

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC023746
Inspection date	10/08/2011
Inspector	Mark Blesky
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	01/03/2011
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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.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service that exceeds minimum requirements

Satisfactory: a service that only meets minimum requirements

Inadequate: a service that does not meet minimum requirements

Service information

Brief description of the service

This is a children's home for three young people. The home provides a service to children with a wide range of behavioural or educational needs, clearly explained in its Statement of Purpose.

Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be **good**.

Young people benefit from this well managed and organised home. The manager provides strong leadership to the staff, who are in turn well motivated to effectively meet the needs of the young people.

Young people feel safe in this home and feel respected and valued. Young people believe that their views are important to the staff and that their wishes are acted upon. Young people feel that they can influence both the operation of the home and their own lives. Staff aim to empower the young people and install self-confidence into them.

Staff are well trained and motivated to care for the young people and staff say that this is as a result of them feeling supported and confident about themselves. Care planning and day-to-day care is very well managed and young people have clearly benefitted from consistent behaviour management strategies and support. Incidents and conflict is extremely uncommon in this home and this reflects the feelings of support and respect shown to young people and staff.

Young people are treated as individuals and the staff in the home are aware of their more diverse and personal aspects of care.

Staff seek to engage with the young people and determine their needs to enable them to express themselves and define themselves effectively. Staff promote young people's aspirations and encourage them to speak out and make choices appropriately.

A requirement has been made to ensure that recording mechanisms are maintained in accordance with the amendments within the Children's Homes Regulations 2011.

Areas for improvementStatutory 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
17B (2001)	ensure written record is made of confirmation that the person authorised by the registered provider to make the record has spoken to the child concerned and the person using the measure about the use of the measure 17b.3 (h); and where a measure of restraint is used on a child the record under paragraph (3) must include details of any methods used to avoid the need to use that measure 17b.4 (b)	30/09/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure that staff have up-to-date information about each child's educational progress and school attendance record. (National Minimum Standard 8.7)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people have made good progress in this home and are confident and positive about their placements. They are supportive of the staff and understand the expectations of their behaviour. Young people feel valued and they are aware of their rights and also their responsibilities. Young people say that they feel well looked after and that the staff really care about them and help them.

Young people express their views openly and frequently and use both key working sessions and more general children's meetings to engage with the staff effectively. Children's meetings are held regularly and the young people use this opportunity to raise issues or make more general comments about the home and staff. Young people say that they can raise anything they wish and the staff will discuss matters with them. This forum provides young people with a chance to engage more formally with the staff and speak about both collective and individual issues.

Children have very good healthcare services that are supported by the home's qualified nurse and healthcare advisor. Young people are aware of their health plans and these are discussed with the young people to enable them to understand how their needs are assessed and met. Detailed records are kept by the home's staff to ensure that all interventions are supported with clear plans and relevant historic information.

To ensure that all young people benefit from formal education the home employs

qualified teachers within its own schools. Young people that do not attend mainstream schools are assessed to determine the most appropriate educational support. For young people that are awaiting schooling the home ensures that they do not miss out on formal education and a qualified teacher is commissioned to provide home tuition. Children benefit from the education services that are provided and both school attendance and achievement have increased as a result. It was noted, in one case, that updated information for one young person was outstanding. Young people are encouraged to engage in clubs and hobbies and this provides an opportunity for them to engage with community activities. Clubs such as football clubs and youth clubs enable young people to engage more fully with the wider community to form relationships and make friends outside of the home.

All young people are supported by staff to plan and maintain contact with their friends and family. Young people benefit from well planned contact and the staff spend time with the young people planning and preparing them for their contact.

Staff also discuss contact at length with young people during one-to-one sessions. This provides young people with an opportunity to discuss any matters that may compromise the quality of contact. All contact is financed by the home and the staff offer supervision of contact where appropriate. Young people say that staff help and support them plan and maintain contact. To ensure young people develop the necessary skills for independent living, assessment is undertaken on all young people. Current skills and areas where development is needed are identified and young people are well supported to acquire new skills and abilities. In this way young people are able to carry out activities and learn for themselves areas where more support and guidance is needed. Plans seek to engage the young people into considering skills for adulthood and progress in this area is good. Young people say they learn about the things that will help them in the future and gain confidence before they leave the home.

Quality of care

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

Young people are well supported by staff that understand their needs and value their opinions. Young people feel confident in their relationships with staff.

This is evident from the young people's views and supported by the very low incidents of disagreement or conflict. Young people say that staff value their opinions and listen to them. This allows young people to feel respected and instrumental in influencing the manner in which the home is maintained. When staff are unable to grant requests, young people are supported to understand the reasons for this through consultation and discussion. Young people therefore feel both valued and engaged in the running of the home and gain a sense of understanding of negotiation and compromise.

If young people are unhappy they are assisted to raise their complaint with staff. Young people feel confident that staff will address any matter that concerns them. Young people say that staff resolve matters promptly and effectively which reassures them that their views are important. If young people feel that the matter is

more serious or needs further action they are encouraged to use the formal complaint procedures where records are kept of the details of the complaint and subsequent resolution. Young people therefore feel supported and protected by both informal and formal systems of support and complaint resolution.

Detailed and comprehensive care plans ensure that young people's broad and more diverse needs are met. Young people benefit from staff members that understand the importance of individual care planning and support them. Young people have care plans that they understand and staff spend time with them making them aware of goals and expectations. Formal key working sessions ensure that young people can discuss planning and express their views and opinions. This engagement allows young people to understand their role in the care planning process and to take an active role in decision making.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people feel safe in this home and value the care that staff provide for them. All young people have detailed and comprehensive risk assessments that detail both individual behaviours and environmental factors that may impact on risk. Risk assessment therefore provides an individual profile of risk addressing the more diverse aspects of the young person. This provides both staff and the young people with a clear and precise picture of behaviour that presents risks. Young people learn to manage elements of these risks and have the opportunity to discuss this with staff. When risks decrease through improved behaviour, staff reflect these changes allowing young people to benefit from taking greater responsibility for their actions. Young people are therefore engaged in understanding risk and this has resulted in risk reduction in many cases.

Well managed safeguarding procedures are in place in the home and the home provides both out of hours and on call services to support the staff if needed. An experienced safeguarding co-ordinator is also employed and all matters of child protection are managed effectively and consistently. Staff and young people benefit from these well managed systems and all young people are aware of their rights to feel safe and well cared for. Any allegations or complaints of this nature are handled sensitively, promptly and effectively and in accordance with local authority guidelines.

Young people rarely go missing or become absent from this home and significant improvement from previous behaviour is noted. Young people say that they are able to talk to the staff and resolve difficulties that may have previously resulted in absence.

Behaviour management is very successful and has resulted in significantly reduced incidents and sanctions. Young people say that staff will talk to them and advise them when they are acting less positively. This positive engagement with young people has improved behaviour in all areas of care and this is exceptional in some

areas. There are procedures in place to effectively record incidents, sanctions and behaviour control. Physical intervention is minimal; however any physical intervention is also recorded in a dedicated book. It was noted that while recording is in most respects maintained in accordance with the children's homes regulations 2001, the 2011 amendments to the regulations have not yet been fully integrated into recording practices.

Young people are cared for by staff that have been recruited through robust employment procedures. Staff are not employed until all statutory checks have been completed and satisfactory reference checks have been received. This ensures that only suitable people are providing care for the young people.

Young people are kept safe by effective health and safety and fire assessments and maintenance. All equipment used for fire safety is regularly monitored to ensure young people are kept safe. Health and safety training and fire training is regularly undertaken by all the staff. This enables them to remain vigilant to matters of safety and confident to take action where it is needed.

Leadership and management

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

This home benefits from strong leadership from a manager with many years experience and skill. The manager attends training and receives supervision to ensure new practice guidance and procedures are understood and effectively implemented. Training is very well managed, frequent and tailored to the needs of the staff and manager. Staff receive clear guidance and understand the expectations of their role and their responsibilities to the young people.

Regular supervision is provided to the staff members and this enables them to discuss the young people's needs and develop their practice. Supervision sessions are of a frequency and duration above the national minimum standards. Staff say that supervision helps them to develop their confidence and provides them with guidance and support to provide care effectively.

Training is discussed in supervision and deployed effectively to meet the development of the staff in accordance with the emerging needs of the young people. The home maintains a development plan that is appropriate to the aims and objectives within the Statement of Purpose. Recommendations and requirements from inspections are addressed promptly and are effectively managed.

A detailed and insightful Statement of Purpose is maintained and regularly reviewed to ensure that the services provided meet the needs of the young people. The Statement of Purpose makes clear the home's mission and the support that is provided for the young people. The Statement of Purpose is made available to placing authorities, parents and other interested parties to make them aware of the facilities provided.

The staff forge and maintain links with the local community and neighbours and this supports young people's opportunities to integrate into the wider community effectively.

Regulation 33 monitoring is extremely detailed and covers areas of the home's performance which exceed the expectations of the national minimum standards. Action is taken to address any area of the home's operation that does not meet the high standards of care. In addition Regulation 34 monitoring by the manager is well managed and appropriate action is taken to address any shortfall in practice or performance. These monitoring practices ensure that the home continues to operate effectively and meet the needs of the young people.

Finance and the provision of services are readily available for the home to meet both the services identified in the Statement of Purpose and needs of the young people.

Records are clear and comprehensive and young people's files are stored securely. Records enable young people to understand their plans and provide a picture of the young person's life.

All significant events are reported to the appropriate authority in a timely manner. All reports are detailed and comprehensive and demonstrate that the appropriate action is taken by the home.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.