

## Inspection report for children's home

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| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC005067         |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 14/11/2012       |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Elizabeth Tanner |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | Full             |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>       | Children's home  |

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|--------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 11/10/2011 |
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## 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**.

Overall this service provides an adequate quality of care and achieves some adequate and good outcomes for young people. Some young people make good progress educationally. Care is personalised and individual and overall young people enjoy varied activities and opportunities. Their health improves and risk taking behaviour reduces.

Young people say they feel safe in the home and get on with most staff. However, the behaviour management policy of the home is not implemented in a consistent manner by staff and at times young people receive differing responses when they behave in a challenging manner. This is in particular respect to attendance at the onsite educational provision and means that some young people do not fully engage with the education available.

Weaknesses were identified in the monitoring arrangements for the home which do not assist managers in the identification of shortfalls and consequently improvement has not been effectively promoted. For example, some maintenance issues have not been identified and therefore have not been addressed and an issue relating to the recording systems for allegations about staff has not been identified. Very recent changes in the management structure have taken place and significant improvements in the effective management of the home were evident on this inspection.

Six requirements and three recommendations are made to comply with regulations national minimum standards 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   |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 18<br>(2001) | ensure the home is organised so as to further children's participation in education including regular attendance at school and participation in school activities (Regulation 18(1)(b))                                                                    | 25/01/2013 |
| 23<br>(2001) | all parts of the home are as far as practicable free from hazards to the health and safety of the children. This is in particular reference to the water temperature in the home and the pot holes in the access road (Regulation 23(a))                   | 07/12/2012 |
| 31<br>(2001) | ensure that all parts of the children's home used by children are kept in good structural repair. This is in particular regard to the cracked panes of glass in the home (Regulation 31(2)(d))                                                             | 31/01/2013 |
| 32<br>(2001) | take adequate precautions against the risk of fire. This is in particular regard to the practice of maintaining a fire door open by use of a catch (Regulation 32(1)(a))                                                                                   | 16/11/2012 |
| 33<br>(2001) | ensure that the person carrying out visits under this regulation interviews young people and persons working in the home with their consent and in private, in order to form an opinion of the standard of care provided in the home (Regulation 33(4)(a)) | 31/01/2013 |
| 34<br>(2001) | maintain a system for monitoring matters set out in Schedule 6 at appropriate intervals and ensure a report of any such review is supplied to the HMCI. (Regulation 34(1)and(2))                                                                           | 31/01/2013 |

### Recommendations

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

- ensure sanctions and rewards for behaviour are clear, reasonable and fair and are understood by all staff and children (NMS 3.8)
- ensure that the staff group who are in day-to-day contact with children includes staff of both genders whenever possible (NMS 17.10)
- ensure that a comprehensive summary of any allegation made against a particular member of staff, including details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved, a record of any action taken and the decisions reached, is kept on the person's confidential file and a copy is provided to the person as soon as the investigation is concluded. (NMS 20.7)

## Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people are making sound progress overall. Staff promote and celebrate the achievements of young people and as a result young people develop a positive self-view. Inclusion in the development of their care plans and the planning of activities helps promote a sense of belonging.

Young people's emotional health improves in this placement and effective health plans are in place. Young people access primary healthcare services through appointments with doctors, dentists and opticians. Specialist support is sourced when necessary. Young people confirm they are supported to make healthy life choices. A young person said that at the home, 'I do no weed at all; at home I smoked it all the time.' Smoking is discouraged but this has not led to a reduction by young people in this behaviour.

Some young people make good progress in education. Some, at the point of placement, were excluded from school; they are now attending full-time schooling and achieving educationally. Young people who receive schooling on site are not accessing full-time provision and their progress is not as well promoted. These young people do not have personal educational plans in place to assure a consistent approach between the home and schooling provision. There is a lack of clarity about the consequences for young people if they do not engage in education and a requirement has been made in respect of this.

Young people are supported to participate in a number of leisure activities. These are arranged on an individual basis, according to the interests of the young people. Young people also take responsibility for tasks within the home environment, such as caring for the chickens. Through this young people are able to develop their confidence and skills as well as take responsibility for their environment.

Contact is recognised as important for young people and is supported in line with care plans. Family members are welcome at the home ensuring young people are not isolated from family members.

## Quality of care

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

Staff are concerned about the welfare of young people and there are positive relationships between most staff members and young people. This helps promote a caring and supportive atmosphere. A young person said, 'They care for us well, they listen to me and do most of the things we ask.' Young people are consulted about their individual care plans and through young people's meetings they can discuss issues pertaining to the home itself. Such involvement means that young people are involved in decisions made in relation to them and their care.

Staff work hard to promote socially acceptable behaviour and detailed risk management plans are in place. However, differences in the interpretation of behaviour plans mean that staff do not provide a consistent response towards young people's challenging behaviour. At times sanctions and rewards are applied in different ways by different staff meaning that such interventions may be ineffective or confusing for young people. This is particularly in respect to attendance at education and a recommendation has been made about this.

Young people are encouraged to engage in a variety of activities, ranging from sports or musical activities to joining organisations such as the local cadet force. Such activities promote peer relationships and help young people learn to relate appropriately with others.

The home has a robust complaints procedure and young people confirmed they know how to make a complaint. The numbers of complaints received by young people are few and all are responded to appropriately by the Registered Manager.

Staff support young people's health needs and mainstream education well overall. They ensure appointments are kept and are keen to pursue appropriate educational placements for young people in their care. Staff are willing to challenge the lack of provision for young people and work with other agencies to seek appropriate provision for young people.

The home is clean and reasonably maintained. The home consists of two home bases a few yards apart with additional educational units; it is located in an isolated rural location. Some areas of the home are in need of decoration and there are plans in place for this. The communal living areas do have a homely feel and young people use these areas to relax and engage with staff. Meals are eaten together, thus promoting a sense of community and aiding the development of social skills. Two cracked window panes in the home have not been replaced and a requirement has been made about this to ensure young people learn that good maintenance of their living accommodation is important.

## **Safeguarding children and young people**

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

Young people rarely go missing from the home but when they do staff follow the procedures agreed with the police and local authority. Because of the remote location specific environmental assessments are in place to address the risks to young people who may go missing in the cold weather. An emergency pack is prepared to assist staff as they search in the vicinity.

There are sufficient numbers of staff and these staff are appropriately trained to protect young people from significant harm. Staff are carefully recruited and selected. The home undertakes appropriate checks and obtains written references to assess people's suitability to work at the home. Investigations into allegations of

abuse are dealt with appropriately and all relevant agencies consulted. However, the written records of the allegation, the actions taken by the home and the outcome are not recorded on staff files. This means young people are not as protected as they might be because information is not retained appropriately.

Young people are cared for in a secure environment. Staff say they are confident about reporting any safeguarding concerns. Staff receive training in child protection, behaviour management and the use of physical intervention. The use of physical restraint is reducing in this home, but staff are trained to ensure it is used safely to protect young people if necessary. Within the home environment the behaviour policy is adequately understood and applied although greater consistency in this area may promote improved outcomes. Young people say they feel safe here and do not identify bullying as a problem.

The home's environment has appropriate risk assessments in place to ensure young people are protected from accident and injury. However, on inspection it was found that the hot water temperature was too high leading to a risk of scalding to young people or staff. The access to the home is along an isolated unmade road which has a number of pot holes. The depth of these in this terrain means that access by emergency vehicles could be delayed as these pot holes are negotiated. A fire door was found to be hooked open in the house and this compromises the effectiveness of the fire safety provision. Because of the good staffing levels, the impact of this on the potential safety of young people is limited but has the potential to be significant. Requirements have been made in respect of these shortfalls.

## **Leadership and management**

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

This home is managed by a new manager who has been in post for a few days. The manager is fully aware of the need to register as a manager with Ofsted. In this short period of time the manager has effectively demonstrated an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. An action plan is in place to achieve improvements in aspects of the home so as to improve outcomes and the quality of care for young people. A development plan is being prepared.

Action has been taken to meet the requirements and recommendations from the previous inspection. However, further breaches of regulation are identified as a result of this inspection. Independent monitoring is undertaken but this is not sufficiently robust or accurate to identify shortfalls. Within this monitoring there is limited evidence of the views of young people or staff being sought. Internal monitoring has not been maintained for some months. This means that opportunities to take action to address weakness and promote improvement are not being maintained or reviewed.

The house is adequately resourced with sufficient staff numbers; however, this does not include staff of both genders, which is not fully reflecting the needs of the young people in placement. The manager has identified this as a concern and the matter is

being addressed.

Supervision is held regularly and appraisals are planned by the manager. Staff say they enjoy their work and feel supported. Training needs are met and team meetings held regularly. This allows staff opportunities to develop their practice and improve the care they offer 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* (March 2011) and the evaluation schedule for children's homes.