

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC022464
Inspection date	04/07/2012
Inspector	Pamela Nuckley
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	30/01/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home, which is privately run, provides care and accommodation for one young person 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 **adequate**.

The home provides suitable and well-planned care. Young people receive individual care and there is a strong commitment to helping young people access education. Staff are committed to supporting and enabling young people to develop their skills and socially acceptable behaviour.

Young people benefit from good relationships with staff and say adults care about their welfare. Young people are able to access health services, community activities and have contact with people who are significant to them. Sufficient safeguarding practices are in place.

This home has a good track record of young people being supported in several areas of their lives and achieving beyond initial expectations. Several professionals commented on the home's efficiency, good communication skills and the home being proactive in instigating meetings in order to keep young people safe. This coupled with the positive comments from young people, shows that the shortfalls identified within this report are not currently impacting on young people or the care given.

Areas for the home's development include ensuring that Regulation 33 visits are carried out regularly and that missing from home risk assessments are individualised to a young person's needs. Further to this, that all persons working in the home have been party to a fire evacuation, that staff receive training on contact, that staff commence the Children's Workforce Development Council's induction standards within seven days of employment, that staff understand the home's whistle-blowing

policy, that young people have a personal education plan in place, that staff references are verified and that medical consent is obtained.

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
11 (2001)	ensure the registered person promotes and makes proper provision for the welfare of children accommodated; specifically in relation to ensuring that missing from care risk assessments are individual to a young person's needs and are reviewed regularly (Regulation 11 (1) (a))	31/08/2012
33 (2001)	ensure visits by the registered provider take place at least once a month and may be unannounced. (Regulation 33 (3))	31/08/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure that telephone enquiries are made as well as obtaining written references on all people working in the children's home (NMS 16.1)
- ensure that there is an emergency escape plan that all staff and children are familiar with and have practised so they know what to do in an emergency (NMS 10.9)
- ensure there is a whistle-blowing policy which is made known to all staff and volunteers (NMS 16.1)
- ensure that new staff undertake the Children's Workforce Development Council's induction standards, commencing within seven working days of starting their employment and being completed within six months (NMS 18.3)
- ensure that children's health is promoted by, for example, obtaining consent for medical treatment (NMS 6.5)
- ensure that the home obtains a copy of the young person's personal education plan (Volume 5, statutory guidance, paragraph 2.118)
- ensure that staff have appropriate training, supervision and support if they are required to supervise and facilitate contact. (NMS 9.2)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people say that they enjoy living at this home and describe the home as safe, friendly and homely. They say that staff are approachable, listen to them and are concerned about their welfare. They say they are included in all aspects of their care. Therefore, young people say that their views, wishes and feelings are actively sought and that they influence the running of the home.

Young people benefit from clear contact arrangements. Young people say, 'Staff have helped me to keep in touch with people that are important to me and I can have friends and family come to visit me.' A social worker said, 'The staff are very helpful in arranging and recording regular family contact.' Young people say that they are able to contact their family by telephone. They also see their parent on a regular basis and feel that this is important to them. Young people's contact is fully included in their placement plan and any restrictions clearly identified. Staff provide transport to and from venues. This ensures the safety of young people and that they can keep in touch with people who are important to them. Staff fully understand the emotional impact contact can have on young people and respond sensitively to their needs. However, staff have not received appropriate training in contact and this could impact on how staff support, supervise or facilitate contact.

This home has a good track record of ensuring that young people's educational needs are well met. Young people make progress in attendance and achievement in their education or employment seeking. Where young people have been excluded from mainstream education, the staff have worked in a determined manner to ensure that appropriate placements are sourced quickly. As a consequence, some young people have succeeded beyond initial expectations.

Young people can choose their food, and the food served is both healthy and nutritious. The staff are aware of individual young people's likes and dislikes to ensure that they enjoy the food served. Staff encourage young people to eat healthy foods and snacks. Young people have the opportunity to go shopping with staff and are able to choose items for the menu and weekly treats. One young person said, 'I don't like going shopping, and I don't do much cooking but the food is great.'

Young people are learning that there are consequences for their actions. The home has an incentive scheme in place to encourage positive behaviours. Young people say that staff always discuss the risks of some unacceptable behaviour and that they realise it is their choice to follow this guidance or not. The home's risk assessments identify said behaviours and the course of action staff should follow. There has been some reduction in risk taking behaviour and staff are working hard to reduce other risks.

An activities programme has been developed to provide a range of opportunities for young people to develop new skills, with support and encouragement from staff. Young people say they enjoy going out with friends and attending the local

community centre. One young person has been supported by staff to continue attending church activities that they were involved in prior to coming to this home. This enables young people to develop their confidence, enhances their self-worth, resilience and self-esteem.

Quality of care

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

Young people say that relationships with staff are good and are based on respect, trust and honesty. Young people say that their behaviour has improved because of these good relationships. The consultation systems with young people are adequate; there are young people's meetings taking place alongside more informal discussions between staff and young people.

Young people are helped to develop socially acceptable behaviour by the use of praise and the implementation of boundaries. Young people know what standards of behaviour are expected and this has resulted in young people demonstrating an increasingly mature and responsible approach to how they conduct themselves.

Young people say that they are fully aware of the home's complaint procedure and other independent services that they can contact if they had any concerns. One young person said, 'I have made a complaint in the past and I was happy with how the manager dealt with it'. Young people confirm that small concerns are acted upon quickly and that staff take all concerns seriously. This ensures that young people are listened to and can influence the care that they receive.

Young people are involved in their placement plan and the home links closely with young people's parents, social workers and significant others. This ensures that all parties are fully involved in the decision making and understand the plan.

Young people access suitable medical and health services to meet their needs. Young people say that the home has provided them with information on health services. For example, young people are supported to access health services to stop smoking. One young person said, 'I want to try one of those electric cigarettes, so the manager is going to look into it for me.' There is also lots of information available to young people on drugs and alcohol issues. There is an adequate health plan document in place which has been completed with the young person to get their views on how they see their health. This means that young people are aware of their health needs and staff can assess how young people view and understand their health. However, the home does not have medical consent for one young person. This would impact on the young person if emergency treatment was necessary.

The home's procedures for managing medication are put into practice to ensure young people's welfare is promoted and protected. Staff are trained in first aid and handling medication. They have a clear understanding of the home's procedures and a detailed knowledge of each young person's medication. Medication is securely stored. Staff make sure that young people only have medication specifically for them

and take it in line with the prescription instructions. The individual needs of young people are identified, and specialist needs are met by external support as necessary.

The staff work in a determined manner to ensure that appropriate education placements are sourced quickly and as a result, young people's education is disrupted as little as possible in order that they can continue to attend classes and achieve. Staff support young people in education planning meetings or represent their views if they choose not to attend. Contact between the home and school is frequent and effective. A notable area of strength is the staff's close communication and support of other professionals working in education to sustain and increase the young people's time in the provision. The staff make a lot of effort to encourage good attendance and ensure that the young people are well prepared for the school day. The home maintains school reports and any certificates that young people receive. However, personal education plans are not on file. Therefore, staff are not fully aware of the young people's attainment levels and targets, progress or areas for development. This may impact on the support required at the home to help young people achieve their education targets.

The young people live in a home that is located near to shops, leisure facilities, education and employment opportunities. It is on the main bus route to the nearby town centre. The interior and exterior of the home are in a reasonable state of structural and decorative repair. There is a good maintenance and repair programme for the building, furniture and equipment, and any damage is repaired promptly. One young person is in the process of choosing colour schemes for their bedroom. The home is clean and there are homely touches throughout.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people say they feel safe and are safe at this home. The home has clear policies and procedures to safeguard young people. Any investigations or suspicions of harm are dealt with without delay, fairly and consistently in a way that supports both the person making the allegation and the person who is the subject of the allegation. The Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) says that this home is excellent in sharing concerns, reporting responsibilities and initiating strategy meetings to keep young people safe. Staff demonstrate that they understand their role and responsibilities in protecting, recording and following policies and procedures in most safeguarding issues. However, some staff do not know the home's whistle-blowing policy. This means that young people may not be protected by staff who do not report concerns in good time.

The home takes steps to make sure that young people missing from home are protected. If young people go missing, staff will try to find them. The home has developed positive links with the local police and follow agreed local protocols regarding young people missing from care. Incidents are recorded appropriately. The missing from home coordinator said, 'The home is really proactive in reporting young people missing from care and instigate strategy meetings to reduce the risk.' Risk

assessments are in place but they do not detail individual needs and have not been reviewed after episodes of missing from care. Therefore, staff lack guidance and relevant information about specific individuals to keep them safe.

Staff praise young people when they do well and reward them. Staff assist young people to learn to manage their behaviour and solve problems. Physical intervention of young people has not been used in, or by the staff of this home. Recording systems for sanctions show that staff are reasonable in their approach when applying consequences.

Staff carry out fire drills, to ensure the premises are safe and young people know what to do in case of an emergency. However, not all staff have been party to a fire evacuation within this home. As a consequence, staff may not be able to help young people exit the building safely in an emergency.

The recruitment and selection of people working at the home is adequate. Some staff's references have not been verified. This does not ensure that young people are fully protected from unsafe adults. There are suitable systems in place to ensure that visitors to the home are suitably checked and supervised to protect young people.

Leadership and management

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

The home is managed by an experienced and qualified Registered Manager. Staff say that they are supported by the Registered Manager and have a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities. They confirm that when they need support and guidance the manager is available and helpful. Staff are supported on a daily basis and they receive one-to-one supervision on a regular basis.

At the last interim inspection in January 2012, one requirement and one recommendation were made. The Registered Manager was asked to supply to Ofsted a report in respect of any review conducted by him. This report has now been received and the manager understands his responsibilities in relation to this. Additionally, the home was asked to ensure that there was a development plan in place. There is now a development plan that identifies what the home does well, what needs improving and future plans for the home.

The home has a clear Statement of Purpose that sets out the aims of the home and how it will operate. Young people receive a children's guide to the home. Both of these documents contain relevant up-to-date information. For example, the children's guide contains details of the complaints system, Children's Rights Officer and independent services that can offer help, support and guidance.

The management of this service demonstrates a commitment to delivering childcare practice tailored to the individual and personal needs of the young people they look after. Social workers feedback has been that, 'young people are safe' and that the 'Registered Manager and staff communicate quickly and effectively with them'.

Young people are looked after by a staff team that is caring and have the young person's best interests at heart. The numbers of staff on duty are sufficient to meet the needs of young people. Most staff have the National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in care but there has been some delay in some staff accessing this qualification or equivalent. Therefore, not all staff's development is prioritised. However, staff do receive on-going training to help them support young people with complex needs.

There are various systems to monitor the care given and the operation of the home and young people's views are sought as part of these visits. However, Regulation 33 visits have not taken place regularly. This does not ensure that there are good effective systems in place to monitor the quality of care.

Young people's records are well structured and are held securely. As a consequence, young people feel that their information is held confidentially. There have been two notifications since the last inspection. Staff and management are well aware of the process and requirements to report significant events.

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.