

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Sharron Escott
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Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	24/01/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This service is operated by a 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 **good**.

Young people make good progress in relation to their starting points. The staff team are experienced and have established positive relationships with young people. They are dedicated in supporting young people's achievements and provide a supportive and nurturing environment with consistent boundaries.

The strengths of the service include the commitment of the manager and staff team to ensuring young people are treated as an individual and their daily living needs are met. This has enabled young people to develop their self-esteem and build on their confidence. Young people are encouraged to take risks as part of their growing up; as a result risk taking behaviours have reduced significantly and young people are thriving in a home they feel relaxed and comfortable in.

Areas identified for improvement include the recording of complaints, monitoring activities, individualised missing from home protocols.

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
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))	21/09/2012
34 (2001)	ensure the person carrying out the visits shall interview with their consent and in private, children accommodated there and their parents as appears necessary in order to form an opinion of the standard of care provided in the home. (Regulation 33 (4) (a))	05/10/2012

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 young person, the young person's family, social worker and Independent Reviewing Officer are sought regularly on the young person's care (NMS 1.4)
- ensure the Runaway and Missing from Home and Care protocols and procedures are maintained and managed by the police and are individualised to meet the needs of the young people in placement. (NMS 5.6)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

The care staff and manager provide young people with individualised care to help them to work towards achieving their full potential. With staff support and encouragement, young people make good progress, particularly in reducing risk taking behaviours and appropriate interaction with adults and peer's.

The staff are successful in promoting young people's education. Attendance is good and educational attainment levels are gradually progressing.

Staff members effectively manage, motivate and encourage young people to increase their range of social skills, making safer choices and to express their wishes and feelings. As a result, inappropriate and risk taking behaviours have reduced significantly and young people have a better self-view and are more confident.

Young people enjoy activities both in the home and out in the community. Personalised activity planners demonstrate how staff promote opportunities to pursue personal interests. Direct work and verbal consultation show that young people feel safe, enjoy living at the home and they can identify a member of staff who they can talk to and who they enjoy spending time with.

The home works in partnership with families and significant others and this helps young people maintain positive and frequent contact. A parent said, 'the staff look after my son well, he is happy at the home and he is doing well'.

Quality of care

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

Young people say that they feel they are listened to and their wishes and feelings are requested and considered on the way the home is run. Young people say 'I like it here, the staff care; they help me and take me out on activities'.

Young people really thrive within this nurturing and supportive environment. Young people's placement plans are detailed and identify their individualised needs taking into account culture, race, religion and gender. All placement plans are frequently reviewed to include current daily living needs. Personalised targets identified are realistic, as a result young people are developing independent skills and care plan objectives are being met.

Young people benefit from a competent and enthusiastic staff team who are able to provide innovative care to support in their placement. Relationships between staff and young people are friendly, positive and good natured with lots of humour. There are clear pathways on how to make a complaint and young people are happy with the way staff respond to any areas of concern.

Staff implement positive behaviour strategies with rewards; records evidence sanctions imposed are frequently reviewed to ensure the young people are learning from their misbehaviour. Young people say sanctions are fair and reasonable.

Furnishings and décor are of a good standard. Young people engage in house activities that include the use of board games, consoles, reading and relaxation. Young people's bedrooms are personalised to their own tastes. Young people were extremely positive about their home and their achievements made since being placed.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people report that they feel safe in the home; their privacy is respected and there are locks on bathroom doors. Staff knock and ask permission to enter before entering rooms.

Visitors are vetted and identification is checked before entry is allowed. Staff are carefully selected and do not start work until all vetting checks and references are available and they have undertaken an induction programme. This covers essential training in keeping young people safe and dealing with child protection issues. In addition, specialist training is frequently provided for the staff to ensure they are meeting the changing needs of the young people. Practice is supported by detailed and summarised policies; quick guides and useful telephone numbers are easily accessible for all staff.

All staff are trained in the use of restraint if needed to manage difficult behaviour. Incidents of restraint are minimal and are only used to safeguard young people. Incidents of absence without authority are rare. Staff are clear on the procedure and appropriate actions to take if an incident should happen. Relationships with the local police community officer are established; however individual protocols have not yet been developed to ensure safeguarding strategies are specific and personal to the individual young person.

The complaints system is accessible to young people within the young person's guide. Young people say their concerns and complaints are listened to and they are happy with how they are managed. However the records do not adequately detail the action taken, therefore the outcomes are not known to all staff and young people.

Care plans identify risks posed by young people and how these are to be dealt with to minimise difficult behaviour and increase the likelihood of positive outcomes. Health care needs are identified and any appointments from supporting agencies are supported by the care staff.

The environment is physically safe and secure, young people are involved in fire drills and know where fire extinguishers and fire blankets are situated. There are smoke detectors throughout the property. Gas and electrical testing is carried out on a regular basis and staff receive training in fire safety as part of the induction programme.

Leadership and management

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

Since the last inspection a newly appointed manager is in post, who is processing an application for registration with Ofsted.

The home's Statement of Purpose is accessible to the young people, parents and social workers. This document has been recently reviewed and amended to reflect the management and staffing changes. The home has a development plan that details the current service provided; areas for improvement and development are clearly identified to support improved outcomes for young people.

The home has a history of good compliance. There were no requirements or recommendations made at the last inspection in January. The service continues to demonstrate capacity for further improvement and during this inspection there was a strong commitment shown to addressing the identified shortfalls and making the necessary improvements, including ensuring its own quality monitoring processes includes consultation with the young people, social workers and parents.

The home has a small team and the manager works as a team member. There is usually just one member of staff on duty and a lone working policy was available for inspection. Staff retention is good, they say they feel supported and receive regular supervision. They benefit from attending regular staff meetings that young people are invited to attend, as a result the young people are central in the day-to-day running of the home by contributing to the agenda, discussions and decision making.

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.