

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC025747
Inspection date	08/01/2014
Inspector	Caroline Jones
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	04/03/2013
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This is a children's home run by a charitable organisation. It provides care and accommodation for up to three young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties, physical disabilities and learning disabilities.

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 live in a good home where they receive high quality care. This supports them in making good progress across their development, in particular to their education. Young people report that they feel safe and speak highly of the home. They comment: 'I would give this home five out of five.' Staff have high aspirations for young people and support them in reaching their potential.

Young people are the focus of care planning, which ensures their involvement and understanding of any decisions about their lives. The core staff team know young people very well and have forged trusting relationships with them. Their commitment to young people is seen in them going above and beyond working extra hours to secure consistency, during staff shortages. This contributes to the stability of young people's placements.

The home is operating in accordance to the conditions set and is effective in meeting its Statement of Purpose. The newly Registered Manager is enthusiastic and focused on developing and improving the service to young people. Firm plans are in place to secure improvements and tackle any areas of weakness. Additionally, monitoring processes are in place to examine the quality of care. Shortfalls are identified in relation to ensuring all significant events are notified promptly, updating risk management assessments and having the medication policy approved. These gaps have not impacted negatively upon the welfare of young people to-date.

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
11 (2001)	ensure that the children's home is conducted so as to promote and make proper provision for the welfare of children accommodated there. This is specifically in relation to ensuring behaviour management and risk assessments are updated. (Regulation 11 (1)(a))	31/01/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure that all significant events are notified within 24 hours to the appropriate authorities (NMS 24.1)
- ensure that medicines are administered in line with an agreed and medically approved protocol. (Volume 5, Statutory Guidance 2.53)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people are making good progress in all aspects of their development. For example, since living at the home young people have been integrated into mainstream education and are making good progress. Staff promote young people's independence and they are encouraged to take appropriate risks and responsibility for their age and understanding. Young people are involved in the daily running of the home including: cooking, decorating plans, cleaning, shopping and budgeting. These practices help equip young people with the skills and competence for adulthood.

Young people are in good health and benefit from effective and consistent health care provision. They are registered with general medical practitioners and have detailed plans to meet their health needs. Young people are educated in a variety of health and wellbeing matters, including sexual health. Furthermore, young people have access to a trained psychologist to meet their needs. There is procedure in place for the administration of medication and records are maintained on this. However, the organisational procedure has not been medically approved to ensure its effectiveness.

Young people attend school and college regularly and achieve their potential, which is fully supported by staff. For example, young people have attained excellent examination results comparable with their peers. Young people participate in a range of leisure activities including: fishing, ice hockey, guitar lessons, football, shopping, meals out and cinema trips. Additionally, young people have been on holidays of their choice, such as horse riding and holidays abroad. These opportunities encourage young people to enjoy, achieve and also builds their confidence and skills further.

Staff work closely with placing authorities to promote contact that is positive, safe and enjoyable. They facilitate contact and encourage family to maintain relationships with young people. Staff value the importance of contact for young people in understanding their background and heritage. They are also aware of the emotional impact of contact upon young people and ensure that they are sensitively supported.

Quality of care

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

Young people thrive in a stable, nurturing and supportive environment. Young people comment: 'I like staff, they get things done.' They enjoy positive relationships with staff who have an excellent understanding of their individual needs. Solid care planning and preparation contributes to the good standards of care received by young people.

Staff work directly with young people to ensure they have a good understanding of their backgrounds and identity. This inspires pride and value in their heritage. There is a culture of promoting young people's rights in which their views are sought and responded to regularly in the daily running of the home. Additionally, young people contribute their views within regular house meetings. A 'chill out' room is currently being refurbished as a response to young people's views. Young people have confidence in the complaints process and use this to settle any dissatisfaction.

Young people live in a healthy environment where their physical, emotional and social wellbeing is promoted. They engage in physical and social activities with friends and have easy access to health care services to meet their individual needs. Young people's friends visit the home, which is indicative of a homely environment. Young people are encouraged to pursue their individual beliefs and a range of activities are being developed further to promote young people's understanding of diversity. The home provides a variety of foods to ensure young people have a balanced diet. Young people assist to prepare the home's menu and food to encourage their understanding of nutrition.

Staff champion young people's educational needs through proactive partnerships with teachers and social workers. They attend mainstream education provision and make progress. Staff emphasis the value of education and provide learning experiences to complement their education. Additionally, staff recognise young people's achievements in the home and celebrate these through rewards. These

practices help young people to experience success and encourages their self-belief.

Young people live in a relaxed, homely environment which blends seamlessly into the residential area. They have their own bedrooms that are personalised and reflect their interests. Young people are involved in plans for re-decoration and furnishing of the home, which provides ownerships and responsibility. They have space and privacy to see their friends and family and to do their homework. This affords respect and dignity to young people.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

There are good arrangements in place to safeguard and protect young people. Staff receive safeguarding training that is refreshed and have a good understanding of their duties in promoting young people's welfare. Young people feel safe and staff work with them individually to address any vulnerabilities and risks. Behaviour management plans and risk assessment reports are in place but are not updated to reflect the current practice for managing risks. Consequently, staff do not have up-to-date written information in responding to young people's changing needs for safety and protection.

Respectful and warm relationships between staff and young people alongside consistent boundaries provides the basis for managing behaviour effectively. The incidents of restraints have significantly reduced and staff are clear that this is only used as a very last resort to prevent harm to young people. Methods such as rewards encourage young people's positive behaviour and assists them in accepting responsibility for their actions. Young people are encouraged to behave appropriately and there are no incidents of bullying.

Incidents of young people missing from home have significantly reduced and staff have worked within agreed protocols to ensure this. Written records show that young people are responded to positively on their return and staff support them. Risk taking behaviours are managed well in partnerships with professional agencies and a reduction in incidents is seen with young people.

Young people live in a home that provides physical safety and security. There are no major hazards to compromise welfare. Fire safety and health and safety checks are carried out at the required intervals. The home has effective systems in place to maintain safe working practices and fulfil health and safety obligations. Staff are vigilant and take appropriate steps to verify visitors identity to ensure the protection of young people.

Leadership and management

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

Management arrangements have been inconsistent for a short time due to the

absence of a manager and permanent full staff team. Consequently, the stability within home environment for young people has not been fully achieved. However, the more recently appointed Registered Manager has brought stability and focus to the direction of the home. Supervision, appraisals and team meetings take place regularly and staff now feel very well supported. Moreover, child centred practice is prevalent within the home's ethos and regular consultation with young people ensures their involvement in the smooth running of the home.

Young people's care is examined by effective systems of monitoring. These include robust monthly monitoring visits by a designated person in accordance with regulation. Additionally, monitoring includes partner agencies and parent's feedback on the quality of care to improve practice further. The Registered Manager is clear about the strengths and weaknesses of the home and plans are in place for continual development of the service. For example, better recording systems are currently being introduced to ensure their effectiveness. The two recommendations from the previous inspection have been addressed, namely all staff are trained in conflict resolution and quality assurance monitoring takes place regularly.

All significant events are notified to the appropriate authorities and a procedure is in place to support this. Additionally, action is taken to protect young people. However, on one occasion Ofsted have not been notified within the timescales necessary, to ensure prompt information sharing and review of significant events. This has not impacted negatively on young people's welfare to-date.

The home's written records are generally good and provide a picture of young people's daily living. Young people's information is securely stored and shared confidentially to protect their safety and privacy. There are sufficient numbers of staff to meet the needs of young people and recruitment is currently underway to gain a senior worker. The team remains motivated, which provides an enjoyable living environment for young people.

The diversity of the staff team ensures a range of skills and qualities in meeting the individual needs of young people. Staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and have high expectations for young people. All staff receive regular training and are suitably qualified or working towards a recognised qualification. This ensures their competence in providing quality care to young people.

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.