

# Island Lodge

Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Inspector</b>	Joanna Heller
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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	15/12/2010

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## 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.

### The inspection judgements and what they mean

**Outstanding:** a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

**Good:** a service that exceeds minimum requirements

**Satisfactory:** a service that only meets minimum requirements

**Inadequate:** a service that does not meet minimum requirements

## Service information

### Brief description of the service

This is a residential service for up to five young people of either sex aged from 13 years to 17 years. Young people have a diagnosed learning disability or a statement of special educational needs. The building is in a residential area accessible to local shops and transport links. Four young people were resident at the time of the inspection, all of whom participated in the inspection to a level according to their wishes.

### Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be **outstanding**.

Young people gain from significant individual growth and development in maturity, behaviour and commitment to educational achievement during their time at the home. Very little placement breakdown is experienced. Young people enjoy living at the home and spending time with staff. The relationships built between staff and young people make young people feel safe and well cared for. These relationships underpin the home's success in nurturing young people.

Placing authorities comment, 'staff always work well in partnership with social workers, parents and young people, to ensure the best outcomes are achieved,' and 'The home's dedication and commitment to their clients is impressive, always putting the needs of young people first whilst keeping the safeguarding agenda in focus.' Parents feel their children are very well cared for. Young people rate the home as brilliant.

## Outcomes for children and young people

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

The home is welcoming and provides young people with a stable, secure and happy environment. Young people grade the home as brilliant. It is clear from social workers and young people themselves that their experiences of the home are highly positive and that they experience significant individual growth.

Young people are supported as management ensure that they are able to meet their needs before agreeing to placements and helps them to maintain as much personal control as is possible over the move. Young people who are new to the home are made welcome and introduced to the other young people. All of the children and young people are healthy and staff ensure that they are provided with the support to develop good emotional resilience and increase their maturity and coping mechanisms.

Family members are made welcome and staff have gone to great lengths to support contact. For example, a child car seat was purchased, so that young siblings can be safely transported from the local train station. Young people and their families are able to enjoy family holidays free of charge at the home's caravan. Staff are aware of the impact of contact for each of the young people and the issues surrounding it.

Most of the young people are engaging in some form of education or employment. Staff are proactive in discussing with young people their options and developing innovative strategies to motivate young people to engage in some form of education. For example, staff have liaised with a local college to develop an education plan based around a beauty course with supported maths and English. Staff have also offered an alternative education package of home tutoring. Young people attending the home with little interest in education have made such progress that they have entered 4 GCSE exams and been awarded certificates for their commitment to education. Young people have experienced a variety of activities in the home such as diversity days, poetry and art competitions, theme park visits as well as theatre trips and concerts. Young people have also enjoyed regular trips to the home's caravan as well as holidays in the past year to Spain, Disneyland Paris and Jamaica.

Staff support young people to develop self care skills from the point they move in, such as getting involved in baking and cooking, as well as managing their own laundry. Young people are able to identify their personal emotional growth and what this individually means for them. As young people get older, they receive more formal support through the home's independence programme, which, is tailored to link with their pathway plan. Few young people have moved on from the home, however, those who have moved on have gone on to independent living arrangements following stable placements at the home.

## Quality of care

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



Staff and management display an outstanding commitment to ensuring young people have the best life outcome possible. Young people have each experienced significant personal growth since coming to the home. This is individually demonstrated through areas such as, the reduction in challenging behaviour, absconding patterns, commitment to education, awareness of diversity and the building of confidence and self-esteem. Young people and staff enjoy positive relationships with each other. Young people refer to 'loving staff' and saying that they are brilliant. Key workers are viewed by young people as strong role models and important people in their lives. Staff ensure clear, consistent boundaries are in place and are prepared to negotiate with young people where appropriate. When young people are not able to do something staff clearly explain why. Whilst this may make them cross, young people are able to recognise that the boundaries make them feel safe and well cared for. Young people enjoy spending time with staff. Settling routines are in place at night where young people who wish to, are able to enjoy quiet time talking about their day or reading books with staff. Young people refer to staff as being people who make young people feel as if they really do care for them and that staff work at the home because they want to be with the young people. Young people say that staff are always available and happy to help young people through crisis. The warm caring atmosphere provides a relaxing and nurturing environment for young people.

Photographs are displayed around the home showing young people and staff enjoying holidays and trips out. Young people who show an interest in a particular hobby, such as drama, are provided with information about local sessions and the finance to attend. Young people spoke about their joy of swimming with dolphins and experiencing different cultures when talking about holidays.

Education is positively promoted and young people are rewarded for regular attendance and commitment. Staff have established relationships with young people's school and the virtual head teacher. Staff are aware of the educational abilities and goals of each of the young people. Staff are proactive at advocating for young people where it is felt that educational arrangements are not appropriate and are imaginative when seeking alternative educational opportunities. Staff talk to young people about their aspirations and academic strengths, ensuring education is viewed as a way to improve their life chances. An experienced head teacher has recently been engaged as an educational consultant who will lead on the development of a local school which will have two places held for young people attending the home. The consultant's role will also be to support staff in developing innovative educational programmes for young people either to support mainstream schooling, or to address the needs of those who are not in education. Relevant employment and apprenticeship opportunities are actively sought and supported to ensure young people have the best opportunities to enter the world of employment.

Young people are helped to develop maturity and learn appropriate ways to express themselves rather than resorting to negative behaviour. Staff consult young people on all aspects of their lives and ensure that the care and support provided is highly child focussed. Young people are fully aware of their care plans, which are sufficiently detailed as to guide staff effectively in the day-to-day support needs of young people. Staff ensure any specific needs arising from gender, disability or

cultural background are fully met.

Staff ensure that complaints whether from young people or neighbours are effectively responded to, investigated and managed. Young people know how to complain and have confidence in the manager to effectively respond to any issues they raise. Staff swiftly address any issues of conflict within the home. Issues of conflict and diversity within the group are discussed on a one-to-one basis as well as being brought to house meetings.

All of the young people are healthy. Staff ensure that they are nurtured to develop good emotional resilience and increase their maturity and coping mechanisms. Children and young people enjoy healthy lifestyles and are supported to access medical professionals such as doctors, dentists and opticians as appropriate. The home privately engages a psychologist to help staff work therapeutically with young people building their care on an understanding of past events. Staff cook nutritious varied meals which young people enjoy. Staff discuss with young people the importance of healthy eating and fresh fruit and healthy snacks are actively encouraged. Discussions also take place with young people about issues such as giving up smoking and the use of drugs. Staff are well trained and competent having received training in key areas such as first aid, food handling, emotional well-being and other issues which affect young people. Management ensure safe systems are in place for the administration of medication, such as, suitable storage, staff training and clear record keeping.

The building provides young people with welcoming homely accommodation that they are proud to welcome their family and friends into. Each young person has their own personalised bedroom which they are able to lock and keep private. Young people are able to choose how their rooms are decorated. Artistic staff members support young people to personalise their rooms with individually designed murals. Staff are provided with suitable sleep in accommodation. The home is well maintained and decorated. The 'club' room converted from the garage is an area where young people can do artwork, play games consoles or snooker and generally 'chill out'. The home is in a residential area accessible to local shops and transport links.

Key stakeholders, such as parents, and placing authorities comment on the friendliness, professionalism and caring nature of staff. Young people grade the home as 'brilliant' and comment that 'if there was a care home of the year competition this one should win it.'

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

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



Young people feel safe, secure and well cared for. Young people feel that one of the strengths of the home is how staff enable young people to mature and develop in a way that helps young people manage their own behaviour and control their anger. Staff ensure that young people know the behavioural expectations and rules and enforce these rules fairly. Staff enable young people to understand that it is not necessarily in their best interest to always have what they want, and explain why. Young people emphasise that whilst this might annoy them, it also makes them feel safe and cared for. Placing authorities comment positively on the ability of staff to effectively introduce structure and boundaries for young people who have not experienced these before.

Bullying is not an issue of concern and young people are confident that staff will address any issues swiftly to ensure they remain safe. Issues of conflict are dealt with immediately and effectively, ensuring young people feel safe and supported. Systems for managing negative behaviour are excellent and remain child focussed. Staff have achieved success in significantly reducing both negative behaviour and the number of restraints for young people since their admission. Young people referred to a strength of the home as staff enabling them to become more aware of themselves and the impact their behaviour has on others. Also, how this is then reflected back at them through other's low perceptions and expectations of them. Individual comprehensive behaviour management plans focus on possible triggers, providing clear routines and explanations and the importance of setting a positive atmosphere. All staff are trained in control and restraint and de-escalation techniques. Restraint is used rarely and clear records are maintained of any restraint applied. When staff do need to use restraint young people are clear that it is done to keep themselves or others safe. Sanctions applied are appropriate and relevant to the negative behaviour displayed. Staff are competent in managing difficult situations and minimise the involvement of police to prevent the criminalisation of behaviour.

Positive behaviour reward systems are in place which formally recognise young people's targets and achievements each week. Each young person has individual targets, these are broadly set around education, self care and behaviour. Young people are able to save their rewards up for significant items, for example, one young person was able to earn a new television for their bedroom. Young people are provided with opportunities to discuss how they feel and any issues worrying them following any sanction, restraint or incident of going missing. Regular key work sessions are an opportunity to talk through incidents and young people's feelings. Staff also encourage young people to express themselves through art. Young people have produced canvas pieces of art which are displayed in the kitchen/ diner. A psychologist is employed to give case management advice and guidance.

Comprehensive risk assessments are in place for young people which identify their vulnerability and any risks they may pose to others. Activity based risk assessments are also in place. It is very rare for a young person to go missing as they feel happy, safe and secure at the home. However, in the rare instances that they do go, staff ensure their safety and notify them as missing to the appropriate agencies in line with local guidelines.

Young people are safeguarded from unsuitable people gaining employment in the home through robust vetting practices. Management ensure no member of staff is employed at the home unless checks have been undertaken to ensure their suitability to work with vulnerable young people.

Any issues of concern are fed back to the placing authority. Staff are aware of what to do should an issue of a child protection nature arise. Staff receive regular training on safeguarding young people.

Management ensure good systems are in place to ensure the safety and security of the building. Regular checks are undertaken to ensure the ongoing safety of the building. Hazardous chemicals and sharp knives are stored securely. Fire precautionary arrangements in the home ensure young people and staff are safeguarded from fire in line with current good practice.

### **Leadership and management**

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

Changes to the management of the home over the past year have been well managed ensuring continuity for young people and staff. Management arrangements are clear and the home is well resourced to ensure that young people receive excellent levels of support.

The Statement of Purpose and children's guide are useful documents which are kept under review and serve to inform young people and placing authorities about the services available within the home. Management ensure information is available to young people in formats which they can easily understand. The home is able to demonstrate that complaints are effectively responded to, investigated and managed. Young people know how to complain and have confidence in the home's ability to respond to any issues of concern which they may raise.

The home is well staffed with a minimum of two staff. with three staff per shift at key times, such as, after school and at weekends. This ensures staff are available to respond flexibly to young people needs and desires. Staffing is arranged to ensure that key periods of activity are covered, for example, some young people have an allocated member of staff to support them when they come in from school until they settle in bed. A waking member of staff is rota'd on duty in addition to one staff sleeping-in. Staff are competent at the role they perform and establish positive relationships with young people, parents and other agencies. Feedback from Parents and placing authorities are highly complementary on the competence, variety of skills, and commitment of staff to the young people. Professionals refer to their experiences of working with the home as a 'model of its type'. Parents comments include 'We feel the home has benefitted our child greatly during the time spent there. Their extreme behaviours have improved dramatically. The staff are organised, helpful and have been extremely patient with our child. Staff are always professional and treat our child with respect and fairness. They keep up excellent communications with us and I cannot fault their excellent care. They work professionally without making my child feel institutionalised.'

The manager leads by example and has high expectations of staff always expecting the staff team to make decisions as a team based on the principle of 'if this was your child what would you do?'. Staff consistently demonstrate reflective practice, always trying to understand what worked or did not work in a particular situation and why. Staff work solidly together as a team to ensure good outcomes for young people. The management team as a whole are approachable, flexible and supportive. Regular staff meetings and supervision ensure that staff are aware of key issues within the home. The organisation demonstrates a sound commitment to staff training and staff benefit from a wealth of training relevant to the roles they perform. Core training such as child protection, first aid, food hygiene, behaviour management and health and safety, is provided to all staff and updated appropriately. Staff are also planning to undertake formal training in the therapeutic approach. This is to support one of the management team's aims to be a recognised therapeutic setting.

The organisation has effective systems in place for monitoring the standards of care within the home. These include good quality assurance feedback systems with an excellent response rate. Any issues identified are swiftly addressed and under the

guidance of the new manager, staff are continually striving to continue to improve standards of care. Young people are involved in the home's participation day where they received their awards for their individual achievements. Not to be outdone young people also presented staff with achievements certificates they invented and designed.

Staff demonstrate a solid commitment to working with young people to secure good life outcomes. Young people and placing authorities give highly complimentary feedback on how staff support young people. Young people refer to staff as being caring people who always act as good role models.

Equality and diversity practice is **outstanding**.