

Inspection report for children's home

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Service information

Brief description of the service

This children's home is owned by a small private organisation. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four young people who have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

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 each individual young person. Young people are fully involved in their care and in the running of the home. Young people are making excellent progress in achieving positive outcomes in all areas, particularly in education and health. Relationships between staff and young people are good and young people are satisfied with the quality of care they receive. Young people are kept safe and feel safe in the home and community. Staff have a very good understanding of safe working practice. Staff are well qualified and experienced and supported through effective supervision and appraisals. The management of the home is good. The manager understands the strengths of the home and areas for development. There are no breaches of regulation, but there are three shortfalls in relation to national minimum standards. These relate to: information in the young person's guide; the manager not having a written development plan in place; and staff not fully understanding the impact of their own emotions when dealing with young people's behaviour. These do not impact negatively on the welfare or safety of young people.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure staff understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the

emotions and behaviours presented by children and understand how past experiences and present emotions are communicated through behaviour (NMS 3.9)

- ensure the Children's Guide includes a summary of how a child can contact their Independent Reviewing Officer, the Children's Rights Director, Ofsted and how to secure access to an independent advocate (NMS 13.5)
- ensure the registered person has in place a written development plan, reviewed annually, for the future of the home, either identifying any planned changes in the operation or resources of the service, or confirming the continuation of the home's current operation and resource. (NMS 15.2)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make excellent progress in achieving positive outcomes in all areas. Young people are supported to understand why they are in care, their family history and their own individual identity within their family. The manager said this has 'enabled young people to find an emotional acceptance of themselves, this has impacted on improving their social relationships.'

Young people enjoy very good health. They discuss various health issues with staff and understand health risks such as smoking and drug use. No young people smoke. One gave up smoking as a result of support from staff and is now encouraging their parent to stop. Young people are able to identify their own health needs and understand how to maintain a healthy lifestyle. For example, one young person carefully selects food with no 'e' numbers and low sugar content, as they know the health risks associated with these additives in relation to their own medical condition. This means young people take responsibility for their own health. Young people plan the weekly menu and benefit from meals that are healthy and nutritionally balanced. They are responsible for preparing and cooking some meals. This means they benefit from a healthy diet whilst developing skills and confidence.

Young people are actively engaged in a wide range of activities and leisure pursuits. Staff encourage young people to try different challenges and experiences to develop new skills. Young people develop a timetable of activities for the week. This involves group activities, such as swimming, and activities for individuals to enjoy their own interests, such as attending football matches. As a result, young people enjoy their interests and develop new skills in social interaction.

Young people benefit from good contact with their parents, family and friends. Arrangements are set out in each young person's plan and staff facilitate and support contact as required.

Young people make excellent progress in their education attendance and attainment. All young people are attending education suitable for their individual needs. Some young people attend college where they are studying A levels, others attend

alternative education programmes and supported learning schemes. Schools provide certificates, merit awards and reports that identify the progress young people make. One young person who found it hard to spell small, everyday words when they arrived at the home is now undertaking a foundation learning course in skills for independence and work. This means young people benefit from education that prepares them for adulthood.

Young people benefit from very good care to prepare them for independent living and adulthood. They acquire practical skills such as cooking, shopping, managing laundry, budgeting and household management. Young people are supported in planning their move from the home and are provided with information on alternative accommodation. They are supported to visit other accommodation and compile a notebook of the points they like and dislike about it, the transport network and local facilities. This ensures they have enough information to support their move.

Quality of care

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

Young people are able to share their views and voice their opinions on all aspects of their care and on the running of the home. Young people benefit from very good, person centred care management procedures. They are fully engaged in formulating their care plans and set objectives for their development. Activities undertaken to meet these objectives are clearly evidenced and progress is reviewed with young people. An example of this is a young person reflecting on their holiday experience and what they had learned with regard to other cultures, trying new food and engaging in different activities. Young people take an active part in their reviews and one young person is working with an advocate to request an extension of their placement to complete their education post-18. A young person said 'nothing is discussed without my input.' This means young people are cared for in line with the individual requirements of their placement plan.

Young people play an active role in the running of the home. They participate in house meetings and consultations with the manager where they discuss activities, how the home operates, suggest menu options and address any issues or concerns. A young person said 'the manager listens to me.' This enables young people to gain confidence and skills in communicating their opinions.

Young people are aware of the complaints procedure and make good use of key work sessions and house meetings to air their feelings and deal with any issues before they escalate. As a result, no complaints have been made since the last inspection.

Young people benefit from good relationships with staff and interact well with each other. One member of staff said 'the young people get on really well.' Young people say they feel very well cared for and looked after. Staff work closely with young people to understand triggers to their behaviour. However, young people feel some staff bring their own feelings into managing behaviour and as a result there is

inconsistency in dealing with some situations.

Young people's health needs and medical history are clearly detailed and action plans identify how best to meet these needs. Young people benefit from support from a range of health professionals. Most are able to make their own appointments and manage their own medicines. Some young people do not like to go to the surgery for routine appointments so staff have arranged for the doctor to attend at the home. Staff are trained in first aid and the safe administration of medication. Written records of medication are clear and accurate. This means the arrangements for dealing with medication are safe and effective. Healthy living, diet and exercise are encouraged. As a result, the physical, emotional and psychological health of young people is promoted.

Staff encourage young people to take part in a wide range of leisure pursuits and activities, which include healthy activities such as badminton, swimming and going to the gym. Young people enjoy trips to the cinema and shopping and quieter activities at home such as cooking and computer games. Young people benefit from holiday experiences abroad where they sample different cultures and enjoy new foods. This means young people are engaged in a range of enjoyable activities.

Young people benefit from a range of educational opportunities and programmes that support their individual learning needs. Staff support them with their homework and revision for examinations. Young people have access to computers and a quiet space in the home to learn. As a result, young people are supported to achieve their educational potential.

Young people live in a family home environment with access to a number of rooms for socialising and space to be on their own. Young people have keys to their room and lockable facilities in them. This ensures their privacy and the security of their possessions. The home is located close to local amenities providing access to a variety of activities to promote young people's development.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

The home provides an environment of care and support where bullying is not tolerated. Young people say that bullying is not an issue at the home but they are aware of what to do if they are concerned about it. One young person said 'I don't feel bullied here.' Good policies and procedures are in place for countering bullying. As a result, young people are protected from bullying.

Young people are supported to develop socially acceptable behaviour. They are encouraged to develop strategies for dealing with their emotions and are provided with a structured daily programme of purposeful activities. Staff implement a positive behaviour management strategy based on positive reinforcement and understandable consequences for actions. Consequences are established with young

people who contribute their ideas. These include reparation, for example buying filler for holes in a wall where they had pulled a shelf away. As a result, young people take responsibility for their own actions and the use of consequences for negative behaviour has decreased. Staff are trained in behaviour management and physical intervention. They use various techniques to diffuse situations and there has been no restraint or physical intervention for over a year.

Young people say they feel safe and know how to protect themselves. They are fully involved in formulating and reviewing their risk assessments. These are proportionate and allow a degree of risk taking behaviour to encourage young people to develop coping skills whilst protecting them from harm. Staff work with young people to keep them safe. One young person no longer associates with certain people who put them at risk. This is as a result of staff working closely with them to alert them to the dangers involved. The young person said 'I want to respect myself.' The home has a range of robust safeguarding policies and procedures in respect of child protection, handling allegations and recruitment. Staff are trained in safeguarding and are clear about their role in the safeguarding process. Although there have been no concerns or allegations, staff have undergone refresher training and discussed safeguarding scenarios in team meetings to ensure they maintain their knowledge. Robust recruitment processes and the recording and monitoring of visitors to the home further ensure young people are protected from significant harm.

There is a very good procedure and protocol for young people missing from care. Staff are aware of factors that can trigger absences from the home and implement strategies to ensure young people are kept safe. As a result, there have been no incidents of young people missing from the home since the last inspection.

Regular fire drills are held and fire alarm systems are checked as required. The home has a fire risk assessment and health and safety assessment for the building and its equipment. Regular maintenance checks are performed. This ensures the building is safe and appropriately secure.

Leadership and management

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

Young people live in a home that continues to improve particularly with regard to safety and outcomes. The home has met the requirements and recommendation made at the last inspection. The Statement of Purpose now reflects the service provided and the manager submits a regular review of the quality of care and the welfare of young people. Young people know their views are taken into account.

No requirements are made as a result of this inspection, but there are three shortfalls in relation to national minimum standards. However, these shortfalls do not have a significant negative impact on the welfare or safety of young people.

The manager is qualified and very experienced. They provide strong leadership and

motivate staff to continue to improve the quality of care provided. The manager has ideas to develop the home and improve a number of areas, but has no written development plan for the home.

Young people are provided with good information about the home in an easy to read welcome guide. However, the contact details for Ofsted and other agencies are not sufficiently detailed or have been omitted. The home has a comprehensive Statement of Purpose that provides a detailed account of the service provided. This is regularly reviewed to ensure it remains accurate.

The service is staffed by suitable personnel who are well qualified and have a range of skills and experiences. The staff rota ensures young people's needs are met through the provision of sufficient staffing. One member of staff said: 'It is a good ratio of staff, it means lots of one-to-one time with young people, this builds relationships.' Staff receive a good induction into the home and continue to develop their skills and knowledge through the provision of a wide range of training opportunities.

Staff benefit from excellent supervision arrangements. Managerial supervision is regular, of good quality and well recorded. In addition, staff benefit from clinical supervision from the home's psychologist. Staff make good use of peer forums and staff meetings. This ensures staff are supported to deliver an effective service to young people.

Rigorous monitoring procedures examine the quality of the service provided, the progress of young people and ensure young people are kept safe. The registered provider undertakes required visits to the home and carries out checks to ensure the welfare of young people is monitored. The registered provider consults with young people to identify any areas for development to improve the quality of care provided. The manager monitors records kept by the home to identify any concerns, patterns or trends. Reviews of the quality of care and progress made are sent to Ofsted as required. Young people's case records are clear and kept securely and contribute to an understanding of their life. Information sharing is in accordance with data protection and young people are made aware of confidentiality, record keeping and sharing of information. The manager is aware of the process to follow with regard to notification of significant events should the need arise. As a result, young people are consulted about the quality of care they receive, how effectively their needs are met, and their welfare and protection is monitored.

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.