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This children's home is privately owned and offers placements for two young people who may have a combination of mental health, psychological, emotional or complex care needs that present challenging behaviour. The service is designed to offer medium to long-term care placements. The home's programme of care generally incorporates a structured balance of education, recreation and therapeutic interventions tailored to meet individual needs. The small scale of the home permits sufficient flexibility to adjust to changing placement circumstances.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service of high quality 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**.

This home provides good care that is very well planned and based on the needs of the individual young people. Young people are achieving good outcomes in their education, healthy lifestyles, independence skills and the development of social skills. Young people have become more confident and feel better about themselves.

Young people are actively encouraged to engage in education and are proud of their achievements. They grow in maturity and develop skills to prepare for life as a young adult in society. Staff support young people to develop and maintain positive relationships. The service provides an environment where young people can express their individuality. Young people live in a home where equality and diversity is promoted and celebrated.

Young people are settled and feel safe in the home. They report very good relationships with the manager and staff. Young people's welfare and safety is at the heart of practice and promoting safe care is clearly understood and put in to action by the team. This provides the security that young people need in order to thrive. Young people confirmed that they are very satisfied with the quality of care they receive and that they are always consulted about any changes to the care plan.

The manager understands the home's strengths and weaknesses and has

implemented improvement plans. The manager and her team continue to improve practice, develop staff and consult with young people and relevant others to inform practice.

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people are making good progress in the home with individualised and consistent support and care from the staff team. They are forming and sustaining positive attachments with staff and make good progress in developing emotional resilience. Young people grow in confidence and maintain good relationships because their individuality is facilitated and celebrated. Young people are given opportunities to make sense of their backgrounds, experiences and their behaviours. As a result, young people engage in positive social interaction with staff in the local community, which increases their self-esteem.

Young people enjoy good health and have prompt access to health services. Specialist care is available if required and appropriate consents are in place for medical matters. Young people's individuality is recognised, valued and promoted through clear and comprehensive placement plans, completed by the home.

Young people establish and maintain constructive contact with families, friends and other people who play a significant role in their lives. This is sensitively managed and in line with young people's individual placement plans. Staff support young people with any disappointments or emotions arising from their family relationships. This helps young people manage their feelings appropriately and begin to understand the complexities of their lives.

Young people are supported by staff in the effective preparation for a successful transition into independence and adulthood. Young people eat healthily and learn about menu planning, shopping for food and preparing foods. Staff in the home spend time with the young people to help them understand how to budget their finances. Young people grow in confidence and are ready to challenge themselves, as a result young people master tasks they would have previously found difficult, such as walking alone to school. This increases young people's independence and sense of personal responsibility.

Education has a high profile in the home and attendance at school is very good. Young people are making good progress with education from their starting points in the home. Contact between the home and school is frequent and effective, enabling staff to support young people successfully with homework or personal targets. This helps to ensure that, with support, young people continue to attend and achieve.

Quality of care

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

Young people benefit from good relationships with staff who are child centred in their approach. Staff act as good role models. As a result, young people respond positively through the trusting relationships that exist. Young people have link workers who support them through individual sessions, where they discuss issues which affect them. One young person said: 'The staff here are very good, they are here for me if I need to talk'.

Young people have input regarding life in the home through regular house meetings, link work sessions and daily interaction with the staff. Young people confirmed that their opinions and suggestions are put into practice whenever possible. Young people said they have not needed to make a complaint about their care but they confirmed that they are aware of the procedure if they needed to do so.

Young people's physical and emotional health is promoted and monitored. Comprehensive individual placement plans clearly identify how young people's needs are to be met and to ensure consistency of care. These plans are up to date and are implemented daily and evaluated regularly. There are effective procedures for the safe administration of medication. Young people are encouraged to understand and take responsibility for their own health needs. Healthy eating and regular exercise are promoted. Staff and young people are involved in planning well-balanced menus which take into account personal preferences and cultural needs.

Young people are actively encouraged to be involved in their care plans. As a result, young people are fully aware of any changes made to their plans. Young people are supported to attend all reviews and to make their views known, which ensures that they are involved and influence any decisions that are made about their future.

Staff are proactive and consistent in supporting the educational achievement of young people, engaging with their schools and successfully promoting their attendance. Young people benefit from this and one young person said: 'The staff have helped me with my education and helping me find a work placement where I am going to be looking after children'.

Young people are supported to pursue their own individual hobbies. They benefit from a range of enjoyable experiences, including an annual holiday. Young people's needs in relation to ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, gender and gender identity are all addressed positively. Young people live in a healthy environment that actively supports their physical and emotional health. The home is suitably located in a residential area where there are good public transport links and access to local facilities.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people say they feel safe and are relaxed in the home. Staff implement a positive behaviour management strategy based on establishing sound relationships with young people in a framework of safe and consistent boundaries. There has been

no incidences of physical intervention. Positive behaviour reward systems recognise good behaviour and achievements of young people. Consequences are implemented for negative behaviour, for example loss of an activity. Consequences are reviewed with young people to ensure they are relevant and effective. As a result, young people learn the consequences of their actions, develop self-control and manage their own behaviour better.

Young people benefit from comprehensive risk management plans that identify the presenting risks and how best to manage them. Young people are fully involved in their risk management and take responsibility for keeping themselves safe. There is a robust procedure and protocol for young people missing from care. However, there have been no incidents of a young person going missing since the last inspection. The staff reported there were no issues of bullying in the home or at school.

All staff are trained in safeguarding and are clear about their role in the safeguarding process. Staff employ safe care practices and are suitably trained about what to do if there are any complaints, allegations, or concerns that young people might be at risk of harm. Young people are protected by an effective and robust recruitment process that includes comprehensive checks on all staff. As a result young people are kept safe.

Regular fire drills are undertaken and there is a comprehensive fire risk assessment and health and safety assessment for the building and equipment. Regular maintenance checks are performed. This ensures the building is safe and appropriately secure. This means that young people benefit from a safe environment and appropriate action is taken to make improvements where issues arise.

Leadership and management

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

This home is efficiently managed by an experienced Registered Manager. The manager with support from senior workers, robustly monitors the quality of care and young people's progress. The home provides young people with a stable, safe and nurturing environment. The home has a clear Statement of Purpose which informs young people, their families and placing authorities about the services provided by the home. The Statement of Purpose accurately reflects the practice and registration conditions of this home. The home's young people's guide ensures that young people know what to expect from the services provided.

There was one recommendation made at the previous inspection, requesting that Regulation 34 audits should be sent to Ofsted on a six monthly basis, has now been met. There have been no complaints made since the last inspection.

Young people and staff are happy with the staffing levels which are flexible towards the changing needs of young people. Staffing levels continue to keep young people safe at all times. Young people are supported by a staff team which comprises a good mix of race, age and experience. This helps young people learn about

differences and they benefit from shared experiences such as different cultures and foods.

Staff receive regular, good quality supervision. All staff have received mandatory training. Staff confirm that they are very well supported and one member of staff said: 'I get on well with the young person and my manager, and I am being given more responsibility'. The home's development plan clearly identifies realistic targets for the coming year. This includes staff training and professional development.

Internal monitoring by the manager is thorough with a comprehensive system to regularly review care plans, risk assessments, records and the daily running of the home. External monitoring of the service is regularly carried out, and when shortfalls are noted these are rectified quickly.

Records are clear, up to date and securely stored. There is a system in place to notify appropriate authorities of all significant events, relating to the protection of young people living at the home. This helps to further promote young people's well-being and protect them from harm.

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.