

## Inspection report for children's home

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| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC025664        |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 18/07/2013      |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Caroline Wilson |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | Full            |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>       | Children's home |

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| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 08/01/2013 |
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## Service information

### Brief description of the service

This is a privately owned home. The company has two other children's homes registered with Ofsted and some other services that focus on promoting young people's independence. This home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three young people 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**.

The home provides good care for young people. This is based on the progress that they have made since the last inspection and is particularly in respect of their educational achievements and the reduction of young people going missing. Young people have good relationships with staff. Any discussions between young people and staff are conducted in a calm and respectful manner. Staff take time to explain the reasons why decisions are made and young people negotiate on matters where they do not agree with this.

There is a new Registered Manager in place. She is experienced and has introduced a number of changes to promote and protect the welfare of young people. This includes changes to recruitment and risk assessment documentation. These are in the process of being implemented within the home's day-to-day practice. The manager is supported by a strong, well-qualified staff team, who put the needs of young people as paramount.

Shortfalls identified relate to ensuring that all necessary information is recorded in the restraints book; to ensure that reports written with regards to young people's progress is written in a balanced way; that key-work sessions are a balance of activity based as well as face-to-face meetings. Risk assessments need to be more robust and written up in more detail.

## 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   |
|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 17B<br>(2001) | ensure that any measure of restraint that takes place, a written record is made which must include a description of any injury to the child concerned or any other person and any medical treatment administered (Regulation 17B (3) (g)) | 31/08/2013 |
| 11<br>(2001)  | ensure that proper provision is made in respect of the supervision of children accommodated there, to ensure that behaviour management plans are more robust. (Regulation 11 (1) (b))                                                     | 20/09/2013 |

## Recommendations

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

- ensure that records are written in a manner which is non-stigmatising to young people and distinguish as far as possible, between fact and opinion (NMS 22.4)
- ensure that children receive care that promotes all aspects of their individual identity, for instance, consideration given for them to participate in activity based key-work sessions. (NMS 2.1)

## Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

All young people of compulsory school age are making good progress in respect of their education. Some young people have made significant progress and have exceeded expectations in the number of GCSEs that they have been entered for. Young people attend school punctually and regularly. They have access to facilities, such as the internet and personal support from staff, so that they have the help necessary for the completion of homework. Young people, who are ambivalent with regards to the choice of employment that they wish to pursue, are supported by staff to research opportunities that may be of interest to them.

Young people build stronger and more positive relationships with staff when engaged in key-work sessions that are activity based. This enables young people to naturally learn how to model positive behaviours and learn important life skills, without them feeling under the spotlight.

Young people have a range of independence skills and can confidently cook, clean and learn to budget. The routine of the home supports them to do so. For instance, young people are responsible for keeping their rooms tidy and some are provided with money so that they can purchase their weekly shopping. Young people are supported by staff in areas where there are gaps in their area of knowledge so that when they transition on to independent living, they do so as confident and independent adults.

Young people enjoy healthy lifestyles which promote their good health. They are engaged in a wide range of physical activities such as horse riding and have gym memberships which provide them with physical exercise to keep them fit and healthy. Young people eat a healthy and balanced diet that meets their personal preferences and cultural requirements. All their immunisations are up to date which protects them from contracting preventable illnesses. Young people have access to all the necessary health services which promotes their physical health; they attend routine and emergency appointments when needed. For some young people, there has been delay in intervention from mental health services to manage specific behavioural issues, which if continues, may have a negative impact on them and others around them. In these instances, young people are supported by staff and other professionals and strategies are in place to minimise associated risks.

Young people enjoy positive relationships with family members and friends whom it is safe to do so. This helps them to build relationships with people who are important to them, which they can sustain into adulthood. Young people know the importance of distancing themselves from negative influences and avoid friendships with others who may be influenced by gangs or sexual exploitation.

## Quality of care

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

Staff enjoy positive relationships with young people that are based on mutual respect. They set consistent boundaries which enable young people to achieve above expectations set out in their care plans. Staff implement specific strategies that have been successful in reducing incidences of negative behaviour. In particular, where young people had been absent without authority. Professionals have positively commended the home for providing one young person with, 'stability after a number of placement changes, (they) started going to school and is doing well.'

Communication between staff and young people is good and helps young people to gain an understanding about their backgrounds as well as how to develop coping strategies and learn respect for themselves and others around them. Written risk assessments and behavioural management plans are not robust and are not reflective of the knowledge and understanding that staff have in respect of young people. Some young people feel that, apart from their most recent one, written reports are not always balanced and tend to focus on the negative aspects of their behaviour rather than any progress that they have made. Some professionals added that they have had concerns with regards to the accuracy of reports provided.

Staff advocate on behalf of young people where there is a delay in young people having access to mental health services that meet their needs. Staff believe that promoting positive behaviour is essential to the quality of care that they provide. Regular key-work sessions and group meetings form the basis of staff promoting young people's welfare.

Staff have good aspirations for young people and what they can achieve. They are aware of the importance of young people achieving good academic progress on their life chances. Staff actively encourage young people to be involved in some form of day-time activity which engages their time constructively. Staff ensure that they attend regularly and punctually by providing transport to their educational establishment. Staff help young people to participate in activities that young people have an interest in. During the summer holidays, they are offered a wide range of activities that young people have expressed an interest in, for instance, overnight stays at theme parks.

Young people reside in a spacious, clean, comfortable home, which blends easily into the residential area. Young people have their own bedrooms which they can decorate to their own individual style. The home has been refurbished to meet the needs of young people. They are able to relax in the main lounge and they now have access to satellite television. Young people can also spend their leisure time outdoors in the garden, which has a lawn and seating area for them to enjoy.

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

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

The home's response to safeguarding incidences is strong and ensures that young people are and feel safe. Safeguarding concerns are reported to relevant professionals in a timely manner in accordance with the London Safeguarding Children's Board procedures. Investigations undertaken by the home are conducted by an independent party to ensure impartiality; these are robust in their nature. The home takes appropriate follow up action to the outcome of their investigation, for instance, referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Scheme, where appropriate. Where young people may actively listen to conversations, staff take steps to ensure that individual young people's privacy and confidentiality is not breached.

Complaints are addressed appropriately, within relevant timescales. External complaints are taken seriously and remedial action taken to ensure continual good relationships with neighbours within the community. Some young people are not confident in using the complaints system; however, they have access to an independent visitor who can advocate on their behalf.

Staff ensure that the home is a safe environment for the young people to live in. There is an appropriate system of risk assessments, portable appliance testing and other health and safety arrangements in place. Documentation confirms the safety of the gas and electricity supply and fire equipment. Young people benefit from regular

fire drills and tests so that they are familiarised with the emergency procedures.

Young people are rarely missing and the home has been effective in significantly reducing the number of incidences for young people where this had been an area of concern. Staff have received training with regards to topics such as sexual exploitation and gangs, so that they can effectively intervene if they suspect a young people's involvement. The home has clear practices and agreed arrangements with the local police, which support effective action in the likely event that young people do go missing. Staff keep in constant contact and have details of the people who are important to young people so that they can monitor their welfare and encourage their safe return home where young people are absent or missing. This ensures that young people are protected as far as possible and they are treated positively on their return.

The Registered Manager has a more robust recruitment selection process in place. The application form has been amended to include recommendations from the Warner report, so that they can make a full assessment in relation to a potential member of staff's suitability to work with young people. The Registered Manager is highly selective in the knowledge and qualification of staff, choosing to employ people with the highest level of skill.

Sanctions and incidents of restraint are few and are mostly recorded appropriately. One restraint was undertaken since the last inspection. With the exception of information with regards to whether any injuries were sustained by a young person, all the relevant information was included. These are monitored by the regulation 33 visitor. Staff are trained in behaviour management which includes a recognised method of physical intervention but the emphasis is on prevention and distraction to minimise incidents. Children are encouraged to behave positively through encouragement and rewards. As a result children are able to discuss their feelings with staff and work out ways of managing their negative emotions.

## **Leadership and management**

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

There is a new Registered Manager in place who is keen to improve and develop the service. The Registered Manager is currently working with her staff team to ensure that all the skills within the team are effectively utilised for the benefit of the children using the service. The Registered Manager will also manage the home's sister service, which is based nearby. There are good arrangements in place for staff at each unit to deputise in her absence, which brings consistency of care for young people and support for staff. Some professionals commented that they thought that the home provided a, 'stable staff team with good leadership and management.'

Regular monitoring of the home is undertaken to ensure that the home is operating in accordance with its Statement of Purpose. This includes regulation 33 visits by an independent person. This monitoring is effective in ensuring that the home continues to provide a good service for young people by ensuring that any recommendations

are quickly acted upon.

Arrangements for the training of staff are good. All staff have or are in the process of completing their Diploma Level 3 certificate. The deputy manager is near completion of the Level 5 Leadership and Management Certificate. This means that all staff have a good theoretical basis for ensuring that the home is a positive experience for young people, providing them with the support and stability that they need to prepare them for transition to the responsibilities of adulthood.

Supervision and handover sessions are held regularly and ensure that staff are kept up to date with the progress of young people as well as the different methods of working with young people. Team meetings are held regularly, however, the membership of these is inconsistent. The lone working arrangements mean that not all staff can regularly attend, as they are not on shift at the time and the arrangement for remuneration does not encourage their attendance. However, the impact of this is minimised by the strong handover and supervision sessions that are in place.



## 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.