

## Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Inspector</b>	Caroline Oldham
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<b>Provision subtype</b>	Children's home

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## Service information

### Brief description of the service

This children's home is registered to provide specialist care and accommodation for up to 3 young people. It is operated by a private provider.

Young people may have a combination of mental health, psychological, emotional or complex care needs that present challenging behaviour. The home's programme of care incorporates a structured balance of education, recreation and therapeutic interventions tailored to meet individual needs.

### 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**.

The well-established staff team know the young people very well and provide personalised, well-planned care. Each young person has a clear very detailed care plan designed to meet their specific needs. Given their starting points, young people are making good progress and their confidence and self-awareness is improving.

Young people generally respond well to the clear rules and expectations. However, where a sanction is imposed young people are not encouraged to have their views recorded to enable them to reflect upon the consequences of their behaviour. Young people re-engage with education and make good progress. There are opportunities to prepare for independence to support young people to learn the skills they need in preparation for independent living. Some young people's psychological health needs are very complex, and these impact on their general health and well-being. The home is proactive in engaging with specialist agencies to offer support and advice.

Leaders and the manager have thorough systems in place to monitor progress, and are fully aware of the home's strengths and weaknesses. However, the manager's overview reports are not submitted to Ofsted on a regular basis. The Regulation 33 visits rarely include interviews with young people, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home, which limits the opportunity of the visitor to form an opinion about the standard of care. The Statement of Purpose does not accurately

reflect the current care practices; this limits social workers, other professionals, parents and young people having a good understanding of the purpose of the home. Staff feel well supported through team meetings, training, and formal supervision.

There are comprehensive, up-to-date risk assessments and well-considered safe working practices, which help to keep young people safe. Risk-taking behaviour is diminishing, and young people are learning to keep themselves safe. Overall, young people make progress in keeping themselves safe, and avoid dangers.

## 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
33 (2001)	ensure that the person carrying out the visit shall interview, with their consent and in private, such of the children accommodated there, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as appears necessary in order to form an opinion of the standard of care provided by the home. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))	29/11/2013

### Recommendations

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

- ensure that the aims and objectives of the Statement of Purpose show how the service will meet outcomes for children (NMS 13.2)
- ensure that the system under regulation 34 enables the provider to identify any trends and issues of concern so that all those involved in running and working in the home can continually improve the quality of care they are providing. It will be good practice for these reports to be completed at six monthly intervals and a copy of every report should be sent to HMCI within 28 days of completion (Volume 5 3.14)
- ensure that where any sanction is used, children are encouraged to have their views recorded in the records kept by the home. (NMS 3.18)

### Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people come to the home with complex needs relating to their mental health or emotional and behavioural difficulties. Through the dedication of the staff team, and the support of other specialist professionals, young people form and sustain friendships and attachments. They learn to develop social skills and interact more effectively, this enables them to reintegrate into mainstream activities such as school and clubs.

Young people have made significant strides to re-engage in education after significant periods of non-attendance in school. All young people are currently in education. They are either undergoing an educational assessment, or attending full-time mainstream placements. The home works closely with schools and colleges and they work together to support young people; consequently young people gain in confidence and are motivated to learn.

Young people's health is good, and all are encouraged to eat a good balanced diet and enjoy the broad range of physical activities. Young people are offered appropriate psychological support and specialist therapies including psychotherapy and play therapy. This work helps them to deal with issues that are troubling them and to make good choices for their health and well-being. Consequently young people are learning about leading a healthy lifestyle.

Young people enjoy opportunities for menu planning, shopping and cooking, keeping their rooms clean and doing their laundry, according to their age and their plan for independence. This is managed very well, and sensitive consideration is given to help young people gain many of the practical and financial skills they will need to manage well in the community.

Staff work closely with social workers and family members to help young people to maintain appropriate contact; this may be through phone calls and visits. This ensures that young people maintain meaningful relationships and learn to understand their past. They welcome visitors in to the home and enable family members to enjoy celebrations with the young people that are important for them. Consequently young people maintain contact with family, friends and other people who are important to them.

## **Quality of care**

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

The staff have a comprehensive understanding of the complex needs of the young people in their care, and this helps them to form sound and appropriate relationships with them. Staff are skilled at using these relationships to help young people to develop confidence and feel secure. Young people learn to respect themselves and others. For example, they cause less harm to themselves and become more tolerant of others.

Young people are actively involved in decisions that affect the day-to-day running of

the home through weekly meetings to discuss any issues they might have. These issues are diverse; for example, issues raised range from the use of the car, to their desire for some redecoration, or a visit from a Pets As Therapy dog, or acquiring a pin board. This helps the young people to see this provision as their home, and to see how their involvement can influence decisions.

All young people have very clear care plans that set out their specific, individualised targets and objectives. The plans include any relevant information about psychological issues, religious and cultural backgrounds and needs. Files also include up-to-date risk assessments, both generic and specific, and cover activities and clinical issues. There are daily evaluation sheets which include the food eaten, appointments, contacts, health and hygiene and medication; they provide a good overview of the day. These provide evidence for the monthly progress summary, which is a very comprehensive overview covering staying safe, health, making positive contributions, enjoying and achieving and economic achievement. There is very close monitoring of young people's moods and triggers for behaviour. The files are clear and contain all the relevant information; consequently, staff and young people can see clearly that the issues identified in plans are being followed through and that young people are making progress.

The home has good working relationships with other agencies, such as, Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAHMS), play therapists, and education providers. This ensures that young people receive the necessary support from specialists to enable them to progress.

When a young person is initially admitted, they are registered with local health professionals. When young people have medical needs these are swiftly responded to and appropriate appointments are arranged; this ensures identified concerns are responded to fully. In particular the staff team are very proactive in ensuring that young people have good mental health support. All young people are encouraged to be active such as going to the gym, ice skating and walking. All young people are encouraged to eat a healthy balanced diet and have plenty of support and opportunities to be healthy.

Social workers speak very highly about the home, they say that the staff are very supportive of young people's needs and keep them motivated with different activities. Social workers are kept regularly updated via email and phone calls, if necessary on a daily basis. They say that the staff give consistent messages to the young people, and young people make fantastic progress: 'She is a different child; her confidence has grown.' And; 'X has come on in leaps and bounds... they (the staff) have helped to make a big difference (to X).'

The home is well placed within walking distance of the centre of the town where there are shops and other facilities. The layout is very spacious and recent photos of the young people and samples of fantastic art work personalise the environment. There is a separate, self-contained annex which may be used to facilitate young people's independence, or where young people need more individualised care. Outside there is a garden with a picnic table for the summer months. The home is

well maintained, and young people take care of their environment; this ensures the home remains welcoming and safe for young people.

## **Safeguarding children and young people**

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

When young people come to this home, thorough, comprehensive risk assessments are undertaken, and these are regularly reviewed to help staff to manage young people's behaviours and keep them safe. All the staff receive safeguarding training and they are clear about how they would deal with any issues of concern. Young people confirm that there are no issues of bullying within the home. The staff team work very hard to keep young people safe, while giving them some independence. It is a real credit to the home, and to the young people, that young people rarely go missing from this home. Young people reduce their risk taking behaviour and they say that they feel safe and secure.

Young people are clear about the rules and expectations of the home and generally they behave very well and respect other people and property. Since the last inspection it has not been necessary for staff to use any form of physical intervention when caring for young people. Sanctions are very rare, as there is an excellent reward system in place to reward good behaviour and encourage cooperation. However, where sanctions are used, there is a lack of opportunity for young people to reflect the consequences of the sanction. This means that young people are unable to learn from the sanctions and make progress.

Recent recruitment and perusal of staff files demonstrates a rigorous recruitment and selection process. Comprehensive checks are made to ensure that young people are always cared for by appropriately experienced staff. Staff turnover is low, and this ensures that young people are cared for by a consistent staff team who know them well.

The environment is monitored by a system of internal safety checks and risk assessments. In addition, services such as electricity, electrical appliances and fire fighting equipment are regularly checked by the appropriate professional companies. Consequently, children and young people live, and are cared for, in a safe environment.

## **Leadership and management**

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

The staff team are very well supported, through frequent formal supervision, comprehensive training and regular staff meetings. Staff meetings are a good opportunity to discuss the care of each young person in detail. The expertise of the manager enables staff to reflect on therapeutic and nurturing interventions. All staff take on additional responsibilities and talk with enthusiasm about their work, for example, they have worked with the young people to put together an excellent

selection of books, and a wall display of famous people who have various disabilities. Staff say that they work well together and social workers confirm they are a consistent team.

There were no requirements or recommendations made at the last inspection. There are management monitoring systems on all aspect of the running of the home, and these are being further developed. However, the monitoring report carried out under Regulation 34 is not sent to Ofsted on a six monthly basis limiting the regulator's overview of the care being provided. The registered person carries out monthly monitoring visits under Regulation 33 which are submitted on a regular basis. Although the visits rarely include interviews with young people, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home; this limits the opportunity of the visitor to form an opinion of the standard of care.

Young people are aware of how to raise a complaint or concern, but have not made any complaints about the home. Significant events are very rare, but these are always notified appropriately and in a timely manner to the relevant authorities, and appropriate action is taken following an incident.

There is a comprehensive and detailed Statement of Purpose which is updated regularly. However, it does not accurately reflect the care practices offered to the current group of young people. This means young people, parents and placing authorities knowledge of the provision is limited.

It is a credit to the staff team that staff work consistently and enthusiastically. Good staffing levels ensure there is plenty of opportunity for individual work, and for young people to choose a wide variety of different activities. All the staff are suitably qualified or working towards professional qualifications. The home is financially well resourced.



## 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.