

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC005067
Inspection date	14/08/2013
Inspector	Jo Stephenson
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	24/06/2013
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2013

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is part of a small private organisation providing up to six placements for young people who have emotional and 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 **adequate**.

Young people say they are happy in the home and feel supported by staff. Staff are suitably experienced and able to recognise the individual needs of young people. Internal support plans are in place to promote positive outcomes for young people, and detail personalised care programmes and interventions. However, internal plans are not consistently supported by up-to-date statutory placement plans and case files do not include all documentation as required. As a result, young people do not benefit from an integrated approach to meeting their care and welfare needs.

Significant improvements have been introduced to ensure consultation with young people. Young people are involved in decisions about their current care requirements, plans for their future, educational and learning options and the development of the home. Relationships between young people and staff are positive and young people say they feel safe.

The majority of requirements raised at the previous inspection have been actioned by a newly appointed manager. A young people's guide is now in place that details the procedure for making a complaint and the contact information for Ofsted. The complaints procedure and associated monitoring records have been revised, although details of the actions taken by the home remain vague and further transparency is required.

Extensive improvements have been made to the environment. The home has been re-decorated and further maintenance work is planned to upgrade parts of the building. Health and safety, and fire safety requirements have been met. Young people are participating in regular fire drills and all fire equipment service schedules

have been completed.

A lack of consistent management over a prolonged period of time has had a negative impact on the home. However, the recently appointed manager, who is in the process of registering with Ofsted, has made significant improvements to the home and these have had a positive impact on the quality of care and outcomes for young people. Robust quality assurance systems have been introduced to monitor the performance of the service, the quality of care provided and outcomes for young people. All monitoring reports have been received by Ofsted. New systems are supported by improved consultation arrangements, shift planning structure and co-ordination, and the effective evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. Medication administration arrangements have been reviewed and amended and staff have completed additional training in this area. The manager has introduced effective procedures to ensure that all significant events are notified to the appropriate individuals, including the Local Authority Designated Officer. Furthermore, individual records of measures of control and restraint used in the home now include all required information. Nevertheless, central logs to monitor the frequency of physical intervention are combined with other incidents that occur in the home and this means that records are confusing and difficult to evaluate.

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
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, discipline or restraint in a children's home, a written record is made in volume kept for the purpose (Regulation 17B(3))	16/10/2013
24 (2001)	ensure that a written record is made of any complaint. This specifically relates to the action taken in response (Regulation 24(5))	16/10/2013
28 (2001)	maintain in respect to each child who is accommodated in a children's home a record in permanent form which includes the information, documents and records specified in Schedule 3 relating to that child; is kept up to date; and is signed and dated by the author of each written entry. (Regulation 28(1)(a)(b)(c))	16/10/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure written records kept by the home when a child goes missing detail action taken by staff, the circumstances of the child's return, and reasons given by the child for running away from the home, and any action taken in the light of those reasons (NMS 5.10)
- ensure visits of the home carried out under Regulation 33 include relevant checks set out in regulations and guidance and checks of any disciplinary measures and use of restraint and records of missing person's reports (NMS 21.7)
- ensure each child's Placement Plan is monitored by a keyworker within the home who ensures that the requirements of the plan are implemented in the day-to-day care of that child (NMS 25.2)
- ensure the home contacts placing authorities to request statutory reviews or visits if overdue for any child (NMS 25.5)
- ensure the results of all statutory reviews and reviews of Placement Plans are recorded on the child's file, and individuals responsible for pursuing actions at the home arising from reviews are clearly identified. (NMS 25.8)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **adequate**.

Young people make progress in their lives. Staff promote the positive achievements of young people through verbal praise and recently introduced incentive and reward programmes. As a result, young people gain from improved self-esteem and confidence and because of this they are able to build and sustain appropriate relationships with staff and each other. The manager has re-introduced one-to-one keywork sessions with young people to support them to understand their backgrounds and reflect on the impact this has had on their development. Young people say that they are able to 'open up' to staff and feel supported.

Young people have ample opportunities to socialise with their friends outside of the home and subsequently, they are not isolated from their peer group. Young people are encouraged to sustain and further progress relationships with their families and staff advocate for young people to have increased contact if this is suitable. Agreed contact arrangements; including the frequency of contact, are clearly defined within case files.

Staff promote a healthy life style for young people by encouraging regular physical exercise and healthy eating. New menus have been introduced in consultation with young people and this means that young people are urged to consider the positive impact healthy eating and maintaining a healthy life style will have on their future. Young people now participate in keywork sessions to look at health factors; such a drug and alcohol abuse, and reflect on the long-term implications of these on both their physical and emotional health. However, these sessions are not constantly

included in the review of internal plans and this means that case files do not reflect the progress made by young people.

The home has a registered education facility on site that is accessed by some young people. Young people attending this school benefit from personalised and structured time-tables that reflect their learning needs, key stage targets and barriers to education. For young people attended external schools, dedicated teaching staff work closely with institutions to ensure the achievements young people make in education are mirrored in internal support plans. This means that the progress young people make in education is recorded and celebrated.

Young people participate in meetings to discuss the development of the home, deliberate food menu choices and plan activities. For example, young people are involved in on-going re-decoration programmes in the home and are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms. Staff plan an extensive range of community activities for young people, which includes membership of local sport and leisure clubs. Participation by young people in these groups has improved since the last inspection.

Staff assess and evaluate the independence skills through internal care plans and keywork sessions. Independent living programmes are available to prepare eligible young people for their transition into adulthood.

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy generally good relationships with each other. Relationships and interactions between young people and staff are constructive and focus on acceptable boundaries and this means young people feel safe in the home.

Staff ensure that young people have personalised plans in place to identify and support their health, education, care and welfare needs. Young people are consulted on the contents of these plans during keywork sessions with allocated staff. Internal care plans include information on identified behaviours that give rise for concern, and are cross referenced to individualised risk assessments. Nevertheless, intervention strategies used to address unacceptable behaviours are unclear and not regularly reviewed. Consequently, young people do not benefit from a comprehensive approach to managing their behaviour. Furthermore, up-to-date statutory placement plans are not in place for all young people and therefore internal support plans are not regularly reviewed or amended to reflect the changing needs of young people. Case files for young people do not include all required documentation and information. For example, statutory review reports and documents are not available.

Young people access all primary healthcare services, such as doctors, dentist and optician appointments and their general health needs are met. The manager has modified medication administration systems to ensure that the potential for errors is minimised. Robust audits of medication retained in the home; when and if this was administered and by who, means that young people's health needs are

actioned and promoted.

Dedicated teaching staff actively seek to resolve identified barriers to education by engaging with providers and educational psychologists to find practical solutions to addressing learning needs. For some young people, their attendance has significantly improved since coming to the home. Young people participate in individual and group activities. Staff plan activities with young people and a range of options are considered, including physical exercise and relaxation time. Activity risk assessments are now completed by the manager prior to any off-site activities taking place and this means that the safety of young people is upheld.

The home has amended the complaints procedure and all young people confirm they understand how to raise a concern. Young people say they feel able to make complaints and are confident that these will be addressed. Improvements made to complaints recording systems demonstrate that complaints are addressed within appropriate time scales, although details of actions taken by the home are unclear and further work is required to safeguard the transparency of this procedure.

The home benefits from extensive open space and a picturesque landscape. The internal environment has been re-decorated and a housekeeper has been appointed to ensure that acceptable standards of hygiene are maintained. Essential health and safety checks relating to food storage temperatures are now completed on a daily basis.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people say they feel safe and that issues of bullying are rare and appropriately addressed by staff. Staff have a good understanding of safeguarding procedures and receive regular training to support their knowledge.

At the last inspection a number of requirements were raised in relation to safeguarding and protecting young people from the risk of harm. These have been addressed. Allegations and suspicions of harm are now addressed within suitable timescales. All previous allegations have been referred to the appropriate authorities, including Ofsted and the Local Authority Designated Officer, and actions taken to address and resolve these concerns. Revised recording and monitoring systems have been introduced to identify concerns regarding the practice and performance of staff or others. Documents completed clarify actions taken by the home, detail referral processes and record investigation outcomes and correspondence with the relevant agencies. As a result, the safety of young people is promoted.

Furthermore, measures of control records, including the use of physical restraint now adhere to legal requirements. All necessary information pertaining to the duration of restraints and actions taken by staff is recorded and monitored by the manager. Nevertheless, the central log combines all negative incidents that occur in the home, with those that result in physical intervention and this means that records are

misleading and require clarity.

Incidents of young people missing from the home have reduced since the last inspection. Staff ensure that risk assessments are reviewed following each episode and that potential antecedents to missing from home events are recorded in internal placement plans. These are supported by protocols and working relationships between the home and local police. Nonetheless, records kept by the home do not include actions taken by staff or the circumstances of young people's return. For example, young people are not encouraged to consider or discuss reasons for these events and this means that people do not reflect on their behaviour.

Young people now take part in regular fire drills, including night time drills. Annual systems checks and tests of fire safety equipment have been completed since the last inspection, and necessary repairs actioned. Local fire and rescue services have visited the home to review the fire risk assessment and this document has been amended to reflect this review. Regular environmental health and safety checks have been established to cover all aspects of the building, including food preparation areas, rubbish collection areas and known hazards within the home, such as limited night time lighting. Visual health and safety checks are completed by senior staff on a daily basis and all items requiring action are immediately addressed. In addition, vehicle checks are now completed and recorded on a daily basis and the completion of these records is monitored by the manager and senior staff. This means that the young people are protected from the risk of serious harm.

Leadership and management

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

The home has been without a manager, who is registered with Ofsted since October 2012. A new manager was appointed in July 2013 and is in the process of applying for registration. However, at this time, the application and registration process has not been concluded. This has influenced the judgement given but does not impact negatively on the quality of care or outcomes for young people promoted under the new manager.

Since the last inspection, the home has made significant improvements to the quality of the service provided for young people. This means that outcomes for young people have improved and the home can demonstrate a capacity for continued improvement. The manager has ensured that the majority of requirements raised at the previous inspection have been addressed. Robust and effective quality assurance systems have been introduced by the manager to continually monitor the progress and development of the home. Systems identify shortfalls against the regulations, and balance qualitative and quantitative data to vigorously evaluate actions required and include consultation with young people. Furthermore, all previous monitoring reports required by Ofsted under Regulation 33 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2011, have been received. Nevertheless, the information included in these reports does not comprise checks of disciplinary measures of control used or missing from home events.

Safeguarding concerns and referral processes are now managed in line with regulations and this means that the safety and welfare of young people is protected and promoted. Revised internal records now capture information relating to admissions to and discharges from the home, the frequency and effectiveness of health and safety and fire checks and certify the correct administration of medication for young people.

A number of staff have recently left the home and new staff have been appointed and have completed their induction period. The manager has implemented a detailed training plan that recognises the complex behaviours of young people and ensures that staff training is regularly reviewed and updated. Formal and regular supervision is now in place for all staff that evaluates their practice and performance and identifies their learning needs. Staff say they feel motivated and empowered by the changes made to the home and because of this young people benefit from working with an enthusiastic staff team.

The Statement of Purpose is well presented and details the aims and objectives of the home. It gives clear guidance on the facilities and services provided. Young people and the placing authority understand the purpose of the home and the outcomes it aspires to achieve. A young person's guide to the home has been introduced that includes an overview of the complaints procedure and contact information for Ofsted.

Staff liaise with allocated social workers and placing authorities on a regular basis. Nevertheless, this communication is not effectively recorded in case files. Social workers do not visit young people at the frequency expected, and this issue is not raised at review meetings. Some young people do not have up-to-date statutory placement plans in place and this means that internal support plans are not reviewed or amended in line with the review process. As a result, young people do not experience an integrated approach to meeting their needs. Furthermore, previous statutory reviewed reports are not consistently provided by the placing authority or included in case files. However, recent action plans implemented by the manager to address these shortfalls have been effective for some young people.

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.