

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Chris Scully
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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 six young people of either gender from 10 years to 17 years. The home cares for young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties, and drug or alcohol dependence, from many parts of England and Wales. The home is owned by a private company.

Overall effectiveness

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

This is a good home with some satisfactory judgements. Young people are happy settled and feel safe here. They are protected from harm due to the positive relationships they have with staff and staff's understanding of the home's safeguarding procedures. Young people's needs are met well through appropriate care planning, which enables them to make as much progress as possible in line with their starting points. On some occasions information from the placing authority is delayed and this may impact upon the care provided. Young people have a say in their care and are confident to discuss any issues with staff and other professionals to secure a satisfactory outcome. As a result young people say they feel valued and are listened to.

The home is well maintained. Although, there are some issues with the independent living flat and some risk assessments are not up to date. Monitoring of the home is satisfactory. This means most records and documentation contain the required information. The exceptions are medication and staff training records, and notifications to Ofsted.

Young people are very well supported by staff to gain the appropriate skills and qualifications that will enable them to gain future employment in their chosen field. Staff are supportive of young people's choices and help them to seek part-time employment. Young people's health needs are managed well and they are able to make informed choices about things that may impact upon their health.

Social workers who have placed young people within the home are complimentary about the care that the young people receive. They say the home provides a 'stable and supportive environment for the young people'. and that it has a clear consistent approach to working with young people.

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
12A (2001)	ensure that before providing accommodation on a children's home or if that is not reasonably practicable, as soon as possible thereafter, prepare in consultation with the child's placing authority a placement plan for the child setting out how on a day to day basis he will be cared for and his welfare safeguarded, the arrangements for health care and education (Regulation 12 (1b) (a) (b))	29/06/2011
30 (2001)	ensure if in relation to a children's home, any of the events listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 5 takes place, the registered person shall without delay notify the persons indicated in respect of the event in column 2 of the table (Regulation 30)	29/06/2011
31 (2001)	ensure the independent living training flat is suitable for the purpose of achieving the aims and objectives set out in the home's Statement of Purpose is reasonably decorated and maintained (Regulation 31 (1) (e))	29/06/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure risk assessments are updated to include new areas of the home being used by young people (NMS 10.8)
- ensure the written record of all medication administered to young people is clear on the actual amount, time and dosage to be administered in with particular regards to controlled drugs (NMS 6.15)
- ensure staff's training records clearly identify the training undertaken by the member of staff and make it clear as to when refresher courses are required (NMS 18.2)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people enjoy healthy and nutritious meals, reflecting a wide range of different cultural tastes that effectively meet their dietary needs. Young people effectively contribute to the development of healthy eating within the home, with some young people actively involved in the purchasing of and preparation of meals. This increases young people's knowledge of basic nutrition and sets out plans for a balanced diet. The meals provided support young people's growth, development, health and well-being.

Young people's health needs are actively promoted. They say they enjoy the opportunities to train with staff and develop their boxing skills. Young people are engaged in a range of activities within the community such as attending sports centres and being members of a local football club. Young people are very proud of their football skills. They say they are looking forward to developing their coaching skills, which will enable them to work in their chosen field. Young people are registered with a doctor, dentist and other specialist services as required. As a result, young people are generally healthy and have a good awareness of where to seek advice or support should they feel unwell.

Staff are attentive to the medical needs of young people and ensure that they receive any medications at the appropriate time. Although, the medication records in relation to controlled drugs is not always clear as to the actual dosage to be administered. However, whilst this is an oversight in the recording systems staff are very clear on what is to be administered to young people and when. Good links with health and advisory services, such as CAHMS and the Brook Advisory service means young people's physical and emotional needs are supported.

Young people have a positive self view of themselves and those around them. Young people say that staff in the home have changed their view on life and as a result they now have positive attitudes towards people and life. Young people feel respected as individuals and say that 'everyone looks after one another as we are a family'. They have a positive attitude towards their education and feel that they are doing well at school and on their placements. Young people appear confident about their forthcoming exams and talk enthusiastically about their future employment opportunities and career prospects. Their attendance at school is good. Some are beginning to look for employment over the summer as they say they would like to earn some additional monies and they do not want to be bored. Young people say that staff are supportive of their decision and are going to help them complete the required application forms.

Young people enjoy regular contact with their family, friends and people who are important to them. Young people have regular telephone contact with family and meet up with them as per the guidance in their placement plan. This means young people are able to maintain positive relationships with their family. Staff effectively facilitate contact visits to ensure young people are able to sustain these relationships especially as some are placed some distance from home.

Young people are involved in preparing to leave the home and where they will be moving to. Young people receive emotional and practical support to help smooth the

transition. Young people say they feel 'ok' about the prospect of moving into their own home and know that staff will still be there to support them if necessary. They feel the use of the independent training flat and the opportunities to budget for their own food will help them plan for the future.

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy positive and constructive relationships with staff. They say everyone loves the staff and acknowledge that the house has 'its ups and downs, but without the registered manager and the staff it wouldn't be a home, just another care home'. Social workers say that they get a 'sense of emotional warmth' towards young people from staff and this has a positive outcome for young people. Young people are respectful to staff and others as they are respected by their peers and staff. Their views are actively sought by staff and effectively influence the running of the home, for example, the introduction of the training flat and the opportunities for young people to decorate the lounge area. Young people are very proud of their new found decorating skills. Young people are aware that some of their requests cannot be acted upon, such as the installation of digital television channels. They understand the reasoning behind the decision and acknowledge that they do have access to some digital channels. Young people's meetings effectively facilitate open discussion about the home, the activities and menus provided, so that all young people have an equal say in what is happening. Young people are fully aware of the complaints' procedure and how to make a complaint should they wish to do so. There have been no complaints made by young people for some time and young people say they are happy here.

Young people are cared for in line with their placement plan. The home works well with placing authorities and relevant agencies to ensure young people's needs are met well. However the delay in information from one placing authority resulted in essential information not being provided in a timely manner. As a result, a placement plan has not yet been agreed with them. The impact of this has been minimised as the registered manager consulted with the young person's family to ensure all necessary information was sourced and appropriate risk assessments and plans initiated to support the young people in the interim. As a result, the impact on the young person was reduced. Placement plans are individualised to meet the needs of the young people. For example, ensuring they attend their chosen place of worship to continue their religious studies and employing staff from the same faith to support them in the home. Young people are encouraged to have a say in decisions made about them and to attend their reviews. Young people say that they are confident to put their views forward and feel that these are listened to.

Young people's health needs are identified and this helps to promote their good health. For example, staff talk to young people about the foods they like to eat and adapt the menus to ensure they eat a balanced diet. Young people's cultural needs are effectively addressed within the meal times, for example, supporting young people's need to fast during certain periods of time in line with their religious needs. Information about health promotion is readily available to young people. Staff actively promote healthy lifestyle choices by talking to young people about these issues such as their sexual health and smoking. As a result, young people are able to make informed choices about their own health and the implications.

Young people's education is effectively supported by staff that have high aspirations for young people. There is good communication between the home and educational establishments, which means staff are informed of young people's progress. Daily routines support young people's attendance and ensure young people are well

presented and equipped with the necessary tools to engage in the various learning opportunities. Equality and diversity issues are positively addressed in both daily living and care planning. Young people are encouraged, supported and enabled to contribute towards their daily care and placement plan. Young people are developing independence and self-help skills that help them move into adulthood. This promotes cultural empowerment for young people as they are encouraged to exercise a safe degree of risk and independence in their daily lives.

The service provides a good standard of accommodation for young people. It is homely, decorated and furnished in accordance with the young people's needs. Young people's bedrooms are highly personalised with posters and photographs of favourite football team, groups, family and friends. The home enables young people to have appropriate areas for homework and for meetings, for example with family and other professionals.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are safeguarded because staff have a sound understanding of the home's safeguarding procedures. This means they are clear on the action to take to protect young people from harm. This is further supported by the home's safeguarding policy and training provided to staff. Staff's generally positive relationships with social workers means they are made aware of any issues which may impact upon a young person's safety and well-being. This enables staff to initiate new strategies to enhance young people's safety. Bullying is not an issue for these young people. They say they get on well with their peers and know who to talk to if they had any concerns as 'staff care about us'.

Young people occasionally go missing from care. However, the clear systems in place for each individual means staff can quickly locate the young people and ensure they return home safely. Positive behaviour is actively encouraged by staff that provide gentle reminders re inappropriate behaviour or language. As a result, young people quickly apologise for their use of language. Young people's behaviour is generally good and they understand that there may be consequences to their actions. Young people say the rules are fair.

The home is generally well maintained. General health and safety issues are addressed within a range of risk assessments of the home and when young people are in the community. However, the home has not completed risk assessments on the recently opened independent training flat, which means some risks posed by some items such as kitchen utensils have not been minimised. Also repairs to this area have not been completed which means the proposed kitchen area is not completed and the bathroom does not promote young people's privacy. This means the area is not currently in keeping with the rest of the home and is not able to promote the positive outcomes identified for young people using this area.

Safe recruitment practices within the setting mean staff are suitably vetted and are unable to commence working with young people until all of their checks are back. Visitors to the home are required to sign in and out the home and are appropriately supervised during their visit. These procedures ensure young people are protected from having contact with unsuitable people.

Leadership and management

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

The home is managed by an experienced, qualified and competent registered manager. A development plan for the home is in place and provides objectives for the continued improvement of the home and service provided, for example, by initiating systems for accurately recording all of the training completed and attended by staff over the year. As currently there are no formal systems in place within the home to record this, it is unclear as to when staff have attended training and when refresher training is due. No recommendations or statutory requirements were raised at the previous inspection. However, the setting has not maintained its previous progress in ensuring all essential information is sourced from placing authorities and Ofsted is informed of all significant events. This has resulted in the setting failing to inform Ofsted of a number of events over the past few months and gaps in young people's information. These are breaches of the statutory requirements.

The provider meets the aims and objectives of the Statement of Purpose and is in the process of updating this to reflect the availability of the independence training flat. The young people's guide provides clear information to young people and their families of the care and support they can expect to receive. This combined with the Statement of Purpose provides transparency for young people, their families and placing authorities as to the care provided.

Young people are looked after by a staff team who have a range of skills and experience. The skills of the team match the needs of the young people living in the home well. The staff reflect the cultural backgrounds of the young people and provide both positive male and female role models for young people. Staff state they receive appropriate support and guidance from senior managers through supervision sessions and general discussions. Staff say they have access to training, which enables them to keep abreast of the current legislation and good practice guidance. A number of staff do not yet hold a childcare qualification, however they are all attending training courses to obtain an appropriate childcare qualification. Induction systems are in place and the home is in the process of adopting the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) induction procedure to enhance staff's skills and expertise.

Records and documentation are generally well maintained though as previously stated there are some gaps in some records. Monitoring of the home is satisfactory. Regulation 33 and 34 visits are carried out in the prescribed manner and have identified some of the issues from this inspection.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.