

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	30/10/2013
Inspector	Sharron Escott
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Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	20/11/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This service is operated by an independent organisation. Children and young people using this service have emotional or behavioural difficulties. The service is registered to provide residential care and accommodation for one child or young person.

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 treated and valued as individuals. Young people feel cared for and safe within the home. They benefit from good having respectful and positive relationships with the care staff.

Young people generally behave well, the structured routine and high expectations set by the manager and staff team enables young people to develop their independent skills and enjoy the diverse range of activities available to them. Young people do not go missing from home and restraints are used infrequently. Rewards for positive behaviour contribute to the young people's growing confidence and emotional resilience. However, sanctions for behaviour considered unacceptable by the home are excessive, restrict young people's liberty and as a result are not effective.

The small staff team are enthusiastic; they have developed warm respectful relationships with the young people. They ensure that young people experience continuity of care by covering shift vacancies in house where possible. Young people say they enjoy living at the home and like the staff who look after them.

Young people are currently making adequate progress towards meeting some of their individual care plan targets. Young people demonstrate a good understanding of independent skills and recognise and accept safety measures in place. However, education services provided by the local authority are predominately activity based and does not follow the national curriculum. As a result young people's education attainment has declined during the academic year. The manager and staff team have

been strong advocates in promoting young people's educational needs by raising concerns with the local authority educational services. Despite these efforts they have been unsuccessful. As a result, young people are underachieving and their educational and social needs are not being successfully met.

In order to improve the service further the home has been asked to improve the arrangements to manage the home in order to ensure effective oversight and operations. The specifics include ensuring maintaining up to date accurate recording systems across a range of areas. The approach to behaviour management also requires review and adjustment to ensure proportionality.

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 the registered manager shall, having regard to the size of the children's home, its statement of purpose, and the number and needs of the children accommodated there, carry on or manage a home with sufficient care, competence and skill (Regulation 9 (1))	15/01/2014
17 (2001)	ensure that 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, this relates to restriction of liberty (Regulation 17 (1))	15/01/2014
24 (2001)	ensure that a written record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response and the outcome of the investigation (Regulation 24 (5))	15/01/2014
26 (2001)	ensure that all staff employed have full and satisfactory information available in relation to all matters specified in schedule 2 (Regulation 26 (3) (d))	15/01/2014
28 (2001)	ensure that a record in permanent form is maintained in respect of each child who is accommodated in a children's home, which includes the information, documents and records specified in Schedule 3 relating to that child and is kept up to date. (Regulation 28 (1))	15/01/2014
34 (2001)	ensure that the registered person shall maintain a system for robustly monitoring the matters in Schedule 6. (Regulation 34 (1)(a))	15/12/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure the views of the child's family, social worker and Independent Reviewing Officer are sought regularly on the child's care (NMS 1.4)
- ensure staff encourage children to take appropriate risks as a normal part of growing up (NMS 4.4)
- ensure where any sanctions, disciplinary measures or restraint are used, children are encouraged to have their views recorded in the records kept by the home (NMS 3.18)
- ensure staff work with the child's education provider to maximise each child's achievement and to minimise any underachievement (NMS 8.4)
- ensure that where only one member of staff is on duty at any time, an up to date risk assessment has been carried out and recorded in writing, identifying any likely risks to children, staff and members of the public. (NMS 17.9).
- ensure a written record is kept in the home detailing the time and date and length of each supervision held for each member of staff, including the registered person (NMS 19.5)
- ensure the management of the home ensures all staff's work is consistent with the regulations and National Minimum Standards (NMS 21.3)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **adequate**.

The staff team provides children and young people with individualised care and support. They are strong advocates in supporting, encouraging and guiding them to achieve their full potential. As a result, young people continue to develop self-esteem, confidence, and positive attachments with the adults who care for them.

Young people are encouraged to develop their independent living skills. The care team provide guidance, encouragement and recognition to successful achievements made. Young people have individualised realistic and achievable targets and incentives set which is regularly reviewed and adjusted. Examples include, one young person being supported to use public transport, save money, cook and clean identified area's within the home.

Contact with family members and significant others has progressed in frequency and quality. As a result, relationships are developing, well managed and contact with family members is a positive experience for the young people.

Young people's educational provisions are provided by their placing authority. Educational programmes predominately focuses on vocational and activity learning. Service provided include two provisions where activity's attended are 1-1 tutoring

and on occasions within a small group. Young people's attendance is good, attainment however is poor. Personal education plans identify limited progress achieved in basic learning subjects. In some instances attainment has deteriorated significantly over the academic terms. The home has made considerable efforts to maximise young people's educational opportunities. Despite these efforts they have been unsuccessful in influencing the Local Authority to review and change the educational services provided to the young people.

Quality of care

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

Staff are clear about their individual and collective responsibilities. There is a strong commitment to provide young people with a safe, stimulating and caring environment which enables them to develop. Young people achieve and their activity interests promoted by a staff team who are enthusiastic, creative and encouraging. Certificates of achievement and memorabilia are proudly displayed and stored at the home.

Young people benefit from positive relationships with care staff. Staff relate well to young people and conversations are relaxed, good humoured and adjusted to meet individuals' understanding. One young person stated, 'It's ok here, the staff are ok, I really like one member of staff.'

Young people are consulted verbally about their daily living choices, additionally they are invited to attend a young people's meeting and talk to staff regarding any concerns or issues they are experiencing. The home has not been successful and creative in utilising their own formal consultation processes to ascertain parents, social workers and young people's views on the quality of care provided.

Young people are involved in the planning of their care, they are encouraged to identify targets and incentives and share thoughts and feelings with care staff they have positive and respectful relationships with. Young people know how to complain and are confident to do so. Young people say all complaints are taken seriously and acted upon. However, records required to be maintained by the home do not adequately detail actions taken, the outcome and the views of the young people as a result required by the regulations.

Young people benefit from taking part in a range of activities that promotes their health and well-being. Memory box's provide young people the opportunity to show family members and reminisce the achievements and new experiences they have enjoyed.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people said they feel safe living at the home. The home ensures that the Local Authority care planning safety strategies are implemented consistently. However, these have been in place for a significant period of time and are custom and practise. Restrictions imposed are risk adverse thus preventing young people to learn how to manage risk and significantly impacts on individuals educational and social development.

Young people do not go missing. The home has established relationships with supporting agencies that ensures correct procedures and protocols are followed to safeguard young people. Placing social workers report that the home is a strong advocate of the young person and it is a pleasure working with the team who are competent and caring.

Positive behaviour is encouraged and promoted in the home. Individualised targets and incentives support young people to develop their independent skills and maintain good health. Sanctions imposed for behaviour not considered appropriate by the home are poor and ineffective. Those imposed are repetitive, inappropriate and restrict young people's liberty. As a result, young people are not supported to learn and reflect from their misbehaviour and are restricted from accessing all reception rooms within the home.

Core staff recruitment files are held at the home. Support and sessional staff recruitment information are maintained at the organisational office. Those recruitment records reviewed do not adequately safeguard young people from harm. Employment history records are inconsistent, commuted Enhanced Criminal Records checks are not accessible and staff members recruitment and training records who have been redeployed to the home has not been verified and checked by the manager.

Young people live in a home that is well maintained and suitably furnished. Regular checks ensures all health and safety matters are maintained to a good standard.

Leadership and management

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

Since the last inspection the newly appointed manager has registered with Ofsted. The staffing composition within this home is small and includes the manager who forms part of the staffing rota. The care staff feel supported by the home manager; they are enthusiastic and positive. The manager and small care team endeavour to cover staff holidays and sickness to maintain continuity of care for the young people. When this is unachievable care staff are redeployed from other homes managed by the organisation. Young people are well informed of any staff changes. However, the actual rotas held within the home do not always reflect these changes, dedicated times for handovers and which staff member is leading in charge of the shift.

The management arrangements at the home lack rigour and efficiency, particularly in

relation to monitoring performance, effective oversight and the record keeping. A significant number of shortfalls are identified within the homes records; overall these are not well maintained. Omissions include no written risk strategies for lone working, placement plans and associated risk assessments are out of date. They do not wholly identify the current needs of the young people and do not reflect the current care planning requirements and needs of young people agreed by the placing authority. Not all records are held within the home, these include supervision and team meeting minutes. Those that are available are deficient in detail, do not demonstrate how staff are able to reflect on their practise and the views of the young people are not considered. As a result, establishing if training needs are met, performance matters are reviewed and developing relationships with young people could not be identified.

External and internal monitoring systems are not effective and fail to adequately identify deficiencies within the records managed and maintained by the home. As a result, monitoring young people's progress and patterns and trends of behaviours are not effectively monitored and evaluated to ensure they continue to achieve positive outcomes.

The home's Statement of Purpose is accessible to the young people, parents and social workers. A young people's guide is also produced which provides them with information they need to know about the home. The home has a development plan that details areas for improvement and continuation of the service provided.

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* and the evaluation schedule for the inspection of children's homes.