

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Louise Redfern
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This is a private children's home that provides care and accommodation for up to seven young people with physical disabilities and emotional and/or 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 **good**.

Young people settle quickly into their placements; they build trusting relationships with staff and as a result, feel they are well cared for and are safe in and around the home. Young people are cared for by a committed and supportive Registered Manager and staff team. They live in an environment that is underpinned with clear and consistent boundaries. One young person commented, 'I like the routine and boundaries in the house. It's a homely and family environment. I like that the staff do what they say they are going to do.' Individual needs are well identified with updated plans and strategies put in place to address them.

The home strongly promotes positive outcomes for all young people. The Registered Manager and staff team are particularly proactive and successful engaging young people in the placement and reducing their individual risk taking behaviours. As a result young people, over the time of their placements, make good progress in relation to their individual starting points. One family member commented, 'X's behaviour has really improved, that's because the staff help X to make the right choices.'

The Registered Manager has already addressed some shortfalls identified during the inspection. However, recommendations and requirements have been raised to ensure improvements are embedded into practice and to ensure the on-going safety of young people.

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, a written record is made including the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure (Regulation 17B (3)(f))	12/07/2013
33 (2001)	ensure that visits to the home shall take place at least once a month and may be unannounced and that the registered provider supplies a copy of the report to the HMCI (Regulation 33 (3)(5)(a))	12/07/2013
34 (2001)	ensure that the system for monitoring and improving the quality of care provides for consultation with children, their parents and placing authorities. (Regulation 34(3))	12/07/2013

Recommendations

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

- implement a written policy regarding electronic devices used to monitor children that sets out how they should be used, how they promote the welfare of children, how children will be informed of their use, how legitimate privacy of children will be protected and how children will be protected from potential abuse of such measures (NMS 10.5)
- ensure that there is an emergency escape plan that all staff and children are familiar with and have practiced so they know what to do in an emergency (NMS 10.9)
- ensure that a review is initiated no more than 72 hours after any emergency admission to consider whether the young person should remain at the home, or it is in the young person's interests to move placement (NMS 11.7)
- ensure that the children's guide includes how a child can contact their Independent Reviewing Officer, the Children's Rights Director and Ofsted (NMS 13.5)
- ensure that telephone enquiries are made as well as obtaining written references. (NMS 16.1) (NMS 16.1)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people are making good progress in the home because of consistent support and care from the staff team. As a result, they are forming and sustaining positive attachments with staff and make good progress in developing emotional resilience. One young person commented, 'This home is 10 out of 10. The staff listen to me and help me to understand things better.'

They benefit from appropriate levels of contact with family members and individuals who are important to them. One parent commented 'The staff are really flexible in making sure that contact happens.' Young people have built friendships with peers in the community. As a result, they have the opportunity to stay overnight at their friends' houses. This means that support networks are being built and maintained in preparation for them living independently from the home.

Young people's physical and emotional health are good. They receive support from health professionals and staff to understand the importance of making healthy lifestyle choices. They benefit from attending routine health appointments to maintain their general health. However, young people continue to have a smoking habit, despite staff and health professional's efforts to educate them away from this.

Young people actively participate in day-to-day decision making about their care, through individual direct work sessions, young people's meetings and attending their statutory review meetings. Young people are taking more responsibility for their daily routines. For example, young people are doing their own laundry and making their own appointments. This means that they are starting to become more competent to take care of themselves in preparation for adult life.

Young people make good progress with their educational attainment. Young people benefit from routines that enable them to make the most of educational opportunities and be prepared for the school day. As a result, they are currently undertaking GCSE examinations and have plans to attend post-16 college courses.

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy positive and constructive relationships with staff. A consistent, nurturing and warm staff team cares for them. They implement clear structures and boundaries to encourage young people to achieve their full potential. As a result, young people know they are valued as individuals and say, 'It's just amazing here, I would recommend the home to anybody. There are rules, encouragement and support. This helps me to be the best I can be. I know the staff are proud of me because they tell me.' Young people often return to the home and continue to sustain relationships with staff members when they are living independently in the community.

Individual placement care plans and risk assessments effectively guide staff in the management of young people's behaviours. Young people's progress is well charted

and outlined in reports and reviews. As a result, these plans ensure care and support is individually tailored for young people, depending on their need.

Young people have access to a range of health support from other agencies, such as drug and alcohol project workers. The support they receive from health professionals and staff enables them to understand the importance of making healthy lifestyle choices.

Staff consistently challenges barriers to ensure the full participation of young people in education. As a result, young people placed at the home have an identified educational placement and are undertaking examinations and qualifications as appropriate to their age.

The home is appropriately located, designed and maintained to a good standard. The Registered Manager monitors both the interior and exterior of the home to ensure young people live in a well-maintained environment.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people report that they feel safe and can talk to an adult when they are concerned. Young people do not identify bullying as an issue in the home.

Staff are well trained in safeguarding and the home has extensive policies and procedures in place, which underpin effective practice. There was a shortfall identified at inspection in that there is no policy in place regarding the use of door alarms. However, young people and staff have a clear understanding of why and how they are used in the home. One young person commented 'We have door alarms to keep us safe.' The Registered Manager rectified this during the inspection and implemented a policy.

Young people are encouraged to behave positively in the home. As a result, there are few incidents of young people being physically restrained. There is a clear procedure in place to support young people to reflect and learn from their behaviour following any incident of restraint. When they do engage in negative behaviour, measures of control are imposed and young people are encouraged to reflect on their behaviours. One young person commented, 'The staff are fair and are honest with you.' However, the Registered Manager does not routinely comment on the effectiveness of the sanctions, in order to evaluate if the consequence remains appropriate.

On the rare occasions that young people go missing from the home, there are clear safeguarding procedures in place. Staff are clear about how to respond to such incidents and work proactively to support young people in returning quickly and safely. One young person commented 'When I go missing the staff always try to find me and then when I come back they always check I am ok.'

All staff are selected and checked through the organisation's recruitment procedures. The Registered Manager takes an active role in recruitment, ensuring the safe recruitment of staff who are able to meet the young people's needs. Young people have the opportunity to be part of the recruitment process for new staff. However, a system for recording the telephone verification of references has not yet been implemented.

The home is physically safe and appropriately secure to take into account the needs and characteristics of the young people. Staff pay good attention to health and safety management. However, a minor shortfall was identified at the inspection. Young people newly admitted to the home have not had the opportunity to practice a fire drill. Despite these shortfalls, all young people in the home were fully aware of fire safety procedures and are therefore kept safe in the home. The minor shortfalls identified do not currently have an impact on the overall safety of young people in the home.

Leadership and management

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

An experienced Registered Manager manages the home. The staff team is well balanced in terms of gender, age and experience. This provides young people with effective role models. The home is adequately resourced to meet the needs of the young people and good staffing levels are in place on each shift. Staff report that they receive regular supervision and training, which means that they are able to provide care and support for young people.

The Statement of Purpose and young person's guide accurately represent the specific service of the home. However, there is a minor shortfall in the young people's guide because it does not contain information regarding the individual young person's independent reviewing officer, Children's Rights Director and Ofsted included in the guide, should young people wish to raise any concerns.

Monitoring of the home is undertaken on a regular basis. However, formal systems have not yet been implemented to ensure parents and placing authorities' views are obtained as part of Regulation 34 monitoring. This means that suggestions for improvement to the quality of care are missed. Young people's views are routinely heard through daily routine conversations, direct work sessions, young people's meetings and complaints.

Visits by a designated person in accordance with regulation did not take place during a period when no young people were in placement at the home, therefore reports were not received by HMCI.

The Registered Manager chases overdue reviews of young people's emergency placements, but these are not completed within the recommended timescale to secure timely plans for young people. There is a process in place to notify the appropriate authorities of significant events relating to the protection of young

people. No recommendations were raised at the last inspection.

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.