

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC016600
Inspection date	26/07/2012
Inspector	Sharron Escott
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	27/03/2012
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2012

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Service information

Brief description of the service

This private children's home is registered for five young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home provides individual support and preparation for independent living and offers an educational outreach service to support young people.

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 good progress in relation to their starting points. The staff team are experienced and have established positive relationships with young people. They are dedicated in supporting young people's achievement and provide a supportive and nurturing environment with consistent boundaries.

The strengths of the service include the commitment of the management and staff team to ensuring each young person is treated as an individual and their daily living needs are met. This has enabled the young people to develop their self-esteem and build on their confidence. Young people are encouraged to take risks as part of their growing up; as a result risk taking behaviours have reduced significantly and young people are thriving in a home they feel relaxed and comfortable in.

Areas identified for improvement include the recording of measures of control and discipline, monitoring activities, the home development, specialist training and formal supervisions.

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
17 (2001)	ensure volume kept for the purpose of recording measures of control include the effectiveness of the control and confirmation that the child and person using the measure have been spoken to (Regulation 17B (3)(F)(H))	24/08/2012
33 (2001)	ensure those monitoring the quality of care are not directly concerned with the conduct of the home. (Regulation 33 (2)(C))	31/08/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure the Runaway and Missing from Home and Care protocols and procedures are maintained and managed by the police and are individualised to meet the needs of the young people in placement (NMS 5.6)
- ensure the young person's guide details how they can contact their Independent Reviewing Officer, the Children's Rights Director, Ofsted if they wish to raise a concern with inspectors, and how to secure access to an independent advocate (NMS 13.5)
- ensure the home has a written development plan, reviewed annually, for the future of the home. Identifying any planned changes in the resources or operation of the home (NMS 15.2)
- ensure that the training programme includes specialist training to provide skills for staff to meet the changing needs of the children (NMS 18.1)
- ensure the written record of supervisions kept by the home details the time, date, and length of each supervision for each member of staff, including the registered person. The record is signed by the member of staff and the supervisor at the end of the supervision (NMS19.5)
- ensure the managers monitoring activities includes to identify any concerns about specific incidents and to identifying patterns and trends. (NMS 21.2)
- ensure the young person's placement plan includes the young person's contribution. (NMS 25.2)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people have made good progress towards meeting their individual aims at the placement, particularly in relation to developing appropriate behaviour, reducing risk

taking behaviour, developing self-esteem and confidence.

Young people are developing good social and communication skills. Young people say they have learnt to be more respectful to others and have not offended since moving into the home. Other young people say they enjoy living at the home and would not want to move, contact visits with family members are better, and opportunities to explore different activities are good.

The home effectively involves and includes parents and social workers in its care planning process. Clear and consistent boundaries are maintained through the effective communication and inventive problem solving that takes place as a result of this approach.

Relationships and contact with family members and significant others continues to progress. The stability of placements mirrors the young people's shared views that they are happy at the home. Placing social workers say: 'The support given to the young people is fantastic, staff are attentive to the young people's needs, communication is excellent. I am particularly impressed with the home's flexibility to ensure young people maintain contact with family and significant others.'

Young people are making good progress since arrival at the home. The organisation's bespoke virtual tutoring education service encourages attendance for most young people. As a result attainment is progressing for some. Educational plans clearly define attainment targets. For others, independent and vocational learning activities are incorporated within their daily living plans.

Young people enjoy good health. There is a focus on living a healthy lifestyle. Young people and staff are encouraged and supported to make healthy options with food, exercise and personal care. Those considered to be competent are making health care choices of their own, demonstrating a good understanding of their individual health needs.

Young people say they have improved their behaviour since living in the home. Missing from home episodes and offending behaviour has reduced significantly for most, for others this has not been a concern for a significant period of time. Young people say they have learnt how to control their anger and emotions better. One young person says 'I talk to staff; this really helps me to manage how I feel, they care and I feel cared for'.

Quality of care

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

Young people say that they feel they are listened to and their wishes and feelings are requested and considered on the way the home is run. Young people say 'staff care, they are very supportive'.

Young people really thrive within this nurturing and supportive environment. Young

people's placement plans are detailed and identify their individualised needs taking into account culture, race, religion and gender. All placement plans are being reviewed to include opportunities for the young people to contribute. Key workers monitor young people's progress monthly and this is then used as the basis for statutory reviews and is forwarded to the young person's social worker on a regular basis.

Young people benefit from a competent and enthusiastic staff team who are able to provide innovative care to support in their placement. Relationships between staff and young people are friendly, positive and good natured with lots of humour. There are clear pathways on how to make a complaint and young people are happy with the way staff respond to any areas of concern.

Staff implement positive behaviour strategies with rewards. Young people say they do not have many negative sanctions, because they are good; the records evidence minimal sanctions. Consequences for any inappropriate behaviour are fair and reasonable and regularly reviewed, however the information within the bound volume does not identify the effectiveness of the sanction and the views of the young people.

Furnishings and décor are of a good standard, there is an ongoing plan for further improvements to the homes physical environment. The communal areas are currently being redecorated; young people have been actively involved in the selection of colours and soft furnishings. Reception rooms allow young people to engage in house activities that include the use of arts and crafts, board games, and relaxation. Young people's bedrooms are personalised to their own tastes. Opportunities are also available for the young people to enjoy quiet time in a room dedicated for meetings, reading and relaxation.

Young people were extremely positive about their home and their achievements made since being placed.

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 in the home; their privacy is respected and there are locks on bathroom doors. Staff knock and ask permission to enter before entering rooms.

Visitors are vetted and identification is checked before entry is allowed. Staff are carefully selected and do not start work until all vetting checks and references are available and they have undertaken an induction programme. This covers essential training in keeping young people safe and dealing with child protection issues. Practice is supported by detailed and summarised policies; quick guides and useful telephone numbers are easily accessible for all staff.

All staff are trained in the use of restraint if needed to manage difficult behaviour. Incidents of restraint are rare and young people report that they have not been restrained. Incidents of absence without authority are also reducing significantly. Staff are clear on the procedure and appropriate actions to take if an incident should happen. Relationships with the local police community officer are established; however individual protocols have not yet been developed to ensure safeguarding strategies are specific and personal to the individual young person.

Care plans identify risks posed by young people and how these are to be dealt with to minimise difficult behaviour and increase the likelihood of positive outcomes. Health care needs are identified and any appointments from supporting agencies is supported by the care staff. The storage and recording of medication is checked daily during handovers.

Young people report that they have not experienced any bullying in this home and if they should feel at risk they are confident that staff will manage any matters of conflict and concern they may be experiencing.

The environment is physically safe and secure, young people are involved in fire drills and know where fire extinguishers and fire blankets are situated. There are smoke detectors throughout the property. Gas and electrical testing is carried out on a regular basis and staff receive training in fire safety as part of the induction programme.

Leadership and management

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

The home is managed by a Registered Manager who is suitably qualified and experienced, and is supported by a senior carer. They effectively monitor the day-to-day care provided to young people. The manager provides clear and effective leadership to ensure that young people receive stability and consistency of care. Placing social workers say ' I am very happy with the services provided by this home, communication is excellent, they are flexible regarding contact visits and they are exceptionally helpful'.

Staff feel supported by the senior manager, the home's manager and senior staff. Staff are supported to develop their knowledge and expertise by undertaking mandatory training that is refreshed regularly. However, there is a lack of some specialist training to equip staff with the necessary skills to meet the changing needs of young people accommodated.

The staff team attend regular team meetings. Monthly formal supervision and annual appraisals enable staff to reflect on their practise and raise any concerns they may have. However, the records relating to these do not wholly reflect discussions, times scales and signed agreement that the written document is a true reflection of their discussion.

The home's Statement of Purpose is accessible to the young people, parents and social workers. A young people's guide is also produced which provides them with information they need to know about the home. However, information provided does not include how children and young people can access the Children's Rights Director or information on cyber bullying and room searches. The home continues not to have a formal development plan; as a result the continuation of service or any planned development cannot be identified.

The manager conducts regular audits on the quality of care provided at the home. The manager has not been able to use this process to support monitoring and development of the home's service. As a result, identifying emerging patterns and trends to improve outcomes for young people is not effectively monitored. Additional monitoring includes independent Regulation 33 visits; information provided within these reports is good; however these visits are currently conducted by a individual who is actively involved with the day to day running of the home. As a result, monitoring activities are not independent.

The home has successfully met one requirement and one recommendation set following the last inspection. However, one requirement and two recommendations have been reinstated, accompanied by an additional requirement and five recommendations to enhance the quality of service provided for children and young people.

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.