

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC013553
Inspection date	05/11/2013
Inspector	Keith Riley
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	20/02/2013
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is privately owned and provides care and accommodation for up to nine boys with 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 **good**.

The home's extensive engagement with health, education, social services and other professionals result in excellent outcomes for young people. Highly personalised support and therapy into the lives of young people who have experienced trauma in their lives is successful. Young people are able to come to terms with their painful emotions and make excellent progress to maximise their future life chances.

The views of young people are central to the staff who are supporting them. This is a home where the voice of young people is heard and acted upon in practice. Positive and constructive relationships between each other and staff are at the core of practice. A young person said, 'This is the best place I have lived since being in care.'

Young people are safe and say they feel safe and secure at the setting. There is a strong emphasis on young people's emotional well-being. Strategies are successful. Young people feel as they belong and are able to express their difficult and challenging feelings.

The Registered Manager has clear plans to improve the home and ensures the young people are fully engaged in this.

Records are mainly well kept. Some shortfalls were found in the recording of physical interventions in a minority of cases and in updating a risk assessment. One further recommendation is made to ensure medication is always given in strict accordance with the prescription.

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 restraint, a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose of which shall include an accurate description of the measure used. (Regulation 17B (3)(c))	20/12/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure prescribed medication is given in accordance with the prescription (NMS 6.14)
- monitor and identify any concerns about specific incidents and take immediate action to address any issues raised by this monitoring, in particular ensure risk assessments reflect the most recent practice (NMS 21.2)
- ensure, where there has been physical restraint, children are always given the opportunity to be examined by a registered nurse or medical practitioner. (NMS 3.16)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **outstanding**.

Young people live in an environment where they have a secure base, safety, warmth and comfort. Young people form healthy attachments with staff. They have the best possible care and support to help them process previous trauma in their lives. Young people feel comfortable to disclose their backgrounds and express their emotions. They are able to deal with their difficult thoughts and memories in a more meaningful way. This is a home where the individual needs of young people are met. This means they make excellent progress, such as developing emotional resilience and disengaging from self-harming behaviours. A parent said that his son demonstrates none of the behaviours seen in a previous placement. A therapist reported that a young person understands his emotions more now than ever before.

Young people benefit from an excellent approach to their health needs. They enjoy a healthy and varied diet, access various sports that interest them as well as attending routine health appointments. Other specialist appointments are available including

weekly access to professional therapists. Young people enjoy excellent physical and psychological health.

Educational achievement is exceptional taking into account starting points at the time of placement. Young people above school leaving age understand there is an expectation they are in employment, education or training. Staff guide, encourage and support them in their options. Young people engage enthusiastically with the process. This means that young people are using their time wisely to prepare them for adult life and maximise their opportunities.

Young people enjoy engagement with the wider community such as volunteering in local charity shops and participating in fund raising events for national charities. Young people learn the benefits of making a positive contribution to benefit others and are maturing into responsible members of society. Certificates for their contribution are displayed in communal areas. This gives them a sense of pride and team-work.

Young people are fully supported to maintain family contacts subject to any limitations set out in their care plan, such as supervised contact. Young people's feelings are carefully considered. Their emotional and psychological well-being are promoted to the highest level to make contact a positive experience.

There is a strong focus for young people to be as independent as possible. For example, staff support young people to learn budgeting and cooking skills as well as seeking meaningful employment or education. Young people are being well prepared for adult life.

Quality of care

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

This is a home where there is highly individualised support, keeping young people at the centre of practice. This generates a culture of respect and security and leads to positive and constructive relationships. Young people talk to staff daily about how they are feeling as well as in more formal house meetings. Any issues are taken very seriously, such as comments made or behaviour exhibited. Staff encourage and reinforce mature attitudes. This is successful. Young people take responsibility for their words and behaviour. This means there is a safe, trusting and open culture with excellent group dynamics. Young people have no need to access the formal complaints procedure. A young person said, 'No matter what you do the staff care for you.' Professionals say they are happy with the placement, there are no concerns and they plan for young people to stay until they reach adulthood.

The home is decorated and furnished to an excellent standard, which creates a pleasant homely environment. Young people are able to choose and personalise their bedrooms to reflect their hobbies and interests. This gives them a sense of identity and belonging. Maintenance issues are identified with clear plans to address any issues, such as a damp wall.

Young people benefit from carefully planned health care. Staff arrange and facilitate contact with other professionals, such as child and adolescent mental health services, if appropriate. Other routine health appointments are offered to the young people who take advantage of the assistance and support offered. Young people engage enthusiastically with sports such as football, cycling and ice-skating. A healthy and varied menu is offered. Young people are as healthy as possible. There is a good system in place for the handling of medication ensuring that it is stored safely and administered properly. However, on two occasions medication was not given in strict accordance with the prescription. The impact was assessed and young people are not at risk.

Care planning is of the highest standard ensuring that young people's specific needs are met. A highly skilled staff team assist young people to make sense of their feelings and thoughts. Staff receive professional advice and support in delivering care to meet individual needs. Consequently, young people make significant progress in developing feelings of self-worth and gain valuable insight into the issues which affect their behaviour and thinking. Young people have considerable input into their statutory review and attend meetings in person to update their plans.

The organisation has a registered school that young people attend. Education and support staff work very closely together. Attendance levels are 100%. Education is highly valued by the home with young people being given extensive levels of commitment and support from staff. For example, a specialist tutor is employed for young people functioning at a higher level than their mainstream peers.

Young people engage in a range of stimulating and meaningful activities such as ice-skating, go-karting and rock climbing. As a result young people's self-esteem is greatly improved.

Needs relating to young people's cultural background and personal identity are identified and positively addressed in both daily living and care planning. For example, young people are encouraged and supported to explore their religious beliefs or ethnic background.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

The culture embedded in the home ensures that the young people benefit from a robust and rigorous approach which treats the young people's emotional and physical safety as paramount. Young people state they feel safe and secure at the setting.

Staff receive regular safeguarding training. There is a robust procedure, that staff are fully aware of, in the event of a disclosure. Issues are handled sensitively and appropriately. The manager ensures that all the relevant agencies are informed of any safeguarding issues. Effective professional relationships ensure that strategies and plans are developed in the event of any concerns being identified. This means

that young people are fully supported and protected.

There is good provision for the management of risk associated with individual behaviour and activities undertaken by young people. Risk assessments provide clear strategies for managing risk. However, one risk assessment, for a recently emerging behaviour, is not up to date. Staff are aware of the risks and the action to take and young people are not at risk of immediate harm as a result.

Staff ensure there is an assessment of the risk of going missing from care. There is a strong emphasis on providing a warm and homely environment where young people can express themselves and have the support and guidance they need. Contact with family and significant others and fulfilling diversionary activities also form part of a strategy to minimise the desire to leave the home. Any event is under close scrutiny in conjunction with other professionals for young people to keep themselves as safe as possible in the community. There is a comprehensive procedure, agreed with the local police, that staff follow meticulously in the case of a young person being absent from the home. The number of incidents is extremely small. A professional said there is a significant reduction in the number of incidents.

Staff are trained in the home's behaviour management programme. Incidents are analysed and there is consistent feedback into practice involving other professionals. This means that the incidents requiring physical intervention are very low for the vast majority of young people. When there is the need for intervention this is carefully recorded and strategies reviewed. There is a strong emphasis on the emotional well-being of the young person. However records do not clearly demonstrate that young people have the opportunity to be examined by a medical practitioner after a physical intervention. Although most records give an accurate description of the measure used, in a minority of records generic terms are used. Young people are not at risk as a result.

The home provides a safe environment for children and there are very good arrangements for addressing all health and safety matters, including fire safety. Regular checks are carried out of the premises and there is good provision for addressing any identified hazards. There are clear plans in place to address any major repairs. These include how to minimise the impact on young people. Young people live in a safe environment that is well maintained.

Recruitment procedures are robust and there is a good system in place for selection of high quality staff. Effective vetting prior to anyone starting work at the home means that young people are cared for by appropriate adults.

Leadership and management

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

The home offers care and accommodation for young people in line with its Statement of Purpose. The aims and objectives of the home are understood by authorities who place young people in the home. A robust admissions process gives each young

person maximum opportunity to succeed in this home and improve their life chances. Placement breakdowns are rare.

This is a home managed by an experienced and competent Registered Manager. He is effective at communicating high expectations to staff and sustaining improvement. There are positive outcomes for young people as a result. For example, young people are extremely motivated to healthy living and are helping build a gym within the grounds as part of their Duke of Edinburgh award scheme.

The Registered Manager ensures the internal monitoring systems are of good quality. He ensures that observations by an independent visitor are acted upon and all reports are sent at the required frequency to Ofsted. There is a culture of continuous improvement. The experienced and stable staff team are highly motivated to continually promote and improve the welfare of children in the home. The professional care, support and therapy means that children are able to move on with their lives and gain interest in meaningful activities, such as participating in sports or growing vegetables.

Staff are subject to a comprehensive induction programme and must satisfy the management of their competencies during a probation period. They undertake regulatory and service-specific training which provides them with the skills and knowledge required to meet the needs of the young people in their care. This means that young people are supported by staff who are well trained and up to date on all current practice issues. The home employs other highly qualified and experienced professionals who have a successful track record in their specialism. The close collaborative working ensures that staff and resources are channelled effectively. Consequently staff are highly enthusiastic about their role and the difference their support makes in the lives of the young people.

Staff speak very highly of the management team, the training they have and the supervision that is provided. This means they are enthusiastic in their approach and not fazed when presented with difficult and challenging situations. Young people are supported by a highly motivated staff team who are extremely well supported themselves.

Records are comprehensive and stored securely. Staff have a good understanding of confidentiality. Placement plans contain all relevant information and are kept up-to-date and under review. There is an extensive referral and admissions process that gives placements every chance of success and this is evident in the progress that is being made.

The Registered Manager ensures that all significant events are notified to the appropriate authority, including Ofsted.

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.