

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Seka Graovac
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Date of last inspection	11/09/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is owned by a private provider and is a family-run business. The Registered Manager is also the registered provider. The home provides care, support and accommodation for five young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties. Emergency placements are accepted and short-term respite care can also be provided.

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 have formed a strong, positive affiliation with the home. They are very complimentary about the quality of the care they receive. They get highly personalised support and flourish on many levels. The home has helped them to turn their lives around.

The excellent relationships between the staff and young people underpin young people's good or excellent progress across different aspects of their welfare and development. The strong sense of safety and the feeling that staff genuinely care for them, instils young people with confidence and motivates them to continue to improve. They have developed more constructive behaviours, better social skills and emotional resilience. They talk about being respected and having learnt to respect other people. Their unsafe behaviours have very considerably lessened. They have engaged more positively with education and health promotion services.

Effective partnership working and the fine tuning of individual support remain the main focus for the continued improvement of the home. The management has also taken steps to ensure that record keeping continues to improve. The areas for improvement identified at this inspection relate to the records of staff on duty at night and of staff supervision. However, these weaknesses have not had a negative impact on the general effectiveness of the service.

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
29 (2001)	maintain the records specified in Schedule 4 including a clear record of the staff duty roster. (Regulation 29.1 Schedule 4.11)	12/04/2013

Recommendations

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

- keep records detailing the time, date and length of each supervision held for each member of staff. (NMS 19.5)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people say they love living in this home. They say that it is the best home they have ever been to. They say that in this home, they feel really cared for. They trust the staff and say that the staff believe in them. This helps them to have increased confidence in themselves and other people. They feel respected and comfortable. Their self-view has become more positive and they are able to be more respectful towards other people.

They describe the home as their new family. Some young people say that although they continue to love their own families, living in this home is much better. It helps them to focus more on their own development and achieve more. They enjoy having regular positive contact with their families and have developed better understanding of why they are in care.

Although some young people have experienced multiple placement breakdowns prior to coming to this home, they now feel well settled. An example of this is a young person who had six placements in three months before coming to live in this home, more than a half a year ago. Young people's ability to make and sustain safe attachments has increased. They say that they have become good, so that they can continue to live in this home. Their destructive, anti-social behaviour or offending have dramatically decreased.

Young people's life-skills are increasing. They enjoy having control of an appropriate, small amount of money that they regularly receive. They enjoy learning to cook and

helping to maintain their environment. They enjoy living together with other young people in a comfortable and beautiful home.

Having a consistently positive experience of communal living helps the young people to gain better social skills and more positive attitudes towards society. Engaging in a wide range of leisure activities within the local community also contributes to their social integration.

However, the young people's exceptional levels of progress, relating to their relationships, social skills, emotional resilience and behaviour, are not always matched by their educational progress. Although overall their attendance and good behaviour at school are increasing, the level of educational progress achieved is more varied.

Similarly, overall the young people have developed better health awareness and much healthier lifestyles. However, for some of them their engagement with specialist substance misuse services appears to be only superficial.

Quality of care

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

Staff place the promotion of young people's well-being at the centre of their practice. They have gained young people's trust. Their exceptionally positive relationships effectively underpin consistently good, and at times excellent, outcomes for young people.

Young people feel listened to and know that their views are respected. Through residents' meetings, individual key-working sessions and participation at their statutory meetings, they are centrally involved in all aspects of their care. They make strong contributions to their comprehensive internal care plans that have been developed in line with their placing authority's care planning process.

Young people receive highly individualised support that effectively meets their specific developmental needs. Staff work in close partnership with social workers and other professionals to address any barriers to young people's progress. Staff are in regular contact with teachers and the home offers additional educational support to young people. A medical practitioner visits the home regularly to talk with staff about the impact of any medical conditions the young people have on their behaviour. This enhances the staff's understanding of the underlying causes of their behaviour, such as tendencies linked with the autistic spectrum disorder.

Staff also work closely with young people's parents, whenever this is in the best interest of the young people. For example, the home has recently organised a meal for young people and their families and staff.

Young people are exceptionally positive about the quality of care they receive at this home. They are familiar with the complaints procedure, but have not raised any

complaints about the home. One young person has complained about their school.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people report feeling safe and protected. They have developed friendships within the home and enjoy each other's company. Staff provide them with an environment that is physically safe and free from any form of bullying and intimidation. Young people have full confidence that staff would take firm actions to protect them if needed. They have seen this happen in the past, when some young people tried to bully others.

Comprehensive individual risk assessments, thorough staff recruitment procedures, excellent relationships and other robust strategies have been put in place to promote young people's welfare. Young people's involvement in unsafe behaviours has decreased dramatically. For example, there have been no incidents of young people going missing from the home, although this has been a significant problem in the past for some of them. There have been hardly any incidents and no need for staff to intervene physically. Young people say that the staff have enabled them to talk about their negative feelings and anger rather than to act them out.

Staff are very skilled at promoting safer behaviours. They have attended relevant training on a number of safeguarding topics including a workshop on gang awareness. They recognise the particular vulnerabilities of some young people in this respect and teach them how to adopt safer behaviours. Young people report being aware of the gangs in the area and keeping away from their influence.

The home has proactive relationships with the Local Safeguarding Children Board, youth offending services and the police. For example, the local safer neighbourhood officers come to the home and speak with the young people about the use of illegal substances.

Leadership and management

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

The registered provider is closely involved in the running of the home. They are also registered with Ofsted as the manager for the service. The management and staff are passionately committed to providing only the best for young people and ensuring that they achieve positive outcomes. The promotion of equality and diversity is very good. An example of this is how the home has supported a young asylum seeker who only has a very limited knowledge of English language.

The small team of highly dedicated staff promote stability and consistency for the young people. Staff are appropriately qualified for their roles and motivated to gain further qualifications. Annual appraisals and a comprehensive training plan actively support staff's learning and keep their knowledge up-to-date. The main focus of the

home's development plan remains to enable young people to improve their lives and to maximise their life chances. The home is very effective at achieving this.

Previous requirements to notify Ofsted of any significant events and to keep an accurate register of admissions and discharges have been fully complied with. Ofsted has been notified of the only significant incident that has happened since the last inspection. The register has been appropriately kept and shows a high level of placement activity. In line with the home's clear Statement of Purpose, that specifies the provision of a range of placements, the home has altogether had 14 admissions in the last 12 months.

The home is managed effectively and remains financially viable. The physical environment is exceptionally well maintained.

In line with the recommendations raised at the last inspection, the home is now monitoring the quality of its records with more rigour. The office is much better organised and the young people's files continue to be very well managed. They clearly demonstrate young people's involvement and the progress that they have made while living in this home.

However, some records still need improving. Recording gaps relate to the records of staff supervision and duty rosters. Although staff confirm receiving regular supervision and feel well supported, supervision meetings are not always recorded. The staffing levels are appropriately maintained at all times. The staff duty roster clearly shows who is on duty during the day-time. Although staff and young people are clear about who is on duty at night-time, the roster does not clearly include the names of the staff who are on sleeping-in duties.

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.