

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Elaine Clare
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This private children's home provides residential care and accommodation for young people who may have emotional and behavioural difficulties. This home is registered for one 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 **adequate**.

Overall the home provides an adequate quality of care to young people. Young people have individual placement plans that are regularly monitored and reviewed. However, the adequate quality of care provided has not resulted in good outcomes for young people overall. This is because they sometimes choose not to accept and follow the good support and guidance they are given, and thereby adversely affect their achievement of positive outcomes. Overall, young people at the home are safe and feel safe. However, the difficulties of some young people placed at the home has led to numerous incidents of challenging behaviour that have frequently required staff to use disciplinary measures. Through regular internal and external monitoring, managers of the home are developing an understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and are developing a plan to get the home to good.

Young people were given opportunities to give their opinions and views on the home in which they lived but chose to have very little input. Observations and recordings in key worker sessions have informed some of the areas for improvement raised.

A statutory requirement is raised to ensure that the monthly visitor obtains views from parents and professionals on the service that is being provided at the home. Four recommendations are raised because of failures to meet aspects of national minimum standards. These have had, or have the potential to have, a negative impact on young people's welfare and safety.

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
33 (2001)	ensure that the registered provider visits the home at least once a month and interviews in private with their consent, and children accommodated there, their parent, relatives and person's working at the home, in order to form an opinion of the standard of care provided in the home, they shall also review the appropriate records and prepare a report on the conduct of the home (Reg 33 (3) (4))	31/05/2013
18 (2001)	ensure that staff promote the educational achievement of children accommodated within the children's home (Reg 18(1))	31/05/2013

Recommendations

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

- encourage children to participate in a range of positive activities that contribute to their physical and emotional health (NMS 6.3)
- ensure that children's health is promoted in accordance with their placement plan (NMS 6.5)
- ensure that the home contributes to the development of and implementation of young people's pathway plans (NMS 12.2)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **adequate**.

Young people are developing some positive self-view, emotional resilience and knowledge and understanding of their background. Reasons for placement, emotional and behavioural development, and identity, cultural and religious needs each form part of young people's placement plans. These plans are used to form individual plans of care and are monitored by young people's key workers so that progress is made with them.

Young people's physical, emotional and psychological health is mostly suitably promoted. However, they are unable to access the services they need to meet their health needs because the young people are choosing not to attend, despite on-going encouragement from care staff. This results in young people not receiving the health assessment they require in order to treat any condition. Young people's health needs

are addressed in their placement plans, in care reports for their looked after children reviews, and are discussed at these reviews to try and ensure they are being met. Targets from the looked after child health review for the registered manager to enable young people to attend medical appointments expired, without being met in March. There had been no further arrangement made to contact the looked after children's nurse to review the health situation, as a result young people have adversely affected their achievement of positive outcomes by choosing not to accept the good services and support they are offered.

Young people know that their views, wishes and feelings, and those of others with an important relationship to them, are suitably taken into account in all aspects of their care. Young people express their strong and very vocal views to staff, for example in key worker sessions and at residents meetings, who take them into account. Young people are encouraged to participate in any meetings about their care, such as planning and review meetings, to ensure their views are heard.

Young people's educational attendance and achievement is inadequate overall. Currently, young people at the home attend a little education within the organisation's own school provision and within the children's home. This represents an under-achievement in their educational outcomes, in relation to their starting points at the time of their placement. Since October 2012, attainment within education has been poor with many weeks achieving a 0% participation level. This results in young people not achieving good educational outcomes for their future.

Through their leisure activities, young people have little positive engagement with the home and the wider community. Young people have developed friendships with local youths and spend some time either with them at their home, or hanging out at the shopping concourse. Other times, young people prefer to walk around the neighbourhood alone. Whilst these young people are in contact with the care staff by telephone, it is not constructive use of young people's time.

Young people have, where appropriate, constructive contact with their family and friends. Their contact arrangements form part of their placement plan and are regularly reviewed with them. Young people are able to travel home each weekend to their home city on the train. This develops independent skills.

Young people at the home are close to leaving care age and moving to adulthood. They are carrying out some life-skills within the home, such as shopping and cooking, to promote their independence. Young people agreed that staff help them to learn how to look after themselves and prepare them for independence.

Quality of care

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

Young people feel that staff are consistently concerned about their welfare; they say that the care and support at the home is ok.

Staff are developing individualised positive behaviour strategies to effectively help young people enjoy good relationships with them and other young people. A psychotherapy organisation provides some staff training. As a result, staff are currently working on improving young people's behaviour management plans and practice to focus more on supporting their positive behaviour.

The running of the home and important decisions in young people's lives are significantly influenced by young people's views and wishes. A member of staff commented: 'The young people have house meetings and key workers whereby they can express their views.' Young people receive prompt feedback on any complaints they raise. They have made one complaint about the way care staff drove the home's vehicle. The complaint has been appropriately investigated and the outcome relayed to the young person. Complaints have been received from neighbours about the noise and disturbance young people sometimes make. The construction of the building is one that offers little sound proofing between the adjoining walls and significantly contributes to the noise heard by the neighbour. Consequently, this primarily affects the adjoining neighbour, the registered manager has addressed each of these complaints and is very empathetic to their concerns. The home has painted fences and clipped hedges to go some way to improve community relations. Staff generally involve young people in the planning and review of their care. For example, by helping them to participate in their planning and review meetings. Pathway plans for the young people raised at the last two inspection relate to young people currently placed. It is important that these are undertaken in conjunction with the placing authority, the home and the young people in order to clearly identify young people's individual goals for the future. To date the local authority have not provided Pathway plans to the home.

Staff actively promote young people's educational attendance and achievement. When they have encountered barriers to this, such as young people's behaviour disrupting their educational placements and young people choosing not to attend their educational provision, they have worked proactively with education professionals to try and overcome these barriers. One young person agreed that staff encourage them to go to school and help them with their school work. The manager was actively encouraging young people to attend the lessons planned for the day.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people who go missing, are protected as far as possible and responded to positively on their return. Young people have not returned home at the agreed time 28 times since October 2012. Monthly registered provider visits check whether young people are 'Staying safe', and as part of this check whether appropriate records are maintained regarding incidents and absconding, or whether this is an area where action is required. The checks have evaluated that all procedures are being followed and that staff work with young people to promote personal safety whilst out in the community alone.

Staff support young people to interact positively with them. However, young people's difficulties have often led them to behave inappropriately, and to incidents of challenging behaviour that have required staff to use disciplinary measures to manage them. Staff have used four sanctions and there have been 17 incidents of restraint. These disciplinary measures have been used and recorded appropriately. Some of these physical interventions have been of a low level, for example escorting young people away from an incident. Staff are now being supported by the Registered Manager to focus more on supporting young people's positive behaviour than on managing their negative behaviour.

All significant events relating to the protection of young people accommodated in the home have been notified as required to the appropriate authorities and appropriate action has been taken following them. For example, the home notified Ofsted of a serious incident in March 2013 that necessitated calling the police to the home.

To help prevent unsuitable people from having the opportunity to harm young people in the home, there is extremely careful selection and vetting of staff working with them. The staff recruitment record of a team leader employed since the registration visit exceeded the information required and recommended.

The home provides a suitably safe and secure environment for the young people living in it. The home's safety checks, assessments and drills are up to date.

Leadership and management

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

The home is generally well managed. The manager has been registered to the home for a few years and also manages two other children's homes within the organisation.

The home has a clear Statement of Purpose and children's guide so that children, their parents and placing authorities, and staff are clear about the aims and objectives of the home. The home's Statement of Purpose has recently been updated to reflect changes to its staffing structure. The home's written development plan has been reviewed and was available for the staff team in the office.

There is adequate monitoring of the home to improve the quality of care provided. Visits on behalf of the registered provider are carried out monthly, reports of which are available to the home's manager and staff. However consultation with parents and professionals about the home had not been obtained. Discussion with the provider shows that this shortfall has been addressed and steps taken to improve the Regulation 33 process. However evidence of this improvement was not seen at this inspection.

Staff are sufficient in number, experience and qualifications to mostly meet young people's needs. Through staff training, supervision and team meetings, they are supported to provide a adequate quality of care to young people. One member of staff commented positively about how the home supports them to promote adequate

outcomes for 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.