

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC005067
Inspection date	24/06/2013
Inspector	Pete Hylton
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	04/02/2013
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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 **inadequate**.

The home fails to provide appropriate levels of care to young people. As a result, the quality of care for young people is inadequate. Staff are not clear in their duties or responsibilities because of inconsistent management and a lack of routine. Young people do not benefit from an environment that safely meets their needs. Failures to meet regulation mean that the safety of young people is affected. There are significant shortfalls in the home's records.

Young people did not raise concerns about their safety to the inspector. Relationships between staff and young people are positive and young people report that they are happy at the home.

The management of the home is inadequate. There are weaknesses in staff training, staff supervision, quality assurance and ensuring that significant events are notified appropriately. The organisation has taken some steps to improve the quality of the home.

As a result of this inspection, 16 requirements and one recommendation have been made. A compliance notice has been issued in respect of notifying relevant parties of significant events and also in relation to forwarding to HMCI a copy of the report of each visit undertaken to monitor the conduct of the home. Furthermore, Ofsted has notified relevant agencies of concerns relating to the home.

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
4 (2001)	produce a guide to the children's home (in these Regulations referred to as "the children's guide") which shall include the address and telephone number of HMCI (Regulation 4 (3) (c))	02/08/2013
15 (2001)	ensure that children accommodated in the home are provided at all reasonable times with access to the following facilities which they may use without reference to persons working in the home - a telephone on which to make and receive calls in private (Regulation 15 (4) (a))	02/08/2013
16 (2001)	ensure that there is prompt referral to the local authority in whose area the children's home is situated, of any allegation of abuse or neglect affecting any child accommodated in the children's home (Regulation 16 (2) (b))	02/08/2013
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 which shall include all details as required, including the duration of the restraint (Regulation 17B (3) (a-i) (4) (a))	02/08/2013
21 (2001)	ensure, subject to paragraph (3), that any medicine which is prescribed for a child is administered as prescribed, to the child for whom it is prescribed and no other child (Regulation 21 (2) (b))	02/08/2013
23 (2001)	ensure that all parts of the home to which children have access are so far as reasonably practicable free from hazards to their health and safety (Regulation 23 (a))	02/08/2013
23 (2001)	ensure that any activities in which children participate are so far as reasonably practicable free from avoidable risks (Regulation 23 (b))	02/08/2013
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))	02/08/2013
27 (2001)	ensure that all persons employed receive appropriate training and supervision (Regulation 27 (4) (a))	02/08/2013
29 (2001)	maintain in the children's home the records specified in Schedule 4 and ensure that they are kept up to date (Regulation 29 (1))	02/08/2013
30 (2001)	ensure that where any of the events listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 5 takes place, the registered person shall without delay notify the persons indicated in respect of the event in column 2 of the table (Regulation 30 (1)) *	02/08/2013
31	ensure that all parts of the children's home used by children	02/08/2013

(2001)	are kept clean and reasonably decorated and maintained (Regulation 31 (2) (e))	
32 (2001)	ensure that the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and any regulations made under it, except for article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home (Regulation 32 [(1A)] (b))	02/08/2013
33 (2001)	supply a copy of the report required to be made under paragraph (4) (c) to HMCI (Regulation 33 (5) (a)) *	02/08/2013
34 (2001)	establish and maintain a system for improving the quality of care provided in the children's home (Regulation 34 (1) (b))	02/08/2013
34 (2001)	ensure that the system referred to in paragraph (1) shall provide for consultation with children accommodated in the home, their parents and placing authorities. (Regulation 34 (3))	02/08/2013

*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice

Recommendations

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

- ensure that children understand their health needs, how to maintain a healthy lifestyle and to make informed decisions about their own health. (NMS 6.2)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **adequate**.

Young people report that they like living at the home. In some cases, good progress has been made in relation to young people's starting points. Young people have positive views about the home and the staff team. Relationships between some staff and young people are positive. A young person talked about progress with emotions and being happy at the home. Another young person said that they were happy and enjoyed living here. However incidents of challenging behaviour remain high.

All young people are engaged in educational activities. An on-site school provides education for some young people and they make progress in accessing a structured timetable. Where young people access off-site education, they fully attend and make good progress. For example, where young people have previously experienced disrupted educational histories they are now settled and making progress.

Young people enjoy access to a range of activities in and outside of the home. This enables young people to develop their social skills and broaden their experiences.

Young people are encouraged and supported to maintain their family relationships, where it is appropriate to do so. Young people confirmed that they do see their families and make relationships outside of the home. This enables young people to form and sustain attachments with important people in their lives. As a result, young people develop their emotional resilience and knowledge of their backgrounds.

The health outcomes for young people are potentially compromised because staff do not manage health needs, such as medication and smoking cessation appropriately.

Quality of care

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

There are failures to meet regulation that impact negatively on the safety and welfare of young people. The staff team are unmotivated and lack clear direction and routine. Basic care matters such as checking the environment and encouraging young people to follow healthy lifestyles are not at the heart of staff practice.

Young people's education is promoted by the staff team. Young people are encouraged to follow their individual programmes and are supported to engage in educational tasks. This ensures that young people understand the importance of education and are supported in making progress.

The health needs of young people are not appropriately met or promoted. Records of medication administering show that prescribed medication has not been correctly administered to young people. As a result, the health of young people is not promoted as courses of treatment are not appropriately followed. Young people are not actively encouraged and supported to stop smoking. As a result, young people are not making adequate progress to develop healthy lifestyles or understand key health risks. They are not provided with appropriate guidance, support and advice on their health needs. This, in turn, affects their outcomes.

Regular young people's meetings enable all young people to have their say about matters in the home. This ensures that young people feel listened to and that their views are heard and acted upon. A young person commented, 'staff listen to me and talk about what bothers me.' Young people confirm that they are able to have a say about meals in the home and their choices are respected. However, there are shortfalls with regards to food safety in the home. Not all staff are appropriately trained in food safety. Food waste is also not regularly taken out from the kitchen. These shortfalls are further impacted by such waste being stored on a kitchen side in an area where food is prepared and stored. This has the potential to place young people at risk of harm through cross-contamination. The local environment health service has been made aware of this concern.

The physical environment is poorly maintained and does not provide a homely environment for young people. For example, a young person's bathroom has a shower that leaks water onto the floor and there are stains on the walls. This presents a slip hazard to young people and is an unsightly environment.

Young people confirmed to the inspector that they know how to use the home's complaints procedure. However, where concerns are raised by young people, the home's complaints procedure is not appropriately followed. For example, where young people indicate they are unhappy with a sanction, a lack of follow up means

this complaint is not recorded or acted on appropriately. The young person's guide does not contain the address and telephone number for Ofsted although all other required contact details are recorded. Young people have access to a telephone although they have to ask staff to use this. Therefore, young people are unable to contact services for support, their families or friends without asking staff first.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

The safety of young people is not adequately promoted. As a result of failures to meet regulation, young people are at risk of harm from unsafe practice and poor risk assessment.

A lack of consistent recording means that restraint, sanctions and missing episodes are recorded on individual sheets that are not stored appropriately. The recording of restraint is not fully effective because records are not made in a volume kept for the purpose of recording restraint. However, this shortfall does not impact on the outcomes for young people.

Since the last inspection there have been several incidents requiring notification to Ofsted. Young people have been hospitalised; the police have been called to the home; there have been complaints about staff and there have been safeguarding concerns. These events have not been notified and as a result, the regulator has been unable to review serious incidents in the home. Furthermore, there has been a failure to notify the local authority where there have been concerns over the safety and well-being of young people.

Young people are exposed to unnecessary risks as a result of poor risk assessment processes. As a result, their safety is not appropriately promoted. There have been trips away from the home where staffing levels have not been sufficient and this has further affected the safety of young people. For example, where young people require 1:1 support, staffing levels on trips have not catered for this. Incident reports show that unsafe situations occurred due to insufficient staff.

The safety of the home's vehicles, used to transport young people, is not adequately checked. Two of the home's vehicles were found to have damage to tyres. Although this damage had been noted on vehicle check forms, no remedial action was taken. This lack of appropriate oversight and safety checking puts young people at serious risk of harm. Actions were taken on inspection to ensure these vehicles were no longer used until they were assessed as safe.

The physical environment is poorly maintained and this places young people at further risk of harm. Records in the home show that monthly checks of fire prevention and detection equipment are not regularly completed. A smoke detector in a young person's bedroom is not securely affixed to the ceiling. This shortfall has the potential to pose serious risks to fire safety as the smoke detector might be

damaged. Ofsted has notified the local fire and rescue service of these concerns.

Leadership and management

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

The home was last inspected in February 2013 and was judged to be making satisfactory progress. The organisation has failed to address the two requirements and one recommendation for improvement that were made at that time. There have been failures to notify Ofsted of serious incidents and monitoring reports have not been sent to the regulator as required. The home has been without a Registered Manager for 39 weeks. An applicant was put forward to be registered but has since left the home.

The organisation has taken some steps to improve the management of the home. A deputy manager from within the organisation has been supporting the home and there have been some improvements. For example, the frequency of consultation with young people has improved and there has been improvement to recording systems in the home.

The home's admission and discharge register is not appropriately updated. As a result, the details of young people staying at the home are not recorded and dates are missing. The organisation has failed to send in monitoring reports, as required by Regulation 33 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2011, at the required intervals. This means that the regulator has been unable to fully review the standard of care in the home during February and March 2013. The manager's own monitoring reports do not identify shortfalls against Regulations and national minimum standards. Therefore, these reports do not improve the quality of care in the home. Furthermore, the views of young people, parents and placing authorities are not explored as required. As a result, these views do not identify or influence improvements to the home.

The staff team are poorly managed and lack clear direction and routine. Some staff training has taken place and all staff are now trained in restraint and fire safety. However, not all staff are appropriately trained in safeguarding and food hygiene. This has the potential to put young people at risk from staff who are not competent in these areas of care practice. This is further compounded by a lack of regular formal supervision for staff. Records of supervision show that some staff have not received supervision for several months. This means that the practice of staff is not explored, discussed or reviewed appropriately.

There have been several incidents in the home that were not notified to the local authority. These incidents involved allegations of harm to children and the practice of staff. Actions were taken during the inspection to ensure that appropriate referral was made. However, systemic failures in the reporting of incidents mean that child protection services and Ofsted have been unable to review a number of incidents in the home. This has put young people at risk of harm and has not adequately promoted their welfare.

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.