

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	30/05/2012
Inspector	Fiona Parker
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Provision subtype	Children's home

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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is run by a charitable organisation and is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five boys. The home provides care for young people who may need support with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home aims to support young people return to family, move to foster carers, or live independently.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service 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**.

Overall this service is inadequate and provides some adequate and good outcomes for young people. Young people say they feel safe and report they get on with all or most of the staff. Social workers are happy with the care provided.

Young people are cared for in line with satisfactory and individual plans and make progress during their stay. However young people's safety is compromised by insufficient staff training and oversight for physical interventions. It is of concern that the method of interventions could not be verified as appropriate for children and young people. The manager has taken immediate action to identify appropriate training in physical interventions.

Monitoring arrangements do not effectively identify shortfalls and provide sufficient oversight of what goes on in the home. The computer systems do not sufficiently support operations. As a result, important information is inaccessible to staff. This does not satisfy accountable practice in line with regulations.

There are eight breaches of regulation. Two recommendations are made to improve the 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
9 (2001)	ensure the registered provider and registered manager carry on or manage the home with sufficient care, competence and skill. In particular IT systems are fit for purpose, monitoring arrangements and disciplinary procedures are effective and promote young people's welfare (Regulation 9 (1))	31/08/2012
27 (2001)	ensure all staff employed by the registered person receive appropriate training, supervision and appraisal. In particular all staff receive training in managing challenging behaviours and physical interventions specifically for young people and new staff receive supervision in line with company policy (Regulation 27 (4))	31/08/2012
34 (2001)	establish and maintain a 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.. In particular, monitor compliance with the home's policies, identify any concerns about specific incidents and take immediate action to address any issues (Regulation 34 (1) (a) (b))	31/08/2012
17 (2001)	ensure no measure of control or discipline which is excessive, unreasonable or contrary to paragraph (2) shall be used at any time on children accommodated in a children's home. In particular any measures used are accredited as safe and appropriate for use with supporting young people and are not used to enforce compliance with instruction (Regulation 17 (1))	31/08/2012
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, restraint or discipline in a children's home, a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose (Regulation 17B (3))	31/08/2012
16 (2001)	ensure written records are kept of any allegation of abuse or neglect, and of the action taken in response (Regulation 16 (2) (d))	31/08/2012
30 (2001)	ensure if, in relation to a children's home, any of the events listed in schedule 5 takes place, the registered person shall without delay notify the persons indicated in column 2 of the table. In particular ensure notifications to Ofsted include full details and any further relevant information is promptly forwarded to complete a notification (Regulation 30 (1))	31/08/2012
4 (2001)	compile a written statement as to the matters listed in Schedule 1. In particular include in the Statement of Purpose the arrangements made for the control, restraint and discipline of children and a description of any electronic or mechanical	31/08/2012

	means of surveillance of children which may be used in the children's home. (Regulation 4 (1) Schedule 1:16,19))	
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Recommendations

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

- ensure visits under Regulation 33 include relevant checks set out in regulations and guidance and checks of any disciplinary measures and use of restraint (NMS 21.7)
- ensure sanctions and rewards for behaviour are clear, reasonable and fair. In particular that sanctions are not used in an accumulative response to several weeks of challenging behaviour and do not include requesting that police caution young people. (NMS 3.8)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make progress and have good opportunities to broaden their interests and experiences through varied and frequent activities, trips and holidays. A social worker comments 'he is thriving in a way I have not seen before'. The majority of young people regularly attend school and have full opportunity to attain and meet their expected educational targets. Young people begin to form attachments and have a sense of loyalty to others they live with. They learn about being patient, sharing and negotiating which helps to reduce anger and levels of frustration. Young people can express their views and opinions and are confident to make requests and suggestions, for example choices for holidays and commenting on how the home is run. Young people feel listened to and valued as an individual.

Young people enjoy good health and are fully supported to access services to maintain their health. Some links with therapeutic services offer individual support to enable young people to work through emotional difficulties. Young people gain knowledge and skills through participating in groups, for example internet safety and healthy eating groups. This supports young people to learn about keeping safe and the importance of developing healthy lifestyles. Young people develop some practical skills such as preparing meals, cooking, baking and keeping themselves and their rooms clean.

Young people maintain important relationships and, where possible, have choices about how their individual arrangements work to meet family and friends. Staff work well with families and significant people to promote young people's future relationships and sense of identity. Young people have recently engaged in interactive life story work. This begins to support their understanding of their personal histories and charts their ongoing journey to adulthood.

Quality of care

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

Young people report positive relationships with the majority of staff and mostly with each other. Staff promote structure and routine which supports good attendance at school and the opportunity to engage in regular activities. Staff act as good parents by working closely with schools, attending regular meetings and parent's evenings. This promotes satisfactory and good educational outcomes for the majority of young people. One young person comments 'my key worker and all the staff offer to help with my revision'. Staff promote varied and physical activities which fully suits the young people accommodated. Young people have many and varied opportunities, for example to make dens, climb trees and ride bikes which is consistent with taking age-appropriate risks.

The staff aim to create a 'family type' approach to caring for young people. As such young people present as settled and comfortable living in the home and want to stay long term. Young people know how to make a complaint but mostly they voice their opinions directly to the manager and staff. As a result, negotiations and compromises are frequently discussed with young people. Young people generally behave positively although on some occasions incidents are not well managed and sanctions are not effectively and consistently implemented to promote positive behaviours. For example a sanction applied to several weeks of challenging behaviours or a police caution used some weeks after the event. Young people don't consider sanctions such as removing their television and limiting pocket money as effective. One said they 'don't think this works I am not bothered by this'. Care plans are individual and adequately guide staff on caring for young people on a day-to-day basis.

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. Staff respond appropriately to any identified safeguarding matters, and any allegations are reported in line with procedures. However, full records are not available of a recent safeguarding matter. Staff work within protocols with the police and local authority to keep young people safe in the community.

Although restraints are not frequent, those that have taken place compromise the welfare and safety of young people. Information on the type of technique is not available. Therefore, managers are not able to verify the training staff have received and the techniques employed are suitable and safe for supporting young people. Also there is no available policy, guidance or instruction for staff to refer to, to ensure safe practice. As a result inappropriate interventions have taken place and records do not support safe holds have promoted young people's welfare during interventions. In addition, restraints are used in circumstances which do not comply with

legislation, for example managing challenging behaviour and denying young people access to the garden area. Restraint practice and records are not always completed or effectively monitored. Therefore, opportunities to correct practice and address staff performance are missed.

Leadership and management

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

This home has a Registered Manager and a stable staff team which supports promoting relationships with young people. Young people live in a very well-maintained and comfortable family home with good financial resources available.

Appropriate action has been taken to meet one of the requirements from the previous inspection. The deputy has attended training run by the local authority on sexual exploitation and the procedures and tools are now available to support staff in assessing potential risks. The manager has recently started to record monitoring of the home. However, the checks are not frequent or thorough enough to satisfy compliance with policies and improve quality.

Regular independent monitoring takes place. However, these arrangements are not sufficiently robust to identify shortfalls and take action to address weaknesses. This has resulted in unsafe practice on occasion and compromises welfare and safety during interventions. The manager is unable to verify whether the method staff are trained in for physical interventions is accredited and appropriate for supporting young people. This raises concerns for the quality of training available and the structures available in the organisation to develop staff. Where patterns emerge regarding staff performance this is not robustly managed which does not support improving the quality of care.

A number of documents are not available in the home and the computer system has not been fully functional for some months. This is causing disruption to the recording of and retaining of information on safeguarding matters and young people's files. This does not ensure accountable practice and that accurate records are kept. Notifications are forwarded to relevant agencies. However where significant further information becomes available this is not always forwarded to Ofsted to fully complete notifications.

An adequate Statement of Purpose informs interested parties on the service. However, details of control and discipline and the use of bedroom door alarms are not included. Staff report they are supported and enjoy working in the home. Staff attend regular staff meetings which focus on young people. They receive adequate supervision. However, supervision for newly appointed staff is not at the frequency specified in the home's policy.

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.