

## Inspection report for children's home

---

|                                |                 |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC022464        |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 23/08/2013      |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Marian Denny    |
| <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, 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 **good**.

Young people live in a well-managed children's home that provides them with good quality care. This enables most young people to achieve positive outcomes in their lives. Young people are engaged in education and, with improved school attendance, have greater opportunities to gain qualifications, commence at college and undertake apprenticeships. Young people's behaviour is generally good and continues to improve. They are feeling more confident and more able to accept the support that is available to them and to begin planning for their futures. However, some young people continue to make choices and take part in risk-taking behaviours that may impact negatively on their health and welfare.

Staff are fully committed to promoting young people's safety and well-being. Young people feel safe and are protected from harm. They develop good relationships with staff and settle well in the home. They are positive about the staff and the quality of care they receive. Young people's social workers and other professionals are also very positive about the standard of care and support provided. They are also complimentary about staff's ability to work with young people who have complex needs and present challenging behaviour. Behaviour management strategies are well thought out, consistently applied and have secured improvements in behaviour for most young people. Staff provide effective personalised, care, which takes full account of the individual needs of each young person. Staff work well with other professionals in planning and delivering individual care plans to meet young people's specific needs. They also work effectively and in a co-ordinated way to manage and reduce risks to promote young people's safety.

The manager is competent and has considerable experience in residential childcare.

The manager knows the strengths and weaknesses of the home and takes action to secure improvements.

This inspection has raised some areas for improvement which has resulted in two requirements and three recommendations being made. These include: improving the consultation process, specifically in relation to young people's parents and relatives in order to form an opinion on the standard of care provided in the home; developing training opportunities for staff, specifically in the administration of medication; introducing a formal process for staff handovers; ensuring information about an individual child is kept confidential; and establishing a robust system to monitor the quality and adequacy of records and address any shortfalls found.

## 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   |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 33<br>(2001) | ensure the person carrying out the Regulation 33 visit shall interview, with their consent and in private, the parents and relatives of children accommodated in the home as appears necessary in order to form an opinion of the standard of care provided in the home (Regulation 33 (4)(a)) | 30/11/2013 |
| 27<br>(2001) | ensure that all persons employed receive appropriate training, specifically with regard to the safe administration of medication. (Regulation 27 (4) (a))                                                                                                                                      | 30/11/2013 |

### Recommendations

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

- ensure staff rotas have time scheduled to ensure handovers are held (NMS 17.6)
- ensure there is a robust system in place to monitor the quality and adequacy of record keeping and take action when needed (NMS 22.1)
- ensure information about individual children is kept confidential. (NMS 22.3)

### Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people are making good progress towards achieving positive outcomes in many aspects of their lives. For example, young people improve educational attendance and achieve qualifications. They are developing good relationships with staff and are increasingly willing to accept help and guidance available from them as well as from other professional staff. Young people are developing greater confidence and self-esteem and taking a real pride in their appearance. They are also more confident in social situations and are playing a positive role in the community. For example, some young people have organised a drama production and raised money for a local charity. Young people are generally well settled in the home and, with staff support, are more able to deal with setbacks and disappointments in a mature and responsible way. Consequently, there has been a reduction in young people taking part in unsafe behaviour at home and in the community.

Young people enjoy good health and have generally healthy lifestyles. They take responsibility for their personal care and enjoy healthy diets and physical exercise. For example, they go swimming and to the local gym. They have very good access to a full range of health services, and receive support and information about any specific health problems. Consequently, they understand the importance of healthy lifestyles and health risks, such as drug-taking and smoking. However, while some progress has been made in these areas, some young people continue to take part in certain risk-taking behaviours, such as smoking and drug use, which impacts negatively on their health.

Most young people's school attendance and participation in education improves. They understand the importance of education and learning and have increased opportunities to achieve, develop their knowledge and skills, pursue their talents and gain qualifications. Young people have attained educational qualifications and have begun to think about their future. One young person stated, 'Staff have really encouraged me educationally and given me daily support which has been good. It is thanks to the staff that I have been able to obtain a qualification in mathematics a year early'.

Young people benefit from appropriate and well-managed contact with their family and other important people in their lives. Staff work hard to ensure that contact with their families is a safe, positive and enjoyable experience. However, staff are aware that young people may sometimes find seeing their family stressful and they always make sure young people are suitably and sensitively supported.

Young people are effectively prepared for adult life and moving on into their own accommodation. Consequently, young people routinely have opportunities to develop their skills in managing money, shopping, planning and cooking meals, and doing their laundry. Young people play a central role in deciding about their futures, with staff helping them to consider their options and think about what they want for the future.

## **Quality of care**

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

Staff use excellent communication and interpersonal skills to develop positive relationships with young people. Young people feel staff are interested in their welfare and said, 'They really take an interest in me.' Another young person said, 'It is dead good, staff really care.'

Young people are encouraged to behave in a more socially acceptable manner. Individual behaviour management plans are supported by comprehensive risk assessments, which identify triggers for negative behaviour, and effective strategies for developing positive behaviour. Daily incentive systems encourage young people to improve their behaviour. Sanctions are used appropriately and professionals stated, 'They help young people to understand and accept the consequences of their behaviour.' Staff work very hard to help young people gain a better understanding of themselves and the reasons for their negative behaviour. This enables young people to begin to address these issues and to gradually improve their behaviour and develop a more positive approach to life. One young person stated, 'Staff have really helped me change my behaviour, I no-longer get arrested.'

Staff actively monitor and review young people's plans to make sure they continue to meet young people's needs. Staff have also developed strong and effective working relationships with a wide range of agencies to promote young people's development. This is very effectively demonstrated by the comment made by one professional who stated, 'Staff are very good in liaising and communicating with me. We work very well together as a team, which enables us to meet (the young person's) needs effectively and achieve good outcomes.'

Staff encourage and support young people to give their view on all aspects of their care including for example care plans, changes in the home such as the re-decoration of the home, their bedroom, menus, their education and any leisure activities that they may wish to be involved in. Young people are confident about expressing their views because they feel they are 'valued'. However, social care professionals and parents are not always asked what they think about the service and how it might improve.

Young people receive good support to maintain contact with family and friends as agreed in their care plans. All professionals spoken with confirmed that the young people at the home were, 'Happy and their needs well met.' One professional stated that 'Staff ensure contact arrangements run smoothly and young people are well supported.' One parent commented 'Staff are welcoming when I visit the home' and said that their child received 'good care.'

Placement plans are good with staff being clear about the day-to-day care arrangements for the young person. Placement plans also clearly identify individuals' heritage and identity. Young people are encouraged to pursue their individual beliefs and are offered a range of material to develop their understanding of individual choice and difference. Young people's placement plans are monitored by staff who work in close partnership with young people, their placing social workers and, where

possible, their parents. This ensures that the individual care needs of the young person living at the home are known and are addressed in their individual care arrangements.

Regular meetings are organised to review the effectiveness of their care plans. Young people are always invited to these meetings and, if they do not attend, their views are always shared at the meeting. Staff work hard though to encourage and support the young person to attend the meeting. This enables the young person to give their views about their care needs directly to the social care professionals at the meeting.

Staff address young people's educational needs effectively and as a result, young people's educational attendance is good and they have been able to sit GCSE examinations. Young people's achievements clearly demonstrate the commitment and effort of a focussed and child-centred team.

Young people know how to complain. Information is provided in the home's literature. There have been no complaints since the home was last inspected.

Young people enjoy living at the home. The home is comfortable and has a homely atmosphere. The quality of the furnishing and decoration at the home is good. Staff take suitable health and safety measures to ensure that the home is free from hazards. The location of the home provides young people with access to a broad range of local community facilities and recreational opportunities.

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

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

Young people feel safe and are protected from significant harm. Staff work effectively with young people, parents, safeguarding agencies and Ofsted to promote young people's safety. They know what they need to do to protect individual young people because they have a clear understanding of the young people's particular vulnerabilities based on their personal circumstances.

Young people's individual care plans clearly identify any risks they may face and outline effective strategies to ensure their welfare is promoted and protected. Staff ensure plans for young people's safety are put into practice and fully address their needs.

Staff provide young people with good advice on personal safety, including relationships, and what to do if they have any worries. Young people state that they are able to talk to staff and are confident that the staff would respond quickly if young people needed help. Staff are effective in balancing the need for protection with enabling young people to take reasonable risks as part of their growth and development. Young people rarely go missing or are absent without permission. However, there are clear procedures to follow should young people go missing from the home.

Young people generally benefit from a consistent and structured environment where they clearly know what is expected of them. They can see the advantages of positive behaviour by successfully earning rewards that they have chosen. The approach has been effective in helping young people to feel safe and emotionally secure and has reduced their anxieties and frustrations. Staff have enabled young people to understand their feelings better and work out ways to promote positive behaviour.

The home does have a sanction system in place and from time to time, sanctions are used. The system is well recorded and evaluates the impact of each measure on young people's behaviour. This information is useful as it helps the manager and staff review the appropriateness and effectiveness of the measures used to promote positive behaviour. Staff are clear that physical intervention is not used in this home.

Young people feel staff are fair and recognise staff reward young people for good behaviour. Social care professionals spoken with stated, 'Appropriate sanctions are used in the home and generally work well in enabling young people to realise the consequences of unacceptable behaviour.'

The recruitment and selection of people working at the home is very thorough. This ensures only people with suitable skills, experience and competencies work at the home and that children and young people are protected. There are also suitable systems in place to ensure that visitors to the home are suitably checked and supervised.

All fire, gas and electrical equipment are serviced annually. Young people take part in regular fire drills to help keep them safe.

## **Leadership and management**

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

The Registered Manager is suitably qualified, is competent and has considerable experience in this area of work. The manager currently manages three single placement homes. At present this arrangement does not adversely impact on any of the homes as they are in close proximity.

The home is effectively and efficiently managed. It is operated in accordance with the aims and objectives of its Statement of Purpose and children's guide. The Statement of Purpose has been updated to reflect staff changes. It provides an accurate and comprehensive picture of the home and of the services it provides. The young people's guide is very clear, attractive and informative. It contains all the required information and is relevant to young people's lives.

The manager has a clear and realistic understanding of the strengths of the service and the areas for further development. The home's development plan sets out how the manager intends to progress the service. Since the last inspection the house has been redecorated and arrangements are in place to re-decorate the bedroom of a



young person who has recently been admitted to the home.

Both the internal and external monitoring of the home is taking place regularly and is generally good. Reports appropriately review performance and identify areas for improvement. Young people contribute to monitoring and their views are listened to and taken into account. However the reports do not contain the views of parents or relatives about the standard of care provided at the home. There are also some minor shortfalls in relation to monitoring the adequacy of records and taking action to address them. For example, there were some omissions in relation to dates on staff handover records. In addition, the fire records did not always contain the times at which fire drills were undertaken although it was possible to ascertain that they had taken place at various times of the day and evening. This means that, despite a shortfall in recording, the frequency of the fire drills is such that children and staff remain safe.

Young people are looked after by a competent and well-supported staff team. The staff are enthusiastic, caring, work well together and provide young people with a good standard of care. The numbers of staff on duty are sufficient to meet the needs of young people. This includes the support they need for education and activities, visits to their families and attending appointments. Staff are suitably qualified and receive training to develop their individual skills and knowledge. However, not all staff have had the necessary training to meet the needs of the young people they are caring for, for example, on the administration of medication. The manager is aware of this and plans are in place to address this shortfall. This will ensure it does not impact on the young people living in the home.

Staff are effectively supported and guided through suitable professional supervision and appraisal. This helps to improve their knowledge and working practices. Team meetings take place regularly to allow the staff team to discuss the running of the home and to look at ways to improve the service they offer. Staff also use this time to reflect on young people's progress and to decide how best to support them. Staff rotas demonstrate a consistent core group of staff look after young people. However at present staff either have to remain behind, or come in early, to ensure handovers are held because there is no specific time scheduled in the rota.

At the time of the last interim inspection the home was found to be making satisfactory progress. One requirement and two recommendations were made and these had been addressed. The capacity for continuous improvement of this home is good, as evidenced by its performance since the last inspection and the improving outcomes for young people. The organisation is keen to take remedial action on the shortfalls found during this inspection and will take this forward to improve the service.

Young people's written records are securely stored and well-organised. They contain up-to-date information and provide a clear and detailed picture of young people's progress and experiences. As a result, the records are helpful to young people in understanding their lives and planning for young people's futures. However, on one young person's files, some information related to another young person and

therefore breached confidentiality.

## 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.