

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Sarah Oldham
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This home is privately owned and provides care and accommodation for up to five young males. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. There is a small school on site which acquired DFE registration in July 2012.

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 all aspects of their development. They benefit from individualised care and consistent levels of support to meet their needs and receive positive support to address their previous offending behaviour. They have excellent relationships with staff who have a range of qualifications, skills and knowledge to provide effective care.

Young people live in a homely environment that is safe. The views of the young people are gained through a number of different ways and this contributes to their sense of being valued. Anti-discriminatory practice runs through all aspects of the day to day care and underpins the therapeutic process.

Robust, strong leadership and management within the home ensures positive outcomes for young people remains central to all aspects of the care and support provided. Young people say that they feel happy, safe and well-cared for and can see the achievements and progress they are making.

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people enjoy good physical and emotional health through attending routine health care appointments and receiving treatment as required. In addition to this, therapeutic support ensures that the emotional and psychological needs of young

people are effectively met.

They enjoy a healthy diet and take part in the planning, shopping and preparation of meals. This enables them to develop skills in budgeting and increase their understanding in how to maintain a healthy lifestyle. They also undertake other household tasks appropriate to their age and stage of development in preparation for independence. One young person said, 'I keep my room tidy, help with my laundry and make sure that I wash and iron my school uniform ready for school each week.'

All young people make good progress with their educational attainment from their initial starting point. One young person said, 'I'm now enjoying school very much and my teachers say that I am making good progress.'

Contact with family, where appropriate, enables young people to maintain a sense of their heritage and background.

Young people contribute to weekly house meetings where they discuss a range of issues, including what they would like to do with regards activities and to discuss any issues regarding group living arrangements. This enables young people to make a positive contribution to the running of the home.

Young people take part in a range of activities within the home and also within the community. This includes cricket, football, drama and sewing classes. This supports them to enjoy good physical health and develop new skills. They also undertake fund raising activities and contribute proceeds to recognised charitable organisations. Young people say that they enjoy doing this as it gives them an opportunity to contribute to projects for other people.

Placing authority social workers and Independent Reviewing Officers who contributed their views prior to and during the inspection speak very positively of the progress made by young people. One social worker said, 'The outcomes for the young person are exceptionally good. School attendance and attainment have greatly improved and (name) is a very happy and settled young person.' Another social worker said, 'It is really positive to see the progress that (name) has made. The care, therapeutic and educational support provided has made a significant difference for him.'

Quality of care

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

Young people have comprehensive care plans in place that provide detailed information about all their care needs and how these will be met during their time at the home. Staff have a clear understanding of the specific needs of the young people and this enables them to be cared for effectively in a nurturing and structured environment. Care plans are developed in consultation with placing authority social workers, a specialist therapeutic team and through discussion with the young people. The residential staff, education staff and therapy staff work closely to provide

consistent care and support to enable young people to address their offending behaviours. Care plans are kept under review. This enables young people to have a good understanding of the individual progress that they are making and provides details of on-going goals to work towards. Young people say that they have positive relationships with staff and feel supported exceptionally well. One young person said, 'The care and support that I have from staff is brilliant.'

Young people are consulted about all aspects of their care and daily lives. Weekly house meetings enable them to contribute their views to the running of the home, support them with decision making and working with one another in a supportive environment. They say that staff listen to them and this makes them feel valued as individuals. They are aware that if they have any concerns or complaints, they can discuss these through a number of different channels, including verbal and written means and are confident that the home will respond appropriately.

Staff encourage and support young people to keep healthy. This includes ensuring that they are registered with appropriate health care professionals; that they are supported to attend health care appointments and therapeutic support is provided on a consistent and regular basis. Physical exercise is promoted through a range of activities including football, walking and focussed exercises. Information, support and guidance is provided about healthy eating. These measures enable young people to make informed choices to maintain a healthy diet and lifestyle.

Young people attend education on a consistent basis, either at the on-site school or external colleges. Staff provide positive support with education, ensuring that homework is consistently undertaken and additional support provided to compliment learning; for example; assistance with reading to build confidence. Discussions with education, residential and therapeutic staff ensure cohesive working practice to support on-going educational attainment.

The home is well maintained and has ample space to meet young people's individual needs for personal space, leisure activities and education facilities.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

The home provides a physically and emotionally safe environment for young people. They say that they feel exceptionally safe and comfortable living at home. One young person said, 'Staff really look after us well and explain the importance of staying safe.'

Young people do not go missing from the home. However, staff have undertaken comprehensive training in safeguarding and child protection and know what to do in the event of this happening. They have robust procedures in place and excellent links with the local police to further underpin their safeguarding practice.

Bullying is not tolerated at the home and young people and staff discuss this in

weekly meetings. Young people say that they do not feel bullied but if they had any concerns they would feel able to talk to staff or the manager about it and know that something would be done about it. One young person said, 'It is really important to care and respect one another's feelings. I wouldn't like to be bullied so why should I bully anyone else.'

Young people are effectively supported in managing their behaviours. Consistent expectations and boundaries provide a foundation for this along with the positive relationships that staff and young people have. Staff know the young people and their individual needs well. They are aware at an early stage when the young people are experiencing difficulties and intervene swiftly to prevent behaviours escalating. The need for restraint is rare and only used if a young person is at risk of harming themselves or others. Clear and detailed records are maintained, including detailed discussion with the young person involved. This enables them to reflect on their behaviours and record their opinions. The use of sanctions or consequences are clearly discussed with young people. Records demonstrate that they are fair and proportionate and this is a view held by the young people.

Recruitment and selection procedures are robust. All staff have references checked and any gaps in employment explored. Criminal record checks are completed prior to any staff member commencing duty. These measures demonstrate that the home has taken reasonable steps to ensure that people who are unsuitable to work with vulnerable children are not appointed.

The home provides a physically safe environment for the young people. Regular health and safety checks are undertaken and records maintained. These include regular fire checks and fire drills. Young people are included in these drills. This ensures that they are aware of what to do in the event of a fire. A comprehensive maintenance programme is in place to ensure that any repairs are undertaken promptly. These measures support the safety of the young people.

Leadership and management

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

The home has a Registered Manager in post who is suitably qualified and experienced and provides strong and effective leadership. The manager demonstrates a clear vision and direction of the service and this is highly valued by staff and young people. Effective monitoring undertaken by the manager and through Regulation 33 visits undertaken by an independent visitor, demonstrates the on-going development of the service and evidences the positive outcomes for young people.

Young people benefit from a stable staff team who have high aspirations for the young people and provide a continuity of care and support. Staff have a range of experience, qualifications and knowledge that further supports and underpins the ethos of the service. They work in partnership with educational and therapeutic staff to ensure that the holistic needs of young people are met. Training and development

opportunities for staff are good. Currently, half of the staff team hold a recognised National Vocational Qualification level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People, with the remaining staff currently undertaking the Diploma in Caring for Children and Young People. A comprehensive induction and in-house training further supports the child centred practice of staff.

Staff say that they feel exceptionally well supported within their role. They receive regular individual supervision on a monthly basis. In addition to this they receive fortnightly team supervision with the therapists to enable them to have the opportunity to discuss and develop their practice in providing effective care and support to young people. Records of supervision are clearly maintained. An appraisal system is in place and will be implemented once the home has been operating for twelve months following the full refurbishment. These measures ensure that staff have comprehensive training and support to meet the needs of the young people.

The home's Statement of Purpose is comprehensive and is available to interested parties. It is kept under review to ensure that information is current. Young people receive a children's guide and this explains what it is like living at the home and basic house rules. Young people say that along with the visits to the home prior to moving in, this document is helpful and clear.

Record keeping is comprehensive, enabling young people to understand their history, their current care needs and decision making processes as well as on-going plans for the future. Discussion with young people identified that they feel included within all aspects of planning for their care and future. All records are maintained securely and young people's files are comprehensive and well ordered. Key workers undertake regular file administration and the Registered Manager undertakes file audits to ensure that information is appropriately stored.

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.