

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Pete Hylton
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is registered to provide care for three young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. It is one of several homes operated by an independent provider.

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 at this home. They are supported in accessing a range of activities and make good progress with their education. Relationships between staff and young people are positive. A culture of mutual respect, tolerance and understanding ensures that young people feel valued and listened to. Young people have positive views about the home and the care that they receive.

Young people are safe at the home. The staff team are vigilant to the individual needs and vulnerabilities of young people. Excellent relationships with the local police and safeguarding services ensure that concerns are robustly managed. The safety of young people is a priority for the staff team.

The leadership and management of the home are excellent. Staff are motivated, clear in their duties and well supported by senior staff in the home. The Registered Manager regularly checks all records and any shortfalls are swiftly and appropriately resolved. Robust monitoring of the home ensures that the home continues to make progress and identify areas for further development.

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people make good progress at the home. In some cases, there has been exceptional progress in relation to young people's starting points. Where young people have found it difficult to access education or build appropriate relationships,

they now do so with success.

Young people maintain close links with their families, where it is appropriate to do so. This ensures that the emotional resilience of young people is promoted and young people feel emotionally secure. Young people also develop friendships within the local community and this further enhances the emotional resilience of young people. Young people are confident in developing their social networks and as a result, are forming positive links with their peers in and outside of the home. When asked about life in the home, a young person commented that they are, 'really active, do loads of things and I enjoy the activities.' Furthermore, young people take part in new experiences as a result of staying at the home. For example, young people are enabled to go on holiday and have overnight stays with their friends. This enables young people to take part in a range of age-appropriate activities and further enhances their outcomes.

Young people enjoy a range of activities. Regular trips out ensure all young people are able to access the local community and develop their knowledge of local services and facilities. This is further enhanced through young people planning their own meals and shopping for the required items. This develops the skills, abilities and confidence of young people in preparation for adulthood. A young person commented that they are, 'able to cook for myself and this is helping me to be more ready for moving on.'

Young people feel involved in the running of the home. Their views are regularly sought and acted upon. This creates an atmosphere where young people feel respected and valued. As a result of a trusting and open culture, young people make significant progress in discussing their concerns and sharing their anxieties. Risk-taking behaviour is reducing as a result because young people feel safe and secure at the home.

All young people are engaged in appropriate educational activity and make good progress. Where young people have faced difficulties with their education prior to arriving at the home, they are now settling into positive routines and engaging with their timetables. As a result, they are working towards appropriate qualifications and are forming realistic career goals.

Where appropriate to do so, young people take responsibility for making and maintaining their own health appointments. All young people are up to date with their health appointments. As a result of positive relationships with the staff team, young people are able to discuss their health needs and access relevant services of support. As a result, young people understand the importance of maintaining healthy lifestyles and maintain good health.

Quality of care

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

Young people's care plans are detailed, individualised and regularly reviewed. This

ensures that the needs of young people are clearly recorded and met. Regular key worker meetings discuss the choices, views and wishes of young people. As a result, young people feel that their opinions are valued and listened to. A young person commented, 'the staff help me to sort things out.' The staff team provide highly individualised care to young people. The Registered Manager commented, 'we completely personalise the young people's care. We treat young people with respect, we value them for who they are.' The individual characteristics of young people are respected, celebrated and provided for. For example, where young people express a desire to follow their faith, the staff team support the purchase of specific items for this purpose. Young people are treated with dignity and understanding. Relationships between staff and young people are highly positive and built on mutual respect and trust. A head teacher commented that the staff are, 'effective at helping young people to make progress.'

All young people are appropriately supported with education. Where young people face difficulties with accessing an educational placement, the staff team work closely with placing authorities to provide suitable alternative education. This ensures that young people are enabled to reach their potential. A head teacher commented, 'the staff are interactive and support young people to make progress.' Young people are fully supported to explore their vocational choices and understanding. For example, young people are supported in accessing voluntary work in the local community and in completing additional jobs around the home. This improves young people's confidence, self-esteem and helps to prepare them for adulthood. An independent reviewing officer commented that the home are, 'helping the young person to develop his independence.' The staff team are committed to providing opportunities for young people to make progress in all areas of their lives.

The health needs of young people are identified and acted upon. All young people are up-to-date with their medical appointments and fully supported in addressing their health needs. Where young people arrive at the home with incomplete vaccinations and outstanding medical appointments, the staff team ensure that remedial action is taken. This ensures that young people's health is further promoted. Medication is safely stored and appropriately administered. All staff are trained in administering medication and do so safely and conscientiously. Regular audits of the home's medication ensure that any errors are quickly identified and resolved. This ensures that young people are able to maintain and improve their health in an appropriately safe environment.

Young people are fully encouraged and supported to develop their independence skills. Young people plan, shop for and prepare their own meals. This develops skills in budgeting and household management. As a result, young people feel ready for adulthood and are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to help them make a positive transition.

The home's complaints policy is available to all young people and they are encouraged to voice their worries and concerns. There have been no complaints from young people since the last inspection. This is further underpinned through an informative young person's guide to the home. This document explains the routines

and expectations of the home. This ensures that young people are clear on what is expected and how they can access services of support. The provision of a freely available telephone for young people ensures that they can access services of support. This is further enhanced through advocacy services offered to young people. A head teacher commented, 'the staff are very good at approaching me to discuss the needs of young people and how these can be met.'

The home environment is well maintained and young people feel part of the home. They are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms and enjoy spending time with staff and each other in the home's communal areas. As a result, they develop a sense of belonging and attachment to the home.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Restraint is rarely used and only for the purposes of keeping young people safe from harm. The recording of restraint is effective and explores and records the views of young people. This enables the Registered Manager to review these incidents and explore any patterns or trends. The staff team work hard with young people to support positive behaviour. The use of rewards and positive reinforcement ensures that young people's positive behaviour is recognised and rewarded. As a result, young people develop their maturity and understanding of socially acceptable behaviours. Where young people display negative behaviour, appropriate and fair sanctions are used. Incidents of challenging behaviour are reducing in the home as a result of consistently applied behaviour management strategies. As a result, young people feel safe, respected and treated as young adults. A social worker commented, 'the staff are extremely consistent with their behaviour management.'

Regular informal visits from police officers have enabled young people to build a positive and trusting relationship with the police. A local authority safeguarding manager commented, 'any concerns about the safety of young people are quickly shared. The home has excellent relationships with the local police.' This also ensures that young people are provided with further sources of support should they wish to raise a concern. A police officer commented, 'the home work really well with us to reduce the risks that young people face.' Risk assessment practice is robust and identifies the vulnerabilities of young people. As a result, staff are clear in their duties and consistent in their approach. This further promotes the safety of young people as they experience familiarity, clear expectations and appropriate boundaries.

Where young people pose specific risks and vulnerabilities, the staff team ensure that close liaison with appropriate agencies is maintained to share concerns and strategies. A local authority safeguarding manager commented, 'the home are fantastic at working with us' and that 'concerns are quickly shared.' Young people are robustly protected from harm as a result and their safety is at the heart of staff practice. A social worker commented, 'the young person has strong feeling of safety at the home.' Where serious events occur in the home, immediate action is taken to

ensure the safety of young people. The Registered Manager ensures that all concerns are communicated to the relevant services. This further promotes an environment where the safety of young people is given the highest priority.

The home is safely maintained and regularly checked. All required checks on gas and electrical installations are in place and regular servicing of fire detection equipment further protects young people. Regular fire drills, including drills in evening times, take place in the home. This ensures that all young people and staff know how to safely evacuate in the event of fire. Young people are safe, and feel safe, at the home.

Leadership and management

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

This home was last inspected in January 2013 and was judged to be making satisfactory progress. Two requirements and one recommendation were made. The home has made the required improvements; the Statement of Purpose has been amended and educational routines in the home are similarly improved. Furthermore, young people now access a wider range of activities. As a result of these improvements, young people benefit from a home that better promotes their educational and recreational needs.

The home has made further improvements since the last inspection. For example, young people have chosen colour schemes for communal areas and staff have completed additional training in safeguarding. Improvements are further identified through regular monitoring visits from the organisation. This ensures that the home is regularly audited and any areas for development are swiftly acted upon.

The staff team feel supported and valued by the Registered Manager. Regular, high quality supervision ensures that all staff are able to discuss their practice and identify areas for development. As a result, staff feel motivated and confident in their duties. Comments from staff include; 'the support from the manager is excellent', 'the training is really good and helps us to develop our skills' and 'we work hard as a staff team, we never give up.'

The home is well-maintained. Health and safety is given a high priority and the Registered Manager ensures that the home meets the needs of young people. Regular checks ensure that all areas of the home are safe and any concerns are swiftly identified and resolved. The home's Statement of Purpose is up-to-date and includes all required details. This ensures that young people, parents and placing authorities are aware of the home's ethos, aims and objectives. The Registered Manager is committed to working openly to celebrate progress and address any concerns. Robust monitoring of young people's files ensures that all information is appropriately updated. All files are securely held and this further protects and promotes the dignity and privacy of young people. Visitors to the home are effectively checked and, where necessary, chaperoned.

The home's development plan identifies strengths and areas for the home to develop. Targets for developing the service demonstrate a commitment to further developing the home for the benefit of young people. For example, the Registered Manager has enabled staff to complete additional and specialised training in safeguarding. This ensures that specific risks and vulnerabilities that young people may face are managed and catered for. The Registered Manager is committed to further improving the home and is constantly reviewing processes to ensure that high standards are maintained at all times. This is further enhanced by the manager's own monitoring of the home against regulations and national minimum standards. The Registered Manager ensures that all required monitoring reports are completed in a timely fashion and sent to the appropriate bodies.

The progress that young people make is robustly recorded and monitored by the Registered Manager. Regular reports to parents and placing authorities identify progress and highlight areas for development. This ensures that all relevant parties are informed of any concerns relating to young people's progress. Furthermore, the Registered Manager evaluates the progress that young people make and uses this information to review the care provided. As a result, young people receive care based on their individual needs and abilities.

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.