

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	26/06/2012
Inspector	Shaun Common
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	15/11/2011
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This privately run children's home is registered to care for up to four young people, whose primary needs arise from emotional or behavioural difficulties.

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 **inadequate**.

Young people are supported and assisted to be healthy. They have access to a range of health services to promote their wellbeing. Attendance and achievement at school varies between young people and support for them to achieve their potential is inconsistent. Lack of regular school attendance is affecting young people's educational outcomes and future prospects. There are limited resources to assist young people with their education. Young people are supported to develop some skills for adulthood, however this is limited.

Young people are supported well to keep in touch with family, friends and other people important to them. They have positive and beneficial relationships with staff. They have some methods of sharing their views about their care. However, their views are not always considered or acted upon. There is no evidence to show that young people's views have influenced the running of the home or how their views have been used to contribute to improvement in the quality of care. Young people are not positively engaged in activities that they can enjoy.

Young people are cared for by a qualified and knowledgeable staff team who understand their needs. However, staff are not supported effectively by managers. They have not been able to access some essential training. There are not always sufficient staff on duty to ensure young people are cared for effectively and kept safe. Care plans set out young people's needs; however, plans contain generic information and are not personal or individualised.

Young people say they feel safe and are free from bullying. However, a number of practices mean that young people are at risk. Risk assessments are not thorough and

do not identify how staff need to address risk concerns to safeguard young people. A lack of effective monitoring and care of young people places them at risk. When young people go missing, robust action is not taken to ensure they are fully supported and advised on their return to the home.

Young people are supported to develop positive social skills and behaviour through appropriate use of sanctions and encouragement to develop responsibility. Physical restraint is rarely used. However, staff's training in this area has expired, so staff are not competent to use any physical intervention if required.

Management and operation of the home is poor. There is good information for parents, professionals and young people about the home and the services it provides. However, monitoring systems are weak. They are not rigorously implemented and are not effective in identifying shortfalls and improving the quality of care provided to young people. There is no current development plan to show how the home will benefit young people and improve their quality of care.

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
11 (2001)	ensure that the children's home is conducted so as to promote and make proper provision for the welfare of children accommodated there; specifically, ensure any risks to young people are robustly assessed and recorded, with actions to reduce or eliminate such risks; ensure staff fully implement and follow such risk assessments (Regulation 11(1)(a))	27/06/2012
18 (2001)	promote the educational achievement of children accommodated in a children's home, in particular by ensuring that the routine of the home is organised so as to further children's participation in education, including regular attendance school (Regulation 18(1) (b))	31/10/2012
18 (2001)	ensure that children accommodated in the home are encouraged to develop and pursue appropriate leisure interests (Regulation 18(2)(a))	17/08/2012
25 (2001)	ensure that there is at all times, having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the health and welfare of children accommodated in the home, a sufficient number of suitably qualified, competent and experienced persons working at the home (Regulation 25(1)(b))	27/06/2012
27 (2001)	ensure that all persons employed by the registered person receive appropriate training, supervision and appraisal;	31/08/2012

	specifically ensure that training for all staff in restraint is up to date, that all staff receive at least an annual appraisal and that high quality supervision is provided to all staff at appropriate intervals (Regulation 27(4)(a))	
28 (2001)	maintain in respect of each child, a record in a permanent form which includes the information specified in Schedule 3 relating to that child; specifically item 10 of that Schedule (Regulation 28(1)(a))	17/08/2012
29 (2001)	maintain in the children's home the records specified in Schedule 4 and ensure they are kept up to date; specifically item 11 of the Schedule ensuring duty rosters show the actual hours worked (Regulation 29(1))	01/07/2012
31 (2001)	ensure the home is of a design and layout and is suitably furnished to achieve the aims and objectives set out in the home's statement of purpose and to meet the needs of the children accommodated; specifically provide suitable furnishings in young people's rooms or other appropriate space in the home to support young people's private study (Regulation 31(1)(4)(a))	31/08/2012
34 (2001)	maintain the system for monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 at appropriate intervals and improving the quality of care provided in the children's home; specifically ensure that monitoring identifies any shortfalls and improves the quality of care provided in the children's home. (Regulation 34(1)(a))	01/08/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure that children's views, wishes and feelings are acted upon, in the day-to-day running of the home and important decisions or changes in the child's life, unless this is contrary to their interests; specifically ensure that young people receive formal feedback about matters they raise in children's meetings (NMS 1.1)
- ensure the care and support provided to children minimises the risk that they will go missing and reduces the risk of harm should the child go missing; specifically ensure that statutory guidance on children who run away and go missing from home or care is implemented and evidenced as implemented (NMS 5.1)
- ensure children have access to a range of educational resources to support their learning (NMS 8.2)
- ensure children are supported in the matters set out in this NMS (NMS 12.1)
- contribute to the development of each child's pathway plan and work collaboratively with the young person's social worker in implementing the plan; specifically ensure that a pathway plan is requested from placing authorities as

required and that staff and young people participate in its review, development and implementation (NMS 12.2)

- ensure there is a written development plan, reviewed annually, for the future of the home, either identifying any planned changes in the operation or resources of the service, or confirming the continuation of the home's current operation and resource (NMS 15.2)
- ensure that where only one member of staff is on duty at any time, a risk assessment has been carried out and recorded in writing, identifying any likely risks to children, staff and members of the public; specifically, review and revise the current document to reflect the current young people at the home, likely risks to them and staff members (NMS 17.9)
- ensure suitable arrangements exist for the professional supervision of the registered person of the agency; specifically that the Registered Manager receives supervision at appropriate intervals (19.3)
- ensure that summary reports of regulation 34 monitoring are sent to Ofsted every six months and within 28 days of completion (Volume 5, statutory guidance, para 3.14)
- ensure that children understand, within their level of understanding, the purpose and content of their plan and the reasoning behind any decisions about their care (NMS 25.1)
- ensure each child's Placement Plan is monitored by a key worker within the home; specifically ensure that each plan reflects young people's individualised needs. (NMS 25.2)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people are supported well by staff to be healthy and stay healthy. Young people say that their health care needs are met and they have access to a range of health services to promote their wellbeing. They say that staff also provide guidance on keeping safe and being healthy, such as advice on the dangers of smoking, alcohol and illicit drug use.

Attendance and achievement of young people in education varies and this means that young people are not all appropriately supported to achieve their potential and succeed in the future. Staff are working with relevant professionals to secure educational placements where young people have been excluded. Where young people have school placements, their attendance is well below expected levels and their achievement has been affected as a result. Reports show that young people's progress is in regression. Where young people have completed exams or have left school, there is a plan in place to support prospects for employment.

Young people are supported to develop some basic skills for adulthood. However these are limited. Skills such as cleaning, tidying and washing clothes are encouraged

and supported, though young people are not educated in a broader and wider range of skills that are required for adulthood. For example, about where to get legal advice, consumer advice and support with utilities or benefits. A pathway plan has not been provided by the relevant local authority to show the support young people need for the transition into adulthood and independence. There is no evidence that staff have contacted local authorities to obtain this plan.

There are clear plans and arrangements in place for all young people to support them to keep in touch with people important to them. Young people make regular telephone calls and visit friends and family.

Quality of care

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

Each young person has a care plan that sets out their needs and how these needs will be met. However, plans are generic in some cases, which means each young person has the same objective. Therefore plans are not always individualised or personalised. Young people are not central to planning processes as their views are not considered and reflected in planning records. For example, the home's planning documents have sections for young people's comments and views and these are not completed. Cultural, religious and identity needs are identified in plans. However, they are not always seriously considered and met. For example, in a consultation document, one young person wrote that their religious needs were not being considered or met. The recorded action response to this comment was blank.

There are good relationships between staff and young people. However, there are not always sufficient staff on duty at all times in order to provide good quality, safe care to young people. Young people are at times at risk of harm when there are insufficient staff to ensure appropriate levels of supervision.

Support for young people to achieve in education is inconsistent. The home has very limited resources to support young people's education. Young people do have access to a computer, though they do not have access to other educational resources such as books and reference materials. Young people's bedrooms do not all have a desk and chair and there is no other room in the house which provides a quiet area with appropriate furnishings in which to study or complete homework. Young people who are taking important exams have received limited support to succeed. Although a programme was developed by a key worker for all staff to provide regular support to young people, this support was not consistently provided. All these matters have the potential to significantly impact upon young people's future prospects.

Young people are able to share their views directly with staff. However, young people stated that they feel their views are not always listened to. Meetings between young people and staff are arranged so young people can have a say about their care and the running of the home, but these are held infrequently. Records of these meetings do not show that the issues raised by young people are considered and acted upon, as there are no formal responses provided in the majority of cases.

There is no evidence to show that young people's views have influenced the running of the home, or how their views have been used to contribute to improvement in the quality of care.

Young people are not actively and positively engaged in purposeful and enjoyable activities. They undertake a limited number of activities such as going to the cinema or watching movies at home. The manager acknowledges that there are a range of activities that young people can engage in within the local area; however encouragement to do so and active participation are lacking.

Young people have access to a range of services to promote their health and wellbeing, such as opticians, dentists, doctors and mental health services. Medication is stored securely in the home and this helps to keep young people safe. Young people receive the medication they need, when they need it, in order to stay fit and well. Appropriate consents are in place to ensure that young people can access and receive appropriate treatment and medication where required, in order to promote their health and wellbeing.

There is a complaints procedure and information for young people. Young people confirmed they know how to complain if they need to, but have never needed to use the procedure. There have been no complaints since the last inspection.

The home is well decorated, furnished and maintained, providing a good environment conducive to the care of young people.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people say they feel safe at the home and that there is no bullying. They say that if there was any bullying, that staff would address this quickly. Staff have a good understanding of how to keep young people safe. They understand and implement child protection procedures where appropriate. One child protection concern has arisen since the last inspection and this has been dealt with fully to safeguard young people.

Risks to young people identified in assessment information are not recorded or detailed in written risk assessments. This means the documents do not inform staff of their role, responsibilities and duties in ensuring young people are appropriately monitored, supervised and safeguarded. The relevant risks are such that a range of measures that are required to ensure young people are kept safe from harm are not in place. For example, an appropriate number of staff on duty at all times and close monitoring and recording of young people's activities and whereabouts.

There is a missing from home policy, procedure and protocol in place that is understood by staff. However, young people are not robustly safeguarded by the home's systems and processes. Staff do inform the relevant people and authorities

when young people go missing from home and when they return, and this contributes to keeping young people safe. However, appropriate action is not taken to ascertain the circumstances of the young person going missing, to address any problems and reduce the likelihood of a further incident. Matters of best practice set out in government guidance are not implemented to robustly safeguard young people, such as reviewing care plans and risk assessments, and consideration of a multi-agency strategy meeting. Records do not show that young people are seen by the police on their return to the home for a 'safe and well' check, or by someone independent of the home to offer them support, advice, guidance and to promote their safety and wellbeing.

Young people are supported to develop positive social skills and behaviour. Sanctions are used appropriately, which are relevant to the misdemeanour and are fully recorded. Young people's views are also recorded and this shows they are encouraged to develop understanding and responsibility.

Physical restraint is very rarely used and records show its use is appropriate. Young people are afforded the opportunity to see a health or medical professional after any incident to ensure they are fit and well. However, training in the use of physical restraint for all staff has expired. This means that where physical restraint may be necessary to keep young people safe, staff are not qualified to use any methods. Therefore, the decision by staff to use physical restraint, or not, because they do not feel qualified or competent, may place young people at risk.

No new staff have been recruited to work at the home since the last inspection. The Registered Manager confirmed the home has a safe recruitment policy and procedure to ensure that those employed are the right people to work with vulnerable children.

Leadership and management

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

The home has a Statement of Purpose that provides professionals, parents and others with good information about the home and what services it delivers. There is also good information for young people in the children's guide that tells young people what the home is like and what it sets out to do.

There are insufficient staff on duty at all times to provide good quality safe care to young people. On occasions there is only one staff member on duty caring for up to four vulnerable young people with varying needs and requiring varying levels of support. The lone-working risk assessment determined by the home's lone-working policy is out of date and not relevant to the current situation in the home. The failure to review, update and apply this risk assessment compromises the care and safety of young people. Staff rosters are not clearly or sufficiently detailed to show the specific hours worked by staff to evidence the level of support provided to young people. Staff are qualified in their role. However, all training is not up to date to deliver safe and appropriate care to young people, specifically training in physical restraint.

Staff are not provided with an appropriate level of support in order to deliver good quality care to young people. Formal supervision is infrequent and they have not received an annual appraisal to determine what further support, training, guidance and qualifications they need for their role. Staff meetings are infrequent and do not support the staff team in delivering consistent care.

The home is visited each month by an independent person to determine the quality of care provided. The visit examines a range of matters and provides the manager with a report which highlights good practice and areas for improvement.

Internal monitoring of the home is poor. Monitoring is carried out each month and a report provided. However, the process lacks rigour and does not sufficiently assess or detail the quality of care provided, or where the home can improve the care of young people. A number of shortfalls that affect the quality of care and safety of young people have not been identified and rectified. For example, compliance with the placing authority's plan for the young person, records and incidents of when young people go missing, risk assessments, duty rosters, staff appraisals and staff meetings. Where shortfalls in provision are identified the report does not always show what action has been taken to rectify matters to improve the quality of care. A summary report has not been completed or sent to Her Majesty's Chief Inspector so that the regulator can continue to assess the quality of care provided to young people. Some progress has been made since the last inspection in that the statutory requirement and recommendation have both been fully addressed.

The development plan that sets out the future of the home, planned changes, developments and areas for improvement that will benefit young people and improve their quality of care, is significantly out of date and has not been reviewed.

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.