

## Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Inspector</b>	Caroline Oldham
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## Service information

### Brief description of the service

This children's home is privately owned and offers placements for two young people who may have a combination of mental health, psychological, emotional or complex care needs that present challenging behaviour. The service is designed to offer medium- to long-term care placements.

### 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 staff 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 very good progress, and their confidence and self-awareness are significantly 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.

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 independent visitor monitoring 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. The system for notifying the relevant agencies of significant events is not sufficiently robust to ensure that every significant incident is appropriately notified. However, the impact on young people is low, as appropriate interventions are followed up with the relevant agencies. Staff feel very well

supported through team meetings, training, and formal supervision.

Risk-taking behaviour is diminishing, in particular going missing, and young people are learning to keep themselves safe. Generally there are comprehensive, up-to-date risk assessments, and well-considered safe working practices, which help to keep young people safe. However, the fire risk assessment does not reflect the current night-time arrangements, which puts young people at risk. Overall, young people make very good 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))	31/12/2013
32 (2001)	ensure that the registered person complies with the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. (Regulation 32(1A)(b))	31/12/2013

### Recommendations

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

- 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)
- ensure that there is a system in place to notify within 24 hours the persons and appropriate authorities of the occurrence of significant events in accordance with Regulation 30 (NMS 24.1)
- ensure that the aims and objectives of the Statement of Purpose show how the service will meet outcomes for children. (NMS 13.2)

### Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people come to the home with complex needs relating to their emotional and behavioural difficulties. Through the dedication of the staff team, and the support of other 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, college and youth groups.

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 full-time mainstream education or enrolling on new college courses. It is a real strength of the home that they work very closely with schools and colleges to support young people, and consequently young people achieve good exam results, gain 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. They start to try new foods, to learn about healthy diets and how to keep fit. Young people are offered appropriate psychological support; 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, to prepare for independence. This is formalised to enable young people to gain certificates and awards which further supports their growing confidence. Consequently, young people are gaining the skills they will need to manage well in the community.

Staff excel at working closely with social workers and family members to help young people to re-establish and 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 into 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 very good understanding of the complex needs of the young people in their care, and this helps them to form sound and appropriate relationships with them. Young people build friendships and learn tolerance and respect. For example, they make food for one another, and enjoy evenings doing craft activities. Through the sound working relationships that staff build with the young people they develop confidence and feel secure.

Young people are actively involved in the weekly meetings where decisions that affect the day-to-day running of the home are discussed. These meetings are driven

by the young people's agenda and include issues such as menus, trips and activities and rules, especially the limit of chocolate biscuits! Notes of the meetings show discussion, debate and requests, and where young people raise issues, staff come back with answers. This helps the young people 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. 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.

When a young person is initially admitted, they are registered with local health professionals. Staff are tenacious in booking appointments and encouraging attendance. Where young people are reluctant to attend, staff persevere; this ensures young people receive appropriate medical support and advice. All young people are encouraged to be active such as going to the gym, ice skating and walking. Young people are also 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; in particular, they praise the very good relationships that staff have with the young people, and the focus on meeting individual needs. They praise the home for the very careful and sensitive selection process which ensures that young people are well matched. They confirm that the home has managed to keep young people safe where other provisions have been unable to do so. They say the staff 'speak with one voice', reinforcing the plan for the young person to ensure consistent messages. Consequently, young people accept the boundaries and expectations; they reintegrate into school and stop running away. Social workers say that communication is brilliant and they are regularly updated via email and phone calls.

The home is well placed within walking distance of the centre of the town where there are shops and other facilities. The layout is compact and very homely with recent photos of the young people, which personalises the environment. Outside there is a garden which is a tranquil environment for young people who need a little space for reflection. The home is very well maintained, and young people take good 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.

Young people come to this home with some very high risk-taking behaviours. Thorough, comprehensive individual 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 works very hard to keep young people safe, while giving them some independence. Young people rarely go missing from this home and this is a significant improvement in their behaviour. They say that they are now more aware of the risks of going missing and that staff have helped them to understand the dangers. Young people are sharing their worries and anxieties with staff as they learn to trust, 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. Physical intervention is rarely used and only in appropriate circumstances to keep young people safe. Sanctions are also 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 on the consequences of their actions and behaviours. This means that young people are unable to learn from the incidents and make progress.

There has been some recent recruitment, and perusal of staff files demonstrates a rigorous 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 thorough system of internal safety checks and risk assessments. A recent fire risk assessment is in place, but does not fully reflect the current situation, which could leave young people vulnerable in the event of a fire at night. Professional companies regularly check services such as electricity, electrical appliances and fire fighting equipment. Overall, 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 is very well supported through frequent formal and informal supervision, comprehensive training and regular staff meetings. Staff meetings are well documented and are a good opportunity to discuss the care of each young person in detail. The expertise of the management team enables staff to reflect on therapeutic and nurturing interventions. All staff take on additional responsibilities and talk with enthusiasm about their work; it is evident that they care a great deal, making comments such as 'we are so proud of (name of child)'. Staff say that they

work well together, and social workers confirm they are consistent in their approach.

There were no requirements or recommendations made at the last inspection. There are management monitoring systems on all aspects of the running of the home, and these are being further developed. The manager carries out comprehensive monitoring reports which provide a strategic overview, and identifies patterns and trends which inform further developmental plans. This is in addition to the monthly monitoring visits under Regulation 33 which are submitted on a regular basis. However, these 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 not always notified appropriately to the regulator, as a robust system has not been established. However, the impact on young people is low as significant issues are followed up with social services, 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 each young person to receive the care and support they need. 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.