

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Susan Southey
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This privately owned children's home is registered to accommodate three boys with emotional or behavioural difficulties. Education is provided through the home's independent school and local education authority provision, when possible.

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 **outstanding**.

The manager provides strong leadership and has made positive changes since her recent appointment to improve the outcomes for young people. Development plans are in place and the manager demonstrates commitment to making on-going improvements. Furthermore, she has submitted an application to register as manager with Ofsted.

Young people are provided with exceptional care from professional and competent staff. The care provision provided at this home promotes successful moves to independence. Staff place young people's welfare at the heart of their practice and are committed to all young people reaching their full potential and having successful moves to adulthood.

Communication between young people and staff is excellent and young people have extensive opportunities to have their views heard. Through daily community, meetings and regular key worker sessions young people are able to make choices and requests. Wherever possible staff grant young people's wishes.

The home has been redecorated and provides young people with a pleasant homely environment. One toilet was not appropriately cleaned. However, the rest of the home was clean and hygienic. Therefore this has minimal impact on the welfare of young people.

Staff encourage young people to communicate effectively to promote positive behaviour. This they achieve by giving young people individual time to explore their

feelings and find strategies that support the reduction of challenging behaviour. This in conjunction with positive rewards and sanctions proves successful as young people do not engage in criminal or risk taking activities and behave appropriately.

Young people make excellent progress in education and training. They all attend regularly and achieve recognised qualifications. In addition to their formal education young people are supported to succeed with the provision of qualified tutors who assist young people to reach their full academic potential.

Vigilant staff make regular safety checks in the home to support the safety of young people. Furthermore, they produce highly effective risk assessments that are adapted regularly to acknowledge young people's increasing independence. Risk management is effective as young people stay safe both in the home and wider community.

Young people understand the importance of healthy lifestyles and their actions support good health. They are able to prepare healthy meals and participate in regular physical activity. Furthermore, young people tend an allotment, which produces fresh produce to use in meal preparation.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure the home provides a comfortable and homely environment with particular regard to the cleanliness of all areas in the home. (NMS 10.2)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **outstanding**.

Young people in this home have exceptionally positive relationships with each other and staff. They spend time together, both individually and as a group engaging in a range of purposeful activities. Examples of this are football, gym sessions and bike rides. These opportunities support young people to build effective relationships in the home. Young people's opportunities to increase their social circles in the community are enhanced through regular attendance in education and training programmes. They have many friends outside the home environment and are able to sustain these friendships. These young people are confident in their ability to interact positively with others in different settings which promotes social inclusion.

Young people make choices that promote healthy lifestyles. They select healthy foods and are able to prepare nutritious meals. No young people choose to smoke and they engage in regular active pursuits that promote fitness. One example of how young people pursue healthy lifestyles is spending time at the homes allotment. This endorses both physical activity and healthy diets with the fresh produce used to

prepare meals. Young people at this home take responsibility for their own good health with guidance from committed staff who educate young people to make positive choices that promote good health.

Young people in education and training make outstanding progress. They complete statutory education and are in further education to promote continued success. All young people attend regularly and engage very well to complete their courses and work placements. They achieve recognised qualifications to promote greater choice when applying for jobs. One young person said he was really enjoying college and is going to take another course next year. Furthermore, young people learn practical skills in commercial establishments. Young people continue their studies in the home environment. This they achieve by taking full advantage of the professional support provided at the home's educational facility. The enthusiastic tutor helps young people with additional literacy and mathematics lessons and guides them to complete course work set by college staff. Young people's excellent success in this area of their development will support them to secure employment in their chosen careers.

Young people have contact with their families and those that are important to them wherever possible. Staff build fruitful relationships with families and support young people to preserve contact. Young people have chances to invite family and friends to social gatherings for special occasions. This affords them opportunities to spend time with those that are important to them. Young people are supported to retain a sense of belonging and understanding of their background when they have contact with individuals that are important to them.

Quality of care

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

Young people receive exceptional support from staff to assist successful moves to independence. Staff are committed to all young people achieving their full potential in all aspects of their lives. Professionals are extremely complementary to the staff at the home. One social worker said, 'The progress the young person has made since moving to the home is outstanding.'

Dedicated staff implement comprehensive pathway plans. These effectively support young people's journey to adulthood. The plans set out goals for young people to assist self-reliance. Staff monitor young people's progress consistently and discuss progress with them at regular key worker sessions. This ensures that the effectiveness of the plans are robustly monitored. Staff share their findings with placing authorities in regular written reports. This practice enables social workers to amend targets if they do not meet young people's needs. Young people have greater chance of successful moves to independence when they have effective support to become independent.

Young people say staff consider their views important and they make a considerable contribution to the home. They are consistently involved in all aspects of the day-to-day running of the home. Through daily community meetings, young people make

decisions on how they wish to spend their free time. In addition, this forum gives young people opportunity to choose holidays and discuss menu selections. Furthermore, young people receive regular individual key worker sessions to discuss their future and concerns. This gives young people chance to talk to staff they trust about their wishes and feelings.

Young people respond very well to consistent boundaries. They are in place to promote positive behaviour. Staff are consistent in their practice which effectively promotes good conduct. Young people receive positive rewards for good behaviour and receive appropriate sanctions when discipline is required. Staff and young people have excellent communication and discussions take place following incidents when young people present with challenging behaviours. Young people have opportunities to reflect on their behaviour and explore the reasons for their outbursts. Together young people and staff seek strategies to positively manage difficult situations. This behaviour management technique proves successful as young people are mainly well behaved and physical interventions are extremely rare.

Young people say they know how to make complaints and can gain access to information in the children's guide, which clearly identifies the process. In addition, staff promote young people's right to complain. When young people raise concerns, staff treat their grievances with respect and take appropriate action by conducting enquiries to resolve the issues. Young people feel empowered when they have appropriate information to endorse their right to complain and staff take their criticisms seriously.

The communal areas of the home are nicely decorated and young people have personalised their rooms to reflect their own identity. The house provides a warm and homely environment for young people to live. Most areas of the home are clean and well maintained however, the ground floor toilet had some dust present on the floor and skirting boards. However, other areas of the home were clean. Therefore, this has minimal impact on the comfort of young people.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people say they are protected by staff. Staff demonstrate a sound knowledge of child protection practice and have received training. This supports young people to stay safe.

All young people have built extremely positive relationships with staff. This supports young people to stay safe. They are able to make requests to have increased freedom. This supports young people to take risks appropriate to their age and development. Staff listen to young people and agree strategies to keep them safe. Then in partnership with other agencies, they adjust young people's risk assessments to meet their changing needs. This enables young people to engage in activities that present potential hazards with effective risk management in place. Young people

respond exceptionally well to the homes risk management practice and do not engage in risk taking behaviours. Furthermore, young people learn to take responsibility for their own safety and gain ability to keep themselves safe.

Young people have individualised risk assessments that are comprehensive and support their safety both in the community and at home. Efficient staff monitor assessments regularly to evaluate their success. Where risk management is not effective, staff amend them to reduce risks for young people. In addition, environmental risk assessments support young people to live in a safe environment. These include the safekeeping of chemicals and sharp objects. Furthermore, vigilant staff keep the home free from hazards with regular maintenance to support the safety of young people.

Young people stay safe and do not go missing from the home. However, should an incident happen there are protocols in place, agreed by the local police constabulary. Each young person has a profile on file with their description and photograph should they leave the home without permission. Furthermore, staff are knowledgeable of the policies and procedures to be followed should young people go missing. This supports young people's safe return.

Managers operate vigorous safe recruitment practice to safeguard young people. Potential employees have checks carried out prior to their commencement of employment. These robust procedures protect young people from individuals who may wish them harm.

Staff regularly check emergency and fire equipment to promote the safety of young people. In addition, professional safety inspectors make annual checks on fire, electrical and gas equipment. There are current certificates on file to verify the home has met safety standards. Young people are also educated to stay safe in the home. They participate in regular fire drills and have a sound knowledge of evacuation procedures in the event of a fire. This promotes the safety of young people should a fire or other dangerous incident take place in the home.

Leadership and management

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

The manager is extremely experienced and provides strong leadership to her competent staff team. Recently recruited to her new role the manager has submitted an application to Ofsted to apply for registration. Young people knew the manager well prior to her appointment as she previously had a managerial role in the organisation. This provided young people with continuity when the Registered Manager left.

Staff and managers receive on-going training to support their professional development. Care staff have completed or are taking professional qualifications to assist enhancement of their knowledge and skills. In addition, the manager and team leaders are studying for recognised management diplomas. This shows the homes

commitment to having staff appropriately trained to provide care for young people.

Staff say they are well supported by the managers and team leaders. They receive regular supervision and annual appraisals from trained senior staff. In addition, staff benefit from the managers 'open door' policy, which enables them to gain advice throughout the day. When the manager is absent, capable team leaders give this assistance and provide guidance to staff to support high quality care provision for young people.

Monitoring of the home takes place monthly with visits from an independent visitor who completes a report of their findings. The manager tackles any actions requiring attention in a timely manner. Furthermore, she consistently undertakes internal monitoring. The manager analyses information gained from these quality assurance practices to produce six monthly reports. These identify patterns and inform the manager of any strengths and weaknesses in the service provision. This supports the manager to make positive changes to address shortfalls.

The manager demonstrates commitment to making continued enhancements to the service and development plans are in place. The manager has been pro-active in implementing the plan with many targets met. Examples of goals met by the manager from the plan are the re-decoration of the home and enhanced training opportunities to promote staff development. Changes made that support improved outcomes for young people include the development and implementation of pathway plans that support young people's on-going needs and are in line with local authority plans. This promotes intense support for young people to have successful moves to independence.

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* and the evaluation schedule for the inspection of children's homes.