

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Elaine Clare
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home accommodates up to four young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. It provides crisis intervention placements for up to 28 days and also medium- and longer-term stays. There is an additional two bedroom bungalow on site, which accommodates one young person, who is supported in living more independently.

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**.

In all respects, young people receive good quality and personalised care. Young people make outstanding progress in all areas of their welfare and development. For example, school attendance over a period of time has improved hugely.

There is a stable, well-trained staff team, led by an effective and efficient manager. Staff are well supported to meet young people's needs, which results in high quality care.

Care planning is individualised and enables staff to focus on areas of need for each young person. Young people engage in some risky behaviours. However, staff work extremely hard to guide them to keep safe and to inform them of the effect their behaviour may have on their welfare and health. Some very good outcomes have resulted from helping young people to modify risky or anti-social behaviour.

The home engages in safe care practices, which are supported by robust policies and procedures. Young people say that they feel safe. Their families also say that they are kept safe and all professionals involved in their lives confirm that they are kept up-to-date with young people's progress. Communication is a real strength of the home.

The home strives to embrace equality and diversity. This means that young people are supported to achieve a sense of personal identity, although the home has not yet

developed this area of work to its full potential.

The home's strengths are the skills within the staff team, good communication and achieving improved behaviours and school attendance. These strengths have impacted positively on young people's life chances.

The manager has a very good understanding of the home's weaknesses and strengths and how to address areas requiring development. Monitoring of the home is very good. Regulation 34 reports clearly evidence how the Registered Manager will improve the quality of care provided.

Outcomes for children and young people

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

The outcomes for young people at this setting are outstanding, with clear areas of excellent progress being made. Young people are aware of their placement plans and have contributed towards them.

Young people are involved in menu planning and often cook their own meals. Young people receive a nutritious and balanced diet, with access to plentiful fresh fruit and vegetables.

Although staff promote healthy lifestyles, some young people engage in risky behaviours, including tobacco and alcohol misuse, which may have a negative impact on their health and welfare. Despite this, young people have made good progress in making a reduction in some of these activities.

Young people benefit from appropriate contact with family, friends and other people who are important to them. Young people appreciate the staff's efforts to help them keep in touch. One young person spoke really positively about the support they had received to keep in contact with their family. Contact records are up to date and are reviewed regularly.

Young people's attendance at their educational facilities is excellent. This has improved significantly over time. Young people feel that they are making good progress and have aspirations for the future. Staff are proactive in making links with the education provider and they transport young people to their education if necessary. This ensures that educational placements are maintained. Some young people are supported to travel independently to school, helping them to gain further life skills.

Young people are working towards semi-independence. They are kept very well informed of their possible future plans.

Quality of care

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

Young people receive good quality care, with some aspects being of a very high standard. Young people have, in general, positive and constructive relationships with staff. This helps them to behave appropriately. Any difficulties with relationships are handled well, with appropriate strategies put in place to protect both the young people and staff.

There are care plans in place and formal requests are made to the placing authority for care plans, if necessary. The plans contain a wealth of information and include behaviour management and health needs. There is clear evidence that placement plans are being shared with young people. This means that staff are able to provide consistent care and young people are able to understand what the plan is for their care.

Young people have access to a range of purposeful and enjoyable activities. Staff work hard to engage young people in activities, and young people are keen to try new things.

Young people's physical, emotional, and psychological health outcomes are good, with some aspects very good. Staff work efficiently and effectively to ensure young people receive the correct professional input and services to meet these needs. Young people are comfortable in asking staff to accompany them to appointments. Staff support young people within education well, achieving some very good outcomes. Staff communicate regularly with schools and take an active part in school time. Staff provide inspiration for young people and their future choices. They promote good school attendance and personal development.

Young people know how to complain. The home has a comprehensive and effective complaints procedure. The views of young people are effectively sought through a wide range of avenues such as key worker sessions, questionnaires, house meetings and one-to-one sessions with the Registered Manager. Young people have access to advocacy services. This means that there is a culture of utilising young people's views to improve the quality of care.

The home is well maintained, decorated and furnished to a suitable standard. Young people have personalised their rooms. This gives young people a sense of belonging.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people, as well as their families and professionals, say that the home keeps young people safe. Young people say that they can talk to a variety of different adults if they feel unsafe. Company procedures, clear records and effective practice ensure that safeguarding young people has a positive impact on their safety in the home and within the community.

Young people's behaviours have improved significantly over time. Although few

physical interventions have taken place, staff are regularly trained to undertake them if necessary. Staff confirmed that they would only use physical intervention as a last resort. Staff undertake regular refresher training so young people would not be at risk of inappropriate intervention if carried out. Effective policies and procedures are in place for managing behaviour, including strategies in de-escalation and distraction. Young people have highly individualised behaviour management plans in place, of which they are well informed. Positive and proactive behaviour management strategies are consistently applied. As a result, there have been some excellent outcomes for young people, including improved anger management and not going missing from the home.

Staff know and implement the procedure when young people go missing. High quality care and behaviour management has seen a huge decrease in the number of missing young people over time. The home's procedures enable them to have liaison with the local police should anyone go missing. Should a young person go missing procedures in place allow staff to respond appropriately using specific risk assessments that detail when to alert the police; dependent on the particular vulnerabilities of each young person.

The environment of the home is satisfactorily secure. Fire detection equipment is checked regularly and there is a fire evacuation plan. The home has effective fire safety measures in place to help to ensure young people's safety.

Staff working with young people in the home are carefully selected and vetted to prevent the appointment of unsuitable people. Staff sometimes work with young people alone. The home conducts high quality working alone risk assessments that highlight all potential risks and how they can be lessened.

There are good child protection procedures in place. Staff are confident and demonstrate that they know what to do and who to inform in the event that they have concerns about a young person's well-being. All members of staff receive training in child protection and safeguarding procedures. The Registered Manager ensures that the appropriate action is taken and all the relevant agencies are informed of any safeguarding issues.

Leadership and management

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

The leadership and management of the home are consistently strong. Young people are cared for by a stable staff team, led by an experienced and efficient Registered Manager. The manager oversees the home's development plan and regularly reviews its contents in order to monitor the progress made. The manager has a clear understanding of the home's many strengths and few weaknesses.

The home has very good links with other agencies within the community, such as youth services, police and the Local Safeguarding Children Board. External agencies provided very positive feedback about the home's communication and care practices.

Many professionals all commented on the excellent communication between the staff and other agencies; also on the professionalism of the staff team. The staff team is a definite strength of the home and results in young people receiving high quality and consistent care.

The home employs sufficient staff representing a range of ages, ethnicities and both genders. Staff confirm that they receive regular, good quality supervision. Staff have completed all mandatory training and a training plan is in place for the forthcoming year. This equips them with the skills to meet young people's needs.

All records are securely stored. Appropriate documentation is in place to support the young people's care.

The Statement of Purpose contains sufficient information to inform placing authorities about the service that is offered. Professionals are aware of what the home provides. The provider does consistently meet the aims and objectives in the Statement of Purpose. Regulation 33 and 34 reports are completed monthly to monitor the home. Overall, both reports show very good monitoring and indicate that the home is being effectively and efficiently managed.

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.