

## Inspection report for children's home

---

|                                |                             |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC020594                    |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 13/06/2013                  |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Pete Hylton / Jo Stephenson |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | Full                        |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>       | Children's home             |

---

|                                |            |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 15/02/2013 |
|--------------------------------|------------|

---

© Crown copyright 2013

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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

The home provides accommodation for up to 10 young people aged from 11 to 17 years, most of who are placed on an emergency basis following a recent history of placement breakdown and difficult or high-risk behaviour. The home undertakes assessments, for up to three months, of young people in crisis.

### 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**.

This is a good children's home where young people are supported to make exceptional progress. Relationships between staff and young people are a key strength. Young people confirm that they are safe and happy at the home. Staff are safety-conscious and vigilant. The behaviour of young people is carefully managed and young people are protected from harm.

The care provided to young people is based on their individual needs and preferences. Young people feel valued and make progress in all areas of their lives. Detailed internal care planning, robust risk assessments and effective relationships with external services ensures young people receive a good standard of care. Young people speak favourably of the home and say that they feel safe. A young person commented, 'staff talk to you and listen to you. They respect you.'

The leadership and management is effective and drives further improvements in the home. The Registered Manager is committed to further improvement and leads a dedicated and enthusiastic staff team. The home is safely maintained and all activities that young people engage in are safely managed. Two recommendations relating to records in the home have been made as a result of this inspection. These shortfalls do not impact on the outcomes for young people.

## Areas for improvement

### Recommendations

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

- ensure that written records kept by the home when a child goes missing detail action taken by staff, the circumstances of the child's return, any reasons given by the child for running away from the home, and any action taken in the light of those reasons. This information is shared with the responsible authority and where appropriate, their parents (NMS 5.10)
- ensure that information about the child is recorded clearly and in a way which will be helpful to the child when they access their files now or in the future. Children are actively encouraged to read their files, other than confidential or third party information and to correct errors and add personal statements. (NMS 22.5)

## Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **outstanding**.

Young people make significant progress in all areas of their lives. In some cases, there has been exceptional progress in relation to young people's starting points. The home provides care for young people who have experienced unsettled or turbulent periods prior to arriving at the home. Young people quickly settle into the home, build effective relationships with staff and make progress. As a result, they value and recognise the progress that they make. Comments from young people include; 'I am more confident in myself', 'I love being here. It has really changed my life' and 'I feel relaxed and know I am making good progress.' A social worker commented in relation to the progress of a young person, 'already I can see a difference in attitude.'

The health needs of young people are carefully managed. All young people benefit from a busy lifestyle where the benefits of regular exercise, healthy lifestyles and positive behaviour are promoted. This leads to exceptional progress for young people. For example, young people quickly reduce previously displayed risk-taking and anti-social behaviours as a result of being at the home. A social worker commented, 'the young person has stopped smoking and has made massive improvements with emotional health.' Young people develop a sense of self-worth and understanding of their emotions. This results in significant improvements to their personal safety and emotional well-being.

Young people regularly attend education and make, in relation to their starting points, exceptional progress in this regard. For example, young people who have struggled with regular attendance in the past are now studying towards qualifications appropriate to their age and abilities. This ensures that young people are enabled to access appropriate education and make progress in line with their peers. As a result, young people are making progress towards achieving their goals and aspirations. A social worker commented, 'the young person is thriving in education.'

Young people learn a range of new skills and abilities as a result of staying at the home. For example, young people talked to inspectors about learning how to erect tents, cook different types of food and how to check equipment prior to activities. As a result, young people are able to recognise their developing knowledge and competencies. This is further underpinned through young people developing skills for independence and adulthood. Young people learn how to look after their personal space and plan and prepare their own meals.

All young people are encouraged, where it is appropriate to do so, to develop and maintain links with their families. This ensures that young people maintain their family identity and this further enhances young people's emotional security. A social worker commented, 'staff fully support the young person in maintaining contact with family.'

### **Quality of care**

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

The staff team are committed, enthusiastic and passionate about supporting young people. They work hard to quickly form appropriate and beneficial attachments to young people. This ensures that young people are immediately supported when they arrive at the home. This, in turn, enables young people to begin making progress and benefitting from their time at the home.

Relationships between staff and young people are a key strength and young people speak favourably of the staff. Comments from young people include; 'staff listen to me and understand where I am coming from', 'staff seem to understand me', 'everyone really cares' and 'I didn't want them to care about me at first but now I feel special.' This is reflected in Social Workers' comment; 'the staff's knowledge of the young person is very good', 'the quality of care is excellent', 'I know that the young person is in safe hands' and 'staff offer high levels of support at all times.'

Young people know that staff are concerned for their welfare. As a result, they build trusting relationships with staff and are able to share their concerns, worries and feelings. This is further underpinned through the provision of a young person's guide that contains all required information. Young people know how to complain and know that they will be appropriately supported should they choose to do so. Complaints from young people are rare. Where they do occur, they are appropriately and swiftly managed.

All young people are actively encouraged to engage in education. Staff ensure that young people are motivated and supported to achieve in line with their potential. Relationships between education workers and the care staff are positive. This ensures that all relevant information is shared and concerns are swiftly acted upon. An education worker commented, 'the integration between education and care is excellent. We share progress and if there are concerns, we share ideas how best to support the young person and help them move forward.'

Highly individualised care plans are regularly and robustly reviewed. The views of young people are sought and their views built into how their care is delivered. Care plans are clearly recorded and all staff are consistent in their approach. As a result, young people benefit from familiarity, structure and routine. The progress of young people is appropriately shared with parents, social workers and other appropriate parties. A social worker commented, 'the weekly reports are excellent. They enable me to evaluate the progress the young person is making.' The staff team work closely with placing authorities and relationships are effective. Due to the short-term nature of placements at the home, the Registered Manager ensures that plans are considered for when young people move on. This ensures that young people make planned and considered moves to their next placement.

Young people spend time away from the home on a range of activities and camping experiences. The standard of accommodation on such experiences is carefully managed to ensure that young people are provided with appropriate shelter, warmth and comfort. This ensures that the needs of young people are met and promoted.

The staff team provide a homely environment for young people. Communal areas are suitably furnished and equipped with leisure activities. Young people are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms. This enables young people to develop and maintain their personal space and identities. This is further enhanced through the display of young people's photographs around the home. These photographs show young people taking part in a range of activities and experiences. As a result, young people feel proud of their achievements and are encouraged by the staff team to recognise their progress. A young person commented, 'I feel at home.'

### **Safeguarding children and young people**

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

Restraint is appropriately used for the purposes of keeping young people safe from harm. A member of the home's senior care staff is an accredited instructor and all staff are appropriately trained. As a result, young people are kept safe from harm and staff are competent in managing challenging behaviour. The views of young people are explored and recorded following incidents of anti-social behaviour. Where sanctions are given, they are fair and proportionate.

Young people are encouraged to reflect on their actions and ways to manage their emotions. As a result, the frequency of anti-social behaviour, missing from the home and challenging behavioural incidents is reducing. Furthermore, the use of rewards and incentives ensures that young people are motivated to work to specific behavioural goals. Comments from young people include; 'I feel safe here', 'staff help me to figure out how to deal with problems', 'staff help me to sort things out', 'the staff compromise with you, they help you to figure out ways to handle things' and 'staff help me to deal with my emotions.'

The staff team are vigilant to the individual risks of young people. Highly detailed risk assessments and behaviour management plans are in place for all young people. As

a result, all staff are aware of the specific vulnerabilities of young people and how to promote young people's safety. Where young people go missing from the home, actions are taken to ensure the safety and wellbeing of young people and all relevant parties are updated. However, the records made by the home do not always detail sufficient information about the circumstances of young people going missing. This means that the Registered Manager is unable to fully review incidents of young people missing from the home. To date, there has been no discernible negative impact on the outcomes for young people. A recommendation has been made to improve this area of practice.

The Registered Manager has built effective and sustainable links with the local police service. As a result of this partnership, any concerns about the safety or welfare of young people are swiftly and appropriately shared. A local police officer commented that the home, 'are very good at working with us.' Serious incidents are rare at the home. Where they do occur, the Registered Manager ensures that robust actions are taken to safeguard young people. Furthermore, appropriate notification is made to the relevant bodies. This ensures that child protection services, placing authorities and Ofsted are able to review the home's response to incidents. This further promotes a safety-conscious culture within the home where young people are safe and staff are clear in their responsibilities. A member of staff commented, 'we work hard to make sure the young people are safe'

Activities are carefully risk assessed and the home has the required licenses in place for outdoor activities. This ensures that young people are able to participate in safe yet challenging activities. The home is regularly checked for defects and immediate action is taken to rectify any shortfalls. All required checks on electrical, oil and gas installations are in place. The physical environment is safe and this further promotes the safety of young people. Regular fire drills ensure that young people and staff are able to safely evacuate in the event of fire. The use of different scenarios during drills, for example, blocking a corridor or exit to a building, ensures that young people are practised in different scenarios. This reduces the risk of complacency and further enhances the safety of young people in the home.

## **Leadership and management**

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

The home was judged to be making satisfactory progress at the last inspection in February 2013. The Registered Manager has taken appropriate action to meet the four requirements for improvement that were made at the inspection. Risk assessment processes are improved and staff now receive regular and appropriate supervision. Quality assurance monitoring reports in line with Regulation 33 and 34 now meet the required standard. As a result of these improvements, the Registered Manager is able to more effectively monitor the home and identify any areas of concern. Furthermore, the safety of young people has been improved through a more rigorous assessment of potential risks.

Three recommendations for improvement were also made at the previous inspection.

These have been fully addressed and met. Fire evacuation drills are improved and there have been further improvements to staff training. The views of young people are now actively sought and recorded following incidents of restraint and sanctions in the home. However, these records are sometimes difficult to locate although are recorded. For example, where staff have recorded the views of young people in a focused key working session, this is not cross referenced on the sanctions record. This has no impact on the outcomes for young people. A recommendation has been made to improve this area of practice.

An experienced, enthusiastic and committed Registered Manager provides effective leadership in the home. Staff are clear in their responsibilities and feel supported by the management of the home. Comments from the staff team include; 'I am able to raise any concerns with the manager' and 'I feel supported and my training needs are met.'

The management of the home has been further enhanced through the appointment of an experienced deputy manager. This has enabled the Registered Manager to spend more time developing the service. Senior staff have been trained in supervision methods and this ensures that staff are appropriately supported by senior staff in the home. Training is regularly refreshed all staff are up-to-date in safeguarding, fire safety, restraint, first aid and food hygiene. As a result, young people benefit from a well-trained, appropriately supervised and well-supported staff team.

The home's Statement of Purpose is up to date and contains all required information. This ensures that young people, parents and placing authorities are able to review the home's aims and objectives. The Registered Manager ensures that young people's records are appropriately updated and safely stored. As a result, information relating to the progress of young people is clearly recorded and shared with relevant individuals. This further ensures that the progress of young people is shared and celebrated. Where concerns arise, the Registered Manager ensures that these are swiftly and robustly acted upon.

The home is safely maintained and the health, safety and well-being of young people is at the centre of staff practice. Regular trips out, including overnight camping stays, are thoroughly risk assessed to ensure the safety of all those taking part. The Registered Manager is committed to providing safe yet stimulating, challenging and explorative experiences for young people. This results in an environment where young people are able to make significant progress in developing their confidence and self-esteem.

The Registered Manager is aware of the home's strengths and weaknesses. The home's development plan is regularly updated and assessed. Monitoring reports from the organisation identify areas of strength and development. The Registered Manager ensures that improvements are made where necessary. The manager's own monitoring is effective. Regular audits ensure that any weaknesses are identified and resolved. The views of young people are appropriately explored by the Registered Manager and this further drives improvement in the home.





## 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.