

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC000802
Inspector	Nicholas Murphy
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered manager	Scott Stainsby
Date of last inspection	27/08/2013

Inspection date	08/05/2014
------------------------	------------

Previous inspection	inadequate progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	three compliance notices were issued on 2 September 2013. A monitoring visit took place on 18 September 2013 and all compliance notices had been complied with.

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	adequate
Outcomes for children and young people	adequate
Quality of care	adequate
Keeping children and young people safe	adequate
Leadership and management	adequate

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	adequate
-------------------	-----------------

The home provides a satisfactory level of care for young people. Staff are caring and attentive, and work to planned objectives which are based on each young person's particular needs. As a result, most young people have made steady progress as a result of living here. However, some young people struggle with aspects of their lives, such as education or training. The home includes a separate annex which enables one young person to live semi-independently. This has posed some challenges for the young person but provides valuable preparation for the transition to adulthood.

Staff have found it difficult to engage young people in group meetings about daily life in the home. However, staff have regular individual sessions with young people in order to seek their views. Consequently, young people feel that they are listened to and that their opinions matter. One young person said, 'I see this as my home rather than just a place to live. I've lived here for a long time so it gives me a good feeling.'

Young people have good relationships with staff. They are confident that if one member of staff can't help them with a particular issue, another one will be able to. A young person said, 'I usually talk to my key worker but they don't always sort things out; but that's OK because I know I can talk to any of the staff and they will.'

There is one issue with the safety of the building, but otherwise the home's practice in keeping young people protected is sound. There are very few incidents where young people go missing, or need to be restrained. Young people generally have few anxieties about their safety, both inside and outside the home. One young person said, 'Do I feel safe here? Yes, definitely.'

There are weaknesses in the home's management which limit its ability to improve. However, these shortfalls have not had a significant negative impact upon the welfare or safety of young people.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home accommodates up to four young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is operated by a private company.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/08/2013	Interim	inadequate progress
30/04/2013	Full	adequate
09/10/2012	Interim	satisfactory progress
26/06/2012	Full	inadequate

What does the children's home need to do to improve further?

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
23 (2001)	ensure that all parts of the home to which children have access are so far as is reasonably practical free from hazards to their health and safety; specifically that the loft space in the annex is cleaned, checked for pest infestation, and access to it is secured (Regulation 23(a))	29/05/2014
4 (2001)	compile a written statement (referred to as the 'statement of purpose') which shall consist of a statement as to the matters listed in Schedule 1 (Regulation 4(1))	13/06/2014
5 (2001)	notify HMCI of any revision to the statement of purpose within 28 days (Regulation 5(b))	13/06/2014
12B	notify, in writing, the local authority for the area in	13/06/2014

(2001)	which the children's home is located without delay of the admission of a child into and the discharge of a child from the children's home (Regulation 12(b)(1)(a and b))	
34 (2001)	establish and maintain a system for monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 at least once in every 3 months, supply to HMCI a report in respect of any such review, and ensure that it provides for consultation with children accommodated in the home, their parents and placing authorities. (Regulation 34(1, 2 and 3))	13/06/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure there is a good quality learning and development programme which staff and volunteers are supported to undertake, specifically that training is provided in child sexual exploitation and positive behaviour management (NMS 18.1)
- ensure that the home provides a comfortable and homely environment and avoidable hazards are removed as is consistent with a domestic setting, specifically that refrigerated packets of food, once opened, are labelled with the date of opening (NMS 10.3)
- ensure that the children's guide contains details of how a child can contact the IRO. (NMS 13.5)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **adequate**

Young people have made progress in making sense of their backgrounds and forming more positive and stable relationships. This has made them more emotionally resilient and able to cope with disappointment. Young people have contact with their families and others with whom they are in stable relationships. This contact is beneficial for their emotional well-being as well as providing the foundation for successful transition to independence.

Young people are developing the skills they will need when they leave the home and begin to live by themselves. Young people take responsibility for some household tasks, such as keeping their rooms tidy and washing their clothes. Some like to cook and have developed skills in this area. One young person said, 'I have good independence skills, I feel like I'm ready to leave and I will be OK, staff have helped me to learn stuff I need to know, like budgeting and cooking.' The home's annex is a particularly useful resource; enabling young people to have the experience of living alone, yet still have the support of staff if necessary. This enables young people to understand not only the practicalities of independent living but also the emotional impact of being alone.

Young people are generally in good health and are aware of what makes for a healthy lifestyle. Some of those that smoke have taken advantage of the support on offer to successfully reduce their dependence on the habit. One young person said, 'Staff have been really helpful in encouraging me to cut down.'

Some older young people have found it difficult to sustain employment or training. However, most have regular attendance at school or college even though sometimes they need encouragement. In terms of attainments, young people in general have made progress in comparison to their starting points.

Quality of care **adequate**

Staff and young people enjoy good relationships, and as a result the atmosphere within the home is usually relaxed and pleasant. Young people behave well, and staff handle the odd upset or disagreement with sympathy and well-judged use of humour.

Young people tend to spend a lot of time outside the home pursuing their own lives. They do not always want to come together as a group to discuss what is going on in the home. However, there are plenty of opportunities for young people to express their views about aspects of the daily routine. Staff have a formal discussion at least

once a month with each young person, which enables them to explore any issues they may have within the home. This is in addition to the sessions which key workers have with young people. These discussions centre on the young person's care plan, so allowing young people to have full involvement in the plans for them.

Care plans are detailed yet concise and easy to understand. They are frequently updated, and take account of changes in each young person's circumstances as they occur. Each care plan is clearly detailed and well-tailored to each young person's individual needs, and takes full account of issues such as culture and identity. Staff take time to explain to young people why they may be treated differently. One young person said, 'Sometimes I feel that staff don't always treat young people equally. But I've spoken to the Registered Manager who says it might look like this because everyone has different needs.'

The home has good links with local services such as doctors, dentists and opticians. Staff support young people in accessing these services, in addition to more specialist ones such as ante-natal clinics. Some young people attend regular sessions with child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS). This work has been instrumental in helping young people reduce behaviours such as self-harm.

Although some young people have difficulty in sustaining school attendance, staff work with placing social workers to devise ways of overcoming this reluctance. For example, one young person has a bespoke incentive scheme which rewards her good attendance. This has resulted in improvement. Staff are persistent in encouraging other young people to engage in employment or further education.

The home is well decorated, clean and comfortable. Following the last inspection, the home was redecorated and carpeted throughout. The good condition of the home has been maintained, indicating the investment that young people have made in their surroundings. Young people's bedrooms are in good condition, with colour schemes of their choice. However, there is a concern in the home's annex. The loft space is easily accessible by young people, and moreover, shows signs of rodent infestation. During the inspection the Registered Manager made arrangements to rectify this health and safety hazard.

Keeping children and young people safe adequate

The home safeguards young people satisfactorily. Each young person has an assessment of risks which takes into account all the factors relevant to that individual. This enables staff to identify risks and put strategies in place to keep young people safe. Staff work well with other agencies to protect young people. For example, the Registered Manager is part of a group of providers which works with the police in addressing safeguarding concerns. Staff have a reasonable knowledge of what might pose a threat to young people and how to reduce it. However, there is no training for staff in child sexual exploitation. This limits the ability of staff to

identify potential dangers in this area. Apart from the occasional argument, young people get on well with each other. Young people do not express any concerns about bullying, and the home's records confirm that this is not an issue.

It is commendable that the number of times that young people go missing has reduced to nearly nil. The work being done with the police includes a new system of reporting incidents should they happen. This will speed up the police response and enable young people to be located and returned more quickly.

The good relationships between young people and staff make for a generally settled atmosphere within the home. There are few sanctions and even fewer incidents where young people need to be restrained for their own safety. Staff are trained in how to restrain appropriately. However, this training is very much focused on the mechanics of physical restraint rather than on ways to prevent escalation of challenging behaviour. This means that staff may not have the skills to effectively de-escalate confrontations or potentially violent behaviour.

The home's arrangements for recruiting and vetting staff are robust, ensuring that only people who are suitable to work with children are employed. Staff undertake routine checks of the home to ensure that the environment is safe. The registered provider has taken action since the last inspection to improve the cleanliness of the home. However, the fridge contains opened food packets which have not been labelled with the date of opening. This means that it is possible for young people to consume food which may not be safe to eat.

Leadership and management

adequate

The Registered Manager has been in post for seven years. He is suitably qualified and experienced to manage the service. At the last inspection, four statutory requirements were made. The Registered Manager has addressed all in full. As a result, the quality and safety of the home's physical condition has been substantially improved and staff are more skilled in dealing with self-harm.

The home's Statement of Purpose provides clear information about the services the home offers and how it meets the needs of young people. However, recent revisions to this document have not been sent to Ofsted, meaning that the regulator is unaware of changes, for example in staffing. Some information required under new regulations is not included, such as how the home assesses the competence of staff to use physical restraint safely. The children's guide provides information about the home in a format that young people can understand. Although it gives contact details for a range of relevant people, it does not include the young person's independent reviewing officer. This makes it harder for a young person to quickly contact this significant person should they have a concern about their care or their plan.

External and internal monitoring provides oversight of the home's performance in

improving outcomes for young people. However, the Registered Manager has not sent his own monitoring reports to Ofsted at the required intervals. Moreover, reports do not make use of any consultation with young people, parents and social workers. These shortfalls mean that the accountability of the monitoring process to the regulator is reduced. Also, the views of users of the service cannot be taken into account in shaping the home's development. This is unfortunate as the Registered Manager does receive feedback from other professionals and acts on it. One independent reviewing officer said, 'I have suggested improvements myself which I have to say were responded to appropriately by the manager.'

Records on young people are well organised and enable staff to access information they need on a daily basis easily and quickly. Other records are efficiently maintained. However, there is no system in place for notifying the local authority whenever a young person is admitted or discharged. As a result, the local authority does not have a complete picture of where in its area looked after young people are located. This could compromise the safety and welfare of young people.

Most staff confirm that they receive adequate support from senior staff. Professional supervision takes place usually every month, and is focused on the needs of young people and how their plans are progressing. Staff have annual appraisals, and the Registered Manager is implementing a new format for staff development plans. This will enable staff training needs to be identified more effectively and so improve the quality of support for young people.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
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.

Information 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 framework of inspection for children's homes.