

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	20/11/2012
Inspector	Wendy Anderson
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	06/03/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This is a privately owned children's home that is registered for up to three children or 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 at the home are making good progress for their starting point on admission in all aspects of the welfare, well-being and development. This is due to a high standard of consistent care from a very young person focused staff team who are very well trained. They also have in depth knowledge of the young people they care for and have high expectations for them. Robust placement and care plans ensure that young people's needs are met. However independent reviewing officer's minutes are not consistently kept on the young people's files.

The safeguarding of young people is very good and this includes a reduction in behaviours that may place them at risk. This is supported by good health and safety systems with the exception of the home refrigerator operating outside the recommended temperature range which could compromise young people's safety.

Staff are provided with good support and this includes robust supervisions sessions which are evidenced by very detailed records. The exception to this is the supervision the manager receives which has not been consistent with the organisation's policy.

The home is well managed with appropriate systems for monitoring the home's work. However these did not pick up the points raised in this report.

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
23 (2001)	ensure all part of the home to which children have access are so far as reasonably practicable free from hazards to their health and safety. In particular that the home refrigerator operates within the temperature guidelines as stated by the Environmental Health Office (Regulation 23(a))	31/12/2012
28 (2001)	ensure in respect of each child who is accommodated in a children's home a record in permanent form is maintained which include the information, documents and records specified in Schedule 3 relating to that child. In particular that a copy of the independent reviewing officers report is on this file.(Regulation 28(1(a) Schedule 3))	31/12/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure staff receive regular supervision in line with the organisation's policy. In particular the home's manager. (NMS 19.4)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make good progress from their starting point at admission. They develop self-confidence, a positive self-view as well as a good understanding of their background and what brought them into care. Young people also understand their culture and ethnicity and this is celebrated. The achievements of young people are also celebrated through the display of certificates and awards in communal areas. This was at the request of the young people.

Young people are able to sustain positive relationships with staff despite them having a history of broken relationship upon admission. Young people said they feel safe at the home and that the staff look after them well. They could clearly identify a number of people they would be happy talking to if they were worried or concerned about anything.

Young people have made good progress with their educational attainments since admission. This has been a real area of concern with some of the young people

placed and does continue to be a work in progress.

Young people understand the importance of a healthy life style and good health. They take part in a number of activities which include physical activity. They eat a varied balanced and healthy diet and they are very involved in compiling the menus. Young people have taken advantage of staff support in addressing issues relating to drugs, alcohol and sexual, emotional and psychological good health. These topics have been addressed through key worker sessions as well as house meetings and general open discussion.

Young people are enabled to take part in activities and hobbies that interest them as well as giving them the opportunity to try new experiences. These take place both within the home and in the local community.

Young people have decreased the numbers of risk taking behaviours they undertake, especially since the end of the summer holidays.

Young people are involved in a comprehensive package of independence work which once completed will prepare them well for their future lives.

Young people are supported by staff in maintaining contact with their families and friends. Young people have established good friendship groups in the local community and these are welcome to visit the home. There is clear evidence to these contacts progressing. Some used to be supervised and are now not. All young people have made contact with family members who are new to their lives with the support of staff.

Quality of care

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

Young people feel well cared for by the staff team with whom they have very positive constructive relationships and provide the young people with consistent boundaries. These relationships are the basis for all the work undertaken by the home and are based on trust, respect, openness, good communication and being realistic with the young people. Young people said, 'Tell it like it is' which they appreciate.

Each young person has a very detailed care plan which is linked to their identified needs within the Looked After Children's documentation. These care plans are frequently reviewed and updated with the young people being fully involved in all aspects of their care. Formal reviews are held on a regular basis; again the young people are fully involved in this process. The review minutes for one young person were not on file and there was a lack of evidence of this being chased by the home. The key work system places an important role in the development of the young people. Regular sessions with key workers not only look at recent events; what the young person hopes for the future but also all those identified needs within their individual plans. Excellent records are maintained of these sessions which clearly

evidence the progress the young people have made.

The home has a variety of systems for consulting with young people on their individual care and the day-to-day running of the home. These include individual key work sessions, house meeting as well as the organisation children's forum which has representatives from each home. Records of these meeting provide clear evidence of the young people's views being listened too, valued and acted upon. Where it has not been possible to action an idea or request a full explanation has been given to the young people.

Staff undertake very good work on the individual young people's ethnicity and culture. This has been done through individual sessions as well as group work. The culture of the young people placed is celebrated throughout the home and this work has been important to them understanding and developing their own cultural identity.

All young people accommodated were clear on how to make a complaint and felt this would be dealt with quickly and fairly. Records on complaints were comprehensive. Since the last full inspection there has been one complaint from the community which was resolved and none from young people.

The health care needs of young people are well met within the home. All young people attend the required medical appointments and health checks. In addition the staff are proactive at carrying out work with the young people on health issues such as drugs, sexual health, contraception, alcohol, and good mental health. This is supported by a robust system for the safe handling, administration, storage, disposal and recording of medication. Young people are provided with any additional support they may require or that the staff feel they may benefit from.

The staff team have high expectations for the young people they care for and place great importance on education. All young people attend either school or college and have made good progress from their starting point. Staff have excellent communication with the education provider to ensure the young people receive the support they need, plus any additional support they may require at school or at the home.

The home has a good preparation for independence programme which is linked to day-to-day activities as well as in depth individual work done with the key workers. This programme provides the young people with a good basis on which to build their life after care and is linked to their pathway plans.

The home is appropriately located and decorated and furnished to a good homely standard. Young people are able to personalise their room and throughout the home there are photographs of the current residences on activities, holiday trips as well as school and family ones.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people feel safe at the home and can clearly identify a number of staff they would be comfortable talking to should they have any concerns or worries. The home has robust safeguarding policies and procedures which are adhered to in practice. The staff team also receive good quality training in this area which is frequently updated and this ensures their work is in line with current practice.

Behaviour management at the home is very good. This is based on excellent behavioural plans which are linked to the young people's individual plans and risk assessments. The behaviour plans clearly identify young people's individual vulnerabilities, behavioural triggers and strategies to combat these. These plans are frequently reviewed and updated. They also have input from the young people. The home has a positive focus on behavioural management. Goals are set, reviewed, rewarded and new goals set, again with the full involvement of the young people. Young people's achievements are celebrated both by the staff and the young people themselves. Restraint is seen as a measure of last resort and since the last inspection there have been none. However staff training in this area is still up to date. Bullying is not seen as an issue at the home by the staff or the young people. This is one of the topics frequently discussed at house meetings and in key workers sessions. Staff are imaginative and use different methods to get messages through to young people, such as art work.

The home has a robust policy and procedure on dealing with young people who are absent or missing from home which is adhered to in practice. There has been a drop in these incidents since the end of the summer holidays. However some of these reported incidents have been young people returning to the home later rather than them being missing. De-brief sessions are held after every incident. The home has a good working relationship with the Police. This includes them being provided with a copy of the individual young person's risk assessment upon admission so they are fully aware of the young person's vulnerabilities.

The home has a robust recruitment and vetting process which is adhered to in practice. This ensures that all staff working with the young people are suitable and do not place them at risk of harm or abuse.

Fire, risk assessment and health and safety procedures are good. These include regular fire drills and training for staff on fire related issues. The one exception to this is the records of temperatures for the homes refrigerator. Although these are consistently recorded, there is evidence of the refrigerator operating outside the temperature range recommended by the Environmental Health Office and no action being taken to address this. This could mean that food is stored at the wrong temperature and could compromise young people's safety.

Leadership and management

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

The home has a registered manager in post and a consistent well trained staff team. All are very young person centred and this is evident throughout the work they undertake. The manager has a clear understanding of the homes strength and areas for improvement and this informs the homes development plan. The staff team were very complimentary about the manager. They feel they work very well together and provide the young people with very good consistent care which meets their needs.

At the last inspection two recommendations were made; both of which have been met.

The homes statement of purpose and young person's guide contains all the required information and reflects the current practice at the home.

Monitoring at the home is appropriate but it has not picked up on points raised in this report. Within the records there is evidence of all records being monitored. This is supported by Regulation 34 monitoring carried out by the manager and Regulation 33 visits and reports. Regulation 33 visits are always unannounced and young people are spoken to on the majority of these visits. This provides another opportunity for young people to provide feedback on the care they receive and about the home in general.

The home has an appropriate staffing level. Currently there is one staff vacancy. There is a very good system for training staff and ensuring this training is refreshed regularly. This provides excellent opportunities for staff development.

Staff are provided with good quality supervision both formal and informal between the team. Notes on formal supervision are comprehensive. However there are some gaps in the frequency of the manager's supervision with their line manager. The company's policy states that staff will receive supervision at least monthly and this has not consistently been the case for the manager. This is supported by an appropriate annual appraisal. This is currently under review and development.

The home ensures that all required parties are informed of any significant events within the required timescales.

Records at the home are securely stored and generally well maintained. However there are some gaps in staff signing some of the homes additional records.

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.