

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Louise Redfern
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for three young people of either gender with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is privately owned.

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**.

Young people make good progress in education and enjoy varied opportunities to engage in activities. As a result, young people improve their social skills and increase in confidence. Young people enjoy positive relationships with staff and each other.

Young people report that they are safe and staff care about their welfare. Recommendations and requirements have been raised to ensure improvements are embedded into practice and ensure the on-going safety of young people.

Young people receive highly personalised, well-planned care, taking into account their individual needs. The home strongly promotes positive outcomes for all young people. The manager and staff team are particularly proactive and successful in engaging young people in attending educational placements and engaging in activities in the community. As a result, young people make good progress in relation to their starting points.

Areas for improvement

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, a written record is made including the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure (Regulation 17B (3)(f))	10/09/2012
26 (2001)	ensure that a full employment history, including a satisfactory written explanation of any gaps in employment is available (Regulation 26 (3)(d) schedule 2 (6))	10/09/2012
34 (2001)	ensure that the system for monitoring and improving the quality of care provides for consultation with children, their parents and placing authorities. (Regulation 34(3))	10/09/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the home does not restrict the liberty of any child as a matter of routine (NMS 3.19)
- implement a written policy regarding electronic devices used to monitor children that sets out how they should be used, how they promote the welfare of children, how children will be informed of their use, how legitimate privacy of children will be protected and how children will be protected from potential abuse of such measures (NMS 10.5)
- ensure the children's guide includes how a child can contact their independent reviewing officer. (NMS 13.5)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people are making good progress in the home because of individualised, consistent support and care from the whole staff team. As a result, they are forming and sustaining positive attachments with staff and make good progress in developing emotional resilience. Young people are able to enjoy the company of positive male and female staff role models

They engage in a variety of activities in the home and local community, which increases their confidence, self-esteem and broadens their horizons. For example, they go to the local climbing wall and learning how to climb. Young people maintain appropriate contact with family members and other people who are important to them, which maintains strong support networks for them outside the home.

Young people's physical and emotional health is good. They receive support from health professionals and staff to understand the importance of making healthy lifestyle choices. They benefit from attending routine health appointments to

maintain their general health. Young people are beginning to develop some basic, age appropriate life skills, such as making snacks and doing their own laundry.

Young people make good progress with their educational attainment, which is supported by good attendance levels. Young people benefit from routines that enable them to make the most of educational opportunities and be prepared for the school day. One young person commented, 'I like school and I miss going in the school holidays.'

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy positive and constructive relationships with staff. One professional commented 'it's a warm and nurturing staff team who are committed to caring for the young people.' The manager and staff team implement clear structures and firm boundaries to encourage young people to achieve their full potential. As a result, young people know they are valued as individuals and say, 'I like living here I'd score it 9 out of 10, I think staff listen to me and are here for me'.

Placement plans are tailored to each young person, clearly outlining their individual needs. Staff use the plans to support young people to focus on clear measurable outcomes and regularly review the progress in each area.

The manager and staff team have regular discussions with young people regarding the day-to-day running of the home. They feel that they have a say in how the home is run. For example, they have developed their own list of sanctions that the staff appropriately imposed, which the young people feel will help to support their behaviour.

Young people enjoy healthy lifestyles; they engage in positive activities such as going swimming, attending street dance classes and accessing the local library services. This encourages them to engage in positive social interaction in the community. Young people have access to a range of health promotion information in the home and access to support from other agencies, such as drug and alcohol project workers.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people report that they feel safe and can talk to an adult when they are worried. Staff are suitably trained in safeguarding and the home has extensive policies and procedures in place which underpin effective practice. There is a shortfall in that there is no policy in place regarding the use of door alarms. However, young people, staff and the placing authority have a clear understanding of why and how they are used in the home.

Managers and staff recognise the particular behaviours associated with the young people's individual emotional and behavioural difficulties. As a result, positive measures are deployed to support young people to make positive choices. For example, they earn extra activities. There are a number of occasions, which have resulted in young people being restrained. Young people have a clear understanding of why they are restrained, one commented 'Staff talk to me during and after I am restrained to try to help me with my behaviour and keep me safe.' However, the manager does not routinely comment on the effectiveness and consequence of the restraint, preventing staff and young people from effectively learning from the incident. On occasions restraint records do not show clarity as to why staff took action to prevent a young person leaving the room or why a restraint took place. These records are open to misinterpretation as they suggest that young people's liberty is restricted and restraint is used inappropriately to ensure compliance.

The manager ensures that individualised behaviour management plans are implemented for each young person. Comprehensive risk management plans and individual planned key working sessions enable young people to take managed risks, develop their life skills and reflect on the progress they have made in their placement. Young people rarely go missing. When they do, staff comprehensively search for young people and actively encourage their quick return home. Young people are supported to understand the risks associated with going missing through regular key working sessions.

All staff are thoroughly checked through the organisation's recruitment procedures. However, when shortfalls are identified in relation to staff files, there is no evidence that the manager has addressed this.

The home is physically safe and appropriately secure to take into account the needs and characteristics of the young people cared for. Staff pay excellent attention to health and safety management. They use risk assessments around the home and in the local community to assure young people's continuing safety.

Leadership and management

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

Young people receive a good level of care from the manager and staff team. The manager has a good approach to identifying young people's individual needs. An effective individual placement plan is established which enables each young person to make progress and achieve their full potential, for both living at the home and forwards into adulthood. The manager can clearly demonstrate the impact and value that living at the home has had on some young people's lives and how their life chances have improved over time. For example, young people actively engage in therapy and in their individual education placements.

Systems have not yet been implemented to ensure young people's, parents and placing authorities views are obtained as part of Regulation 34 manager monitoring.

However, this shortfall does not negatively impact on young people because their views are routinely heard through complaints, daily routine conversations, key work sessions, young people's meetings and the organisation's Regulation 33 visitor.

The Statement of Purpose and young person's guide accurately represent the specific service of the home. However, there is a minor shortfall in the young people's guide because it does not have the young people's independent reviewing officer details included. There is no impact on the young people as they all attend their reviews and the home has the details held in their files.

There are currently vacancies in the staff team, the shortfalls in the rota are covered by existing staff doing extra hours or with a small number of casual and agency staff. This ensures a level of consistent care to meet the needs of the young people. The home demonstrates good quality record keeping. Records contribute to an understanding of young people's lives and show the progress they have made. Young people routinely sign placement and behaviour management plans. This encourages and enables them to be part of their care planning and setting goals for the future.

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.