

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Diane Thackrah
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This is a privately owned children's home that is registered to accommodate three young people of either sex who have 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 make progress in this home with all aspects of their development. They make small steps from their starting points which contributes to the promotion of their welfare. There is strong staff support which promotes young people development. Staff are highly motivated and effective in supporting positive changes in young people's lives. As a result young people feel valued and have positive relationships with staff.

Young people are treated as individuals. The strong care planning arrangements ensure that individual needs are well addressed. As a result, young people develop trust in the staff that care for them and a positive self-view. Good practice is followed for keeping young people safe. This helps to reduce risks to young people and ensures that they feel safe and secure. Behaviour is well managed and staff have clear expectations of young people. They are consistent in their approach which results in young people developing positive behaviour.

The home is generally well managed with staff receiving strong support and guidance from management. However, the arrangements for providing formal supervision to staff in order to promote young people's welfare are less strong. There are good arrangements for staff training and development which ensures that young people are cared for by staff who are competent. The strengths and weaknesses of the home are well understood by management which means that any problems are put right quickly.

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
27 (2001)	ensure that all persons employed by the registered person receive appropriate supervision. (Regulation 27 (4)(a))	12/10/2012

Recommendations

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

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for children and young people are **adequate**.

Young people make some progress to develop a positive self-view. Staff say they 'build on young people's strengths'. They are consistent in their approach to caring, nurturing and building strong relationships with young people. A staff member said, 'We want to send a clear message to young people that staff want to keep them safe and care about them.' This helps young people to develop improved self-esteem. Young people generally benefit from good health and have access to services that meet their physical, emotional and psychological needs. The home has developed a good professional relationship with the child and adolescent mental health services. This means young people benefit from swift access to this service. There is promotion of healthy living within the home which ensures that young people know how to look after their own health.

There is an open and honest culture within the home which promotes positive relationships between staff and young people. As a result, young people are enabled to share their wishes and views and feel listened to and valued. Young people make some progress with their educational attainment from the point of moving into the home. They are supported to access and attend post-educational training that meets their individual needs and abilities such as short life skills and music production courses. There is a focus on preparing young people for moving on. This results in young people developing skills to lead successful and productive lifestyles in adulthood. Young people also make some positive contributions to the home. For example, their views contribute to the way the home is decorated. As a result, they live in a pleasant environment that they value. Young people have their welfare promoted through the positive contact they maintain with significant family members and friends.

Quality of care

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

Young people and staff share generally positive relationships. Young people understand that staff care about them as this message is consistently applied. Key work sessions occur regularly to support this. There are good arrangements for consultation with young people. Young people attend all reviews and are supported to share their views at these. Some young people have an advocate to support them at statutory reviews. Key work sessions are viewed as important and weekly residents' meetings are held to help young people have their say. These measures help young people to feel listened to and valued.

Highly individualised behaviour management strategies are used to promote positive behaviour. Young people have comprehensive care plans and risk assessments that are tailored to their needs. These are produced following consultation with significant people in young people's lives such as social workers and psychiatrists. Care plans also take into account young people's own views. Care plans are updated regularly to reflect changing needs. As a result there is a robust approach to young people's care.

Staff work positively to address barriers and challenges to achievement. For example, they have asked a youth empowerment team to talk to young people with a view to reducing criminal behaviour and absconding. There is a strong approach to treating young people as individuals. Staff say, 'We listen to young people, adjust our practice to work with them and are always open to new ideas.' An Independent Reviewing Officer's manager said of a young person, 'The home has worked well with him.'

Staff encourage young people to engage in purposeful activities. For example, they have sought out a local boxing club for one young person to attend as an alternative to less productive activities. Swimming with staff has been planned for another young person.

Staff actively encourage education. There is an on-site school and young people receive very close support from the teacher. There is a creative approach to providing education to young people who struggle to follow a full curriculum. For example education is provided through the encouragement of reading and visiting places of interest. There is a strong focus on further education. Young people are supported to reach their potential after school age by having access to resources that meet their individual needs. They have support from staff to create curriculum vitae. Some engage in short vocational courses run by the Prince's Trust. As a result, their welfare is promoted. Complaints are taken seriously and used to improve the quality of the service. A recent complaint resulted in the removal of a staff member deemed not suitable to work in the home. Young people benefit from living in a home that is well maintained, clean and homely.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Staff have a good understanding of young people's needs and behaviour. Care plans clearly identify risks and there are clear plans to address these such as key work discussions about drug use and safe sex. This results in young people feeling safe and risks to them being reduced. There are high levels of absconding, however, staff understand the vulnerabilities of young people and respond to them positively. For example they plan activities to encourage young people to stay at the home rather than abscond. They also address the emotional needs of young people in relation to absconding and say, 'We talk about this in key work sessions.' Staff also help to keep young people safe when they are missing by staying in touch with them by telephone and going out looking for them. Staff are proactive in developing links with the local police. As a result, there are clear protocols for responding safely to young people who go missing. There has been some success in reducing absconding levels as a result of this.

There are strong arrangements for behaviour management which are consistently applied. Young people are supported to manage their behaviour positively through incentives and individual goal setting. No restraint has been used in the home recently. All staff are trained in safe restraint techniques, including non-care staff. This ensures that there is a consistent approach from staff involved in and witnessing restraints. The positive relationships that young people generally enjoy with staff help to ensure that young people have an adult that they can trust. Staffing of the home is well thought out and this ensures that there are adults on shift that young people feel comfortable with and safe talking to. Staff say bullying is not tolerated in this home. This promotes young people's well-being.

There is safe and careful selection of staff which means that young people are cared for by suitable people. Young people live in an environment that is safe and secure. Robust fire safety checks within the home help to keep young people safe from harm. There is mandatory training for staff in fire safety and regular drills involving all young people and staff. This also helps to keep young people safe.

Leadership and management

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

The arrangements for staff training help to ensure that staff have the skills to promote young people's welfare. Most staff have, or are working towards, a National Vocational Qualification level 3 in children and young people and some are qualified at a higher level. Staff have also recently been trained in therapeutic behaviour management techniques and restorative justice. One staff member said, 'My training and development needs are very well met, the training and support here is excellent.' Staff are employed in sufficient numbers to meet the needs of young people currently placed in the home. Effective action has been taken to ensure that a recommendation made at the last inspection of the home has been met. This means that young people are cared for only by staff who have successfully completed their probationary periods. There is strong management. A staff member said that the

Registered Manager, 'Leads from the front and she deals with difficult situations.' Staff also say the Registered Manager is 'calm and a good influence on the home'. Staff are motivated and highly committed. They say that regular handover sessions ensure that they are consistent in the care they provide to young people. Staff are generally well supported and feel supported. One staff member reported they receive good quality and reflective supervision. However, another staff member confirmed that two consecutive supervision sessions had been missed and this was not helpful. This inconsistency leaves some staff feeling less prepared to meet young peoples' needs. Furthermore, not all staff are supervised by a staff member who has been trained in supervision. This does not fully support good child care practice.

The home is well maintained and provides a pleasant environment for young people to enjoy. A staff member said, 'There is a very good maintenance team that come mostly within 24 hours to put things right.' Funding is available to ensure the home is well resourced and young people have the material possessions they require to lead fulfilling lives. There is good understanding of the home's strengths and weaknesses by management. This is achieved through the robust quality assurance measures such as Regulation 33 visits and talking to stakeholders. As a result, problems are put right quickly. Staff take a proactive approach to ensuring that statutory reviews occur as required. They also ensure that young people have regular contact with their social workers. Staff understand the value of joined up working and regularly consult with professionals working with young people. This helps to ensure that young peoples' needs are met in a consistent way. There is good record keeping which means that young people have a clear and accurate record of their history. This also promotes a professional and consistent approach to young people's care.

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* (March 2011) and the evaluation schedule for children's homes.