

Inspection report for children's home

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

### Brief description of the service

This children's home is one of a number of homes operated by a charitable trust. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties, physical disabilities and learning disabilities.

### 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 live in a homely environment where they receive high quality care. This provides the safety and security for young people to grow and develop in all areas of their lives. The service uses established communication with young people to enable their participation in decisions about their lives. Staff assist young people to develop their independence skills which aids their transition to adult living. Although this work is very good, written plans do not always capture young people's progress to show and develop this further. Young people's families are very complimentary about the service and partnership working is excellent. This makes sure that young people's needs remain central to all aspect of care practice.

Staff know young people exceptionally well, which is evident in the positive and warm relationships they have built with them. This provides the foundation for the success and stability of the placements, in which young people have lived for a number of years. Staff work proactively with young people's families to promote contact and sustain meaningful relationships in the best interests of young people. This is a key strength of the home.

The home is effectively managed and a strong emphasis is placed on providing high standards of care. Internal and external monitoring systems are in place to scrutinise the care provided and information about young people is gathered to identify trends and learn and improve practice further. A breach of regulation has been identified, which highlights that processes were not followed in planning for young people's placements together with the local authority. This has not impacted negatively upon the welfare of young people or the fitness of the registered person.

## 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
12A (2001)	ensure that the registered person co-operates with the young person's placing authority in agreeing and signing the placement plan prepared in accordance with provisions in regulation 9 of the Care Planning Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010. (Regulation 12A)	06/11/2012

### Recommendations

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

- ensure that plans are developed to include further opportunities for young people to learn skills in preparation for adulthood. (Volume 5, statutory guidance, paragraph 2.131)

### Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for children and young people are **good**.

Young people continue to develop their individual skills, abilities and talents which helps them grow in confidence. As a consequence of the support and care they receive young people make significant progress in managing their behaviour and attending to their personal care. Firm transitional arrangements are in place for young people to ensure they receive continuity of care and support into adulthood. Young people have good advocacy support from the staff; this ensures their voice is heard and they get the best adult placements when they need to move on from the service.

Young people have an excellent record of school attendance and make very good progress. All young people, including those who do not communicate verbally, actively participate in decisions about their life. This empowers them to have more control in their daily lives. They choose menus, activities and they are involved in shopping for food, clothing and personal items. Young people take part in regular activities to promote a healthy lifestyle including swimming, walking, sensory experiences and trips to the seaside, animal farms, museums and parks. All young

people are registered with a general medical practitioner, dentist and optician and have individual plans to target their health needs.

Young people take part in the community activities including taking part in local discos and fund raising at the local church. This helps to build their confidence and skills further. They have regular contact with their families which reinforces their support networks and provides a personal understanding of their background and identity.

### **Quality of care**

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

Young people continue to grow and develop in a nurturing and supportive environment. Staff are committed to young people which is evident in the warm and caring relationships that have been built over time. Staff liaise with young people's families to ensure they receive the right support and care they need. Staff know young people very well, their individual communication styles and mannerisms, which enables young people to express themselves and contribute their views and ideas. Communication systems are currently being reviewed by the management team to develop and improve them further with young people. Care planning is generally detailed and provides a good understanding of the support young people require to ensure they are treated according to their uniqueness. Care practice promotes young people's independence, however, progress is not always captured in the written plan to further develop and demonstrate young people's skills for adulthood.

Staff are proactive in supporting educational achievement of young people and engage with partner agencies to secure school attendance and achievement. Medication is stored safely and records are maintained on its administration. All staff receive suitable training to support health and wellbeing and have a first aid qualification to ensure safer caring of young people. Full attention is paid to young people's individual identity and staff demonstrate respect for young people's privacy and dignity. Personal care is sensitively managed and young people have space within the home environment to have time alone away from the group if they choose.

Young people's right to complain is promoted within the home through regular young people's meetings and in the close keyworker care. Pictorial exchange and photographs aid this communication. Young people have information about complaints and advocacy which is accessible and tailored to their needs and understanding. Consultation with young people's families and partner agencies is excellent and they give the home good feedback. Young people's families comment: 'Staff show a loving and caring attitude, this comes from the top, from the leadership, a very special and caring manager.'

Young people are encouraged to behave appropriately and excellent behaviour management strategies guide this. Staff understand young people's triggers and

have plans in place to manage behaviour effectively. A stable staff team and team work supports the quality of care received by young people. All young people have key workers to ensure a consistent approach to care needs.

Young people live in a relaxed, homely environment which blends into the residential area. The home is well maintained and young people have their own bedrooms that are personalised and reflect their interests. They have a garden with play equipment and as sensory garden to enjoy and relax in. This affords respect and dignity to young people.

### **Safeguarding children and young people**

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

There is a strong organisational emphasis on safeguarding and protecting young people; this promotes a safeguarding culture and ethos. Staff receive safeguarding training and have a good understanding of their duties in promoting young people's welfare. Locally agreed protocols are in place to ensure a robust response to any allegation of abuse or safeguarding concern. Additionally, young people have regularly reviewed comprehensive risk assessments to clearly manage and identity risks to young people. Close supervision of young people and proactive safeguarding practices ensures that their personal safety is maintained and that they do not engage in any risk taking behaviours.

Staff know young people very well and have developed planned strategies to manage behaviour successfully, as a result no sanctions are used and physical intervention has not been used since the last inspection. Staff engage positively and sensitively with young people to assist them in working through their frustration. Staff confirm that that physical intervention is only used as a very last resort and that young people's behaviour is managed in a calm and supportive manner.

Young people live in a physically safe environment in which health and safety issues are thoroughly managed to protect them. Staff carry out routine health and safety checks around the home. Safety and insurance certificates are up to date and direct work with young people ensures they are aware of an emergency evacuation route in the event of a fire. Young people benefit from a consistent, experienced and suitably qualified staff team, who are safely recruited. Staff also take appropriate steps to verify visitors identity to ensure young people are protected.

### **Leadership and management**

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

The home is effective in meeting its recently revised Statement of Purpose. The management team consists of a Registered Manager and an assistant manager; together they work with young people and staff to rigorously monitor young people's welfare, which ensures the high standards of care and the safety of young people. Although management arrangements are good, on one occasion, the registered

person did not follow established organisational processes to jointly agree placement plans with the placing authority. Lessons have been learned from this and improvements have been made. This breach has not impacted negatively upon the welfare of young people or the fitness of the registered person.

The management team provide leadership and accountability; therefore staff fully understand the roles and responsibilities delegated to them. Young people's care is scrutinised through quality assurance systems which include monthly management monitoring. Trend analysis systems are in place to learn and improve practice further. For example, this has been successful in identifying triggers for behaviours. All significant events are notified to the relevant authorities and appropriate action is taken to protect young people. The management team are well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the home and the previous recommendation to consult with parents and relatives during monthly monitoring has been implemented. Developmental plans are realistic and show a commitment to young people for continual improvement. For example, plans are in place to review and develop communication systems with young people.

High staffing levels ensure young people gain the care and support they need. The organisation demonstrates a commitment to professional development and training is high on the agenda. Staff are suitably qualified and the team remains stable which provides consistency for young people. They have regular supervision, appraisals and team meetings that contribute to their competence in providing quality care to young people. Young people are also involved in the performance assessment of staff to ensure their views count. Staff feel supported and confirm that the management team are available.

Staff fully understand young people's diverse needs and have high aspirations for young people in achieving their individual potential. Good recording provides a picture of young people's daily lives. Young people's information is securely stored and shared confidentially to protect their safety and privacy.

## 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* (March 2011) and the evaluation schedule for children's homes.