

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Wendy Anderson
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Date of last inspection	09/02/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This is a privately owned children's home which is registered for up to three young people with 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 good progress in all aspects of their lives in relation to their starting points on admission. The cornerstones of this progress are the young people's individual plans which are implemented and the in-depth knowledge the staff team have about the young people they care for. Additionally, the excellent relationships staff have with the young people supports their progress. Staff provide young people with consistent care which meets their identified needs and will access any additional services the young people may need. Equality and diversity are evident throughout all the work undertaken at the home as is the staff team's child focused approach.

Young people are enabled to lead a healthy lifestyle which includes taking part in a range of activities both in the home and in the community. This enables the young people to build their self-esteem and develop their social skills.

There are good systems in place to safeguard the young people; these are mostly adhered to but there are some gaps in the staff information retained at the point of their employment. Health and safety processes are also good but the home has not has a night-time fire drill for over a year.

Behaviour within the home is good with restraints and sanctions being used on a minimal basis. Sanction records need to include more detail on any financial reparations imposed.

Leadership at the home is appropriate. The new manager is aware of the strengths and weakness of the home and these are reflected in the current action plan. The

staff team feel well supported but formal supervision is not happening in line with the organisation's policy.

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
26 (2001)	ensure full and satisfactory information in respect of that person has been obtained in relation to the matters specified in paragraphs 1 and 2 of schedule 2. (Regulation 27(b)) (Schedule 1 and 2)	31/12/2012
27 (2001)	ensure all staff receive appropriate supervision. In particular this must be line with the organisations policy of the frequency of staff supervision. (Regulation 2794(a))	31/12/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure sanction and rewards are clear, reasonable and fair and are understood by all staff and children. In particular sanction records record the amount and duration of any financial sanctions. (NMS 3.8)
- ensure there is an emergency escape plan that all staff and young people are familiar with and have practiced so they know what to do in an emergency (NMS 10.9)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make good progress in the home. They develop a positive self-view, their self-confidence and a good understanding of their background and culture. The foundations for this work are the sound relationships between the staff and the young people.

Young people are enabled to lead healthy lifestyles including making decisions about their lifestyles and health. This is promoted well as they are involved in the planning of meals and take part in activities which promote good health. Young people's house meetings and keyworker sessions assist with this as during these they look at

general health topics as well as the hazards of drugs, alcohol and smoking. Staff support young people in accessing and attending all health care appointments and support them to access support from external professionals where a need has been identified.

Young people's attendance and engagement with education has greatly improved from their starting points. Progress has been good in many areas and young people have, as a result, been able to take and pass examinations.

Young people are encouraged to join local clubs and organisations as well as undertaking activities with the staff. Engagement in these activities in the local community enables them to improve their self-confidence and develop their social skills. This also enhances their life skills and independence skills which are key for life after they leave the home. This work links with the formal pathway work undertaken by the home with the young people. This work is supported by clear records which develop into an effective work book that the young people can use for reference after they leave the home.

Young people are enabled to maintain contact with their family and friends. Where required the staff supervise contact visits and produce comprehensive reports on these. Progress has been made in this area as, with the support and input from the staff team, contact between young people and their families is now unsupervised. Young people said that they are welcome to bring their friends to the home as long as they let staff know.

Quality of care

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

Young people feel safe at the home and feel that the staff team care for them very well. Relationships between the staff and the young people are excellent and these are the foundation on which their work is built; relationships are built on mutual trust and respect. The staff team are very young-person focused and the young people's well-being is at the heart of their practice.

Care plans at the home are excellent and are supported by robust individual behaviour plans. All of the young people's plans are frequently reviewed and updated. The young people are fully involved in this process. The details within these plans ensure that the young people receive consistently high quality care from the staff team. All of the young people's individual needs are noted and plans are put into place and implemented to address these. These include comprehensive pathway plans. Evidence of the effectiveness of these plans is clear in the progress the young people have made from their point of admission to the home.

Key worker sessions are fundamental to the success of the work undertaken at the home. This time enables the young person and their key worker to not only address any recent incidents and/or events but more importantly to look at the events that have led to them being in care. The identified needs of the young people are

discussed and these sessions provide an opportunity for the key worker to ensure that the needs of the young person, be it relating to their physical, emotional or psychological well-being, are met. Young people see the relationship with their key worker as very important.

Consultation with young people is evident throughout the work undertaken at the home. Staff see this approach as key to the young people's development into adulthood. Consultation takes place on a day-to-day basis at the home. This is supported by regular house meetings and the young people's individual sessions with their key workers.

Young people are clear about how to make a complaint and feel that any complaint would be dealt with very quickly by staff. Some said they would just talk to staff who would sort things out for them. The home has an effective complaints process which is supported by clear records. There have been two complaints since the last inspection and these have been resolved.

Staff are proactive and supportive at engaging young people in education. They have made good progress from their starting point on admission to the home. Young people's attendance at school is good which is a major achievement for some who have been out of education for a considerable period. Individual education plans are in place where required. Communication between the home and the school is good with staff attending parents' evenings and providing additional support where required. All young people have individual education plans which are frequently reviewed and updated. Young people's achievements in this area and in other areas are celebrated and rewarded by the staff team.

Health care at the home is good with young people being encouraged and enabled to make healthy life style choices. This is supported by them being able to access external services, where required, with staff's support. Systems are in place and adhered to by staff for the administration of medication and storage. These systems are supported by robust records. Young people attend all the required health appointments. Each young person has a detailed health care plan which ensures all their health care needs are met.

Young people are given the opportunity to engage in a wide range of activities and hobbies. The staff support the young people to attend clubs and facilities in the local community; this enables them to develop their social skills and social networks and relationships outside the home. It also helps them to develop their self-confidence which in turn feeds into the home's work on independence.

The home is appropriately located, designed and maintained with high quality furnishings and equipment. Maintenance is well managed and any repairs or refurbishments are promptly undertaken. The home is kept clean and tidy and provides the accommodation and services detailed within the Statement of Purpose.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people feel safe in the home and can identify a number of staff members they feel comfortable to talk to on any topic. They understand that the staff want the best for them including keeping them safe. The staff team are well trained in this area and this training is regularly updated. The home has robust policies and procedures for safeguarding the young people placed with them; these are adhered to,. At the core of this work is the in-depth understanding the staff team have of the young people in their care

Behaviour management at the home is very good. The detailed behaviour management plans identify young people's individual vulnerabilities and triggers. The staff develop robust strategies to address these with the input of the young people. This document is supported by a detailed risk assessment which is also frequently revised and updated. The behaviour of the young people is good with a dramatic drop in the level of risk taking behaviours from the point of admission. Staff talk to the young people about risk and risk-taking behaviour and offer them guidance to help keep themselves safe. Anti-bullying procedures and vigilant staff ensure that any suspected bullying is promptly and effectively addressed. Bullying at the home is rare and not seen as an issue by the young people. Bullying is also a topic which is frequently discussed at house meetings and in key worker sessions.

The use of restraint at the home is minimal and is seen by the staff team as an action of last resort to protect others or the young person themselves. There have only been two since the last inspection and these have been appropriately recorded including holding a debrief session and recording the young person's views. These actions inform future practice. Records of incidents are also low but are effectively recorded. The sanction records are also minimal but these occasionally lack detail about financial reparations that have been put in place. They includes a lack of information about how much the young person has to pay and over what time period.

The home has a robust procedure should young people become absent or go missing from the home, which are adhered to in practice. The home has an effective working relationship with the local Police which includes them sending the Police a risk assessment for each young person upon admission which identifies their vulnerabilities in relation to being absent or missing.

The home has robust health and safety policies and procedures which are adhered to in practice; this ensures young people live in a safe environment. Comprehensive records are maintained of all health and safety areas. This process is supported by effective risk assessments which are frequently reviewed and updated. Fire records are maintained and fire drills are frequently held. However the home has not had a night time drill in the last twelve months. All young people and staff received frequent fire briefings.

The home has a robust recruitment and vetting process. At this inspection three staff files were inspected. Two of these files were exceptional and contained information

above and beyond that required. However one file did not. This shortfall could place young people at risk. To protect the young people all visitors must show evidence of their identity and sign the visitors' book; visitors' do not have unsupervised access to the young people or the home.

Leadership and management

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

The home has a new manager in post who is in the process of applying for registration with Ofsted. This is the third manager the home has had since the last key inspection. There is a lack of clarity as to how long the current manager may be in post. The manager demonstrated a clear understanding of the strengths and weakness of the home and these have been linked to the home's development plan.

At the last inspection there was one requirement and six recommendations made. The requirement was related to ensuring fire drills are carried out at the appropriate intervals. This is partially met but the home has not carried out a night-time drill in the last twelve months. All of the recommendations have been met. Comprehensive health care plans show how young people's health needs are being met. Appropriate pathway plans are now in place to ensure the best possible transition for young people about to leave care. Consultation with young people has greatly improved and young people's views are taken into account about important aspects of their care. Staff meetings are now taking place more regularly. The home now has a clear development plan to outline how the provision will be maintained and be improved further.

Complaints are robustly addressed and lessons learnt from a complaint are used to inform and develop future practice. Clear records are maintained of all complaints made. The home has an appropriate Statement of Purpose and a children's guide, which reflect the current practice of the home.

The home has good monitoring systems which include detailed Regulation 33 and 34 reports. The Regulation 33 reports include input from the staff and young people wherever possible. Within the home's records there is evidence of these being monitored and short falls being addressed with the exception of those shortfalls identified in this report.

The home is appropriately managed and the staff team are aware of their responsibilities and the expectations of their roles. There are always sufficient numbers of staff to meet the needs of the young people placed. The staff team are very young-person focused, committed and exceptionally well trained. Staff training is a real strength of the organisation. It includes a comprehensive induction process which includes them undertaking the Children's Workforce Development Council's induction standards. This approach to training ensures the young people benefit from a well-trained team who provide consistent care.

Staff supervision is not consistent with the organisation's policies and procedures,

which both staff and the supervisor sign up to. The policy states that new staff will initially receive supervision weekly, then fortnightly and then monthly. Also the policy states these sessions should be one and a half hours in duration; this has not been the case. Staff do say they feel very supported by the team, the manager and the wider senior management. Staff find all of these people approachable and encouraging. Annual appraisals are taking place but the organisation is in the process of reviewing this process to make it more effective. Staff meetings are happening on a regular basis with appropriate minutes being maintained. This too assists the staff team in providing consistent care for the young people.

Young people's records are clear, up to date and stored securely, and contribute to an understanding of the child's life. Records demonstrate there are insightful and comprehensive assessments and sound planning for the young people.

The home has good working relationships with external professionals with whom they effectively communicate. All significant events relating to the protection of the young people accommodated in the home are notified by the registered person of the home to the appropriate authorities and appropriate action is taken following any incident.

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 children's homes.