

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	22/03/2013
Inspector	Elaine Clare
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Provision subtype	Children's home

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Service information

Brief description of the service

This children's home is owned and operated by a private company. The home is registered to care for one young person who may have emotional or behavioural difficulties or a learning disability.

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**.

The manager and staff group work as a team to ensure young people feel safe and secure. Young people are respected and supported as individuals. The home décor has improved and internal doors are not locked as a matter of routine. Young people say that they are listened to and they enjoy living in a home where they feel cared for.

Quality assurance has improved and the manager is aware of the home's strengths and weaknesses. The service shows capacity to improve. Action has been taken to continue to improve services but as yet good practice in all aspects of care are not embedded. This is reflected in the two requirements and five recommendations raised as a result of this inspection. These also highlight other areas for improvement relating to young people's education.

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	compile in relation to the children's home a statement which	30/04/2013

(2001)	will consist to the matters listed in schedule one; with particular regard to the number and experience of persons working in the home (Regulation 4(1))	
16 (2001)	implement a written policy which sets out the procedures to be followed in the event of any allegation of abuse or neglect. (Regulation 16 (1)(b))	30/04/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure the home's written policy on managing behaviour is understood by all staff and consistently applied at all times (NMS 3.3)
- ensure all staff understand, share and implement the home's ethos, philosophy and approach to caring for children (NMS 3.4)
- ensure that young people maintain a healthy lifestyle; with particular regards to smoking (NMS 6.2)
- ensure children are helped by staff to achieve their educational goals. This includes providing support, facilities and opportunities as needed. Staff work with a child's education provider to maximise each child's achievement and to minimise any underachievement (NMS 8.4)
- ensure the registered manager exercises effective leadership of the home's staff and operation, such that the home is organised, managed and staffed in a manner that delivers sound, good quality care that meets the individual needs of each child at the home. (NMS 14.5)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **adequate**.

Young people report that, prior to living in this home their attendance at school was adequate. However educational attainment is not progressing at the same rate as their peer group and young people are no further forward than they had been at the commencement of placement in the home. Young people have become disengaged in the in-house provision and teacher/pupil relationship has broken down. This does not allow young people to have good outcomes for their future.

Young people state that they are listened to by care staff at the home. This has contributed to young people having positive relationships with staff in the home and has improved young people's self-confidence. As a result, they have stopped going missing and have stopped putting themselves at risk when out in the community.

Health needs are identified and young people have access to universal health services, such as the dentist. This normalises their lives and improves their health

outcomes. Young people are encouraged to contribute to the home and to take responsibility for aspects of their own personal needs, such as cooking and laundry.

Young people are given access to support helping them to address negative health choices, such as smoking however the staff are ineffective in actively supporting smoking cessation. For example young people access cigarettes with full knowledge of staffing members working with them. Young people are provided with specialist support from services, such as child mental health services. This is effective in promoting young people's emotional well-being but it is not always accepted by the young people.

Young people are encouraged to develop positive friendships outside of the home; this supports their good mental health. Young people have positive contact with friends and family that enables them to keep in touch with people who are important to them and to build attachments to support their sense of self-esteem.

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy positive and respectful relationships with care staff. Young people state that there are times when there are tensions and a lack of respect between them and the teaching staff that come into the home. Staff are skilled to diffuse negative behaviours and successfully avoid escalation of negative behaviours.

Young people feel they are treated fairly and respectfully and this has led to improvements in their challenging behaviour. Staff however have not been consistent in setting clear boundaries from the point of admission to the home. This does not provide young people with clear and consistent boundaries.

Staff successfully engage young people in house meetings. Young people say that their views are acted upon in the running of the home. However, some one-to-one meetings between young people and staff are missed, reducing opportunities to engage young people in discussions about their progress. Other discussions are not passed on to the Registered Manager to refer onto young people's social workers. This demonstrates a lack of reasonability by staff to implement the organisations policy.

Staff recognise and respect each young person on an individual basis. Positive action is taken to promote young people's cultural values; for example, as expressed in their personal hair styles and in their music. Consequently young people's individuality and their sense of identity and self-respect is promoted.

Young people express appreciation at the work that staff do to support them. Staff have made some improvements to young people's care plans. However, these are not comprehensive and do not contain actions or monitor progress on outcomes. In addition, staff are not always actively promoting young people's educational attainment. Consequently, young people's life chances are reduced.

Staff are good at communicating with parents. In addition, staff provide young people and parents with outreach support to promote successful home contact. This helps to rebuild positive relationships between parents and children.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people have adequate relationships with staff and feel very able to talk to staff about their concerns. Young people's welfare and well-being is promoted in this home and young people report that they feel safe and cared for. Behaviour has improved and there has been no use of physical restraints.

Staff carry out good risk assessments that identify antecedents and actions to take to reduce the impact of risk-taking behaviours. Staff listen to young people and show good practice in following the home's going missing policy. Young people state that they have stopped going missing as a result of the effective support that they receive from staff. Staff have a good working arrangement in place with the police, with who they meet regularly, to ensure young people are safe and that the correct procedure is being followed.

Staff working with young people are carefully vetted to ensure they are suitably skilled and knowledgeable to promote young people's well-being and to keep them safe.

Young people live in a well cared for home that is spacious and young people report their privacy is respected.

Leadership and management

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

Young people benefit from a Registered Manager and staff team that strive to make them feel safe and cared for. The manager promotes a culture of respect and values diversity. Staff have regular team meetings that are focused on young people and enable staff to reflect on practice to improve their outcomes.

The five requirements and one recommendation from the previous inspection have been met. The home has updated its Statement of Purpose to include up to date contact details for Ofsted and the missing from home protocol has been inserted. Internal repairs have been undertaken which include the unlocking of lounge and kitchen doors to allow access in case of fire. All significant events relating to the protection of children accommodated in the home are notified to the appropriate authorities by the registered person. .

Quality assurance has been improved. The manager has used this information to inform the development plan. Independent quality assurance is undertaken on a

regular basis and is of a good standard. The manager has a good understanding of the strengths and weakness of the home. There have been some staffing concerns which relate to a general lack of responsibility. This includes not referring information following a safeguarding incident, and not providing adequate opportunity for the young people to celebrate a birthday. The Statement of Purpose is clear but does not include the length of experience staff have working at the home and the minimum number of staff that is required to have on the premises as a minimum.

There has been some successful staff recruitment and young people are well supervised. Good vetting practice is in place to protect young people from harm. Staff are provided with a good range of training opportunities to ensure they are competent to provide good quality care to young people.

Staff have worked with young people to improve the decoration of the home and it feels homely and spacious. Young people report that they enjoy where they live. The manager ensures that health and safety is well maintained in the home to promote young people's well-being and safety. The manager has developed supervision arrangements to ensure that all staff feel supported with the responsibilities they are undertaking.

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.