

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Caroline Wilson
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Provision subtype	Children's home

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Service information

Brief description of the service

This is a privately-run home which provides care and accommodation for up to four young people aged 13 to 17 years old. This home caters for young people who have emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD).

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service 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 **adequate**.

Good evidence has been seen of individual young people's progress. There is effective communication between staff, young people and other important people in their lives. This ensures that consistent boundaries are continuously in place and a significant improvement in young people's behaviour. Parents have positively complimented staff on this improvement and there has been a reduction on the number of incidences recorded. Young people are encouraged and supported by staff to achieve to the best of their ability with regards to their education. Good health and safety systems are in place and ensure that the home is free from hazards to young people, visitors and staff.

A talented staff group are in place who are committed to achieving good outcomes for young people. They communicate well with each other, parents and other agencies that are involved in their lives to effectively promote young people's welfare. Staff have good behavioural strategies in place. These are reviewed and updated in a log book, but not formalised into documents for each young person. Restraints are only used in instances to prevent likely injury to young people, others and property. These have been recorded, but not in a bound book that is set out for this purpose. The manager was the registered manager for another home within the organisation and provides consistency of care. However, there is a requirement that he be assessed as suitable to manage this individual home. Therefore, although good outcomes have been noted with regards to young people's progress, because they have not complied with the requirement to ensure that the manager is registered to manage this particular home, these shortfalls have led to an overall judgement of adequate being given.

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 (2001)	ensure that a written record of restraint is made in a volume kept for that purpose (Regulation 17B (3))	30/06/2012
28 (2001)	ensure that young people's case records specified in Schedule 3 are kept up-to-date (Regulation 28 (1) (b))	30/06/2012
34 (2001)	ensure that the registered person supplies to Ofsted a report in respect of any review conducted by him for the purpose of paragraph (1) (Regulation 34 (2))	30/06/2012

Recommendations

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

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people enjoy healthy lifestyles which are incorporated into their daily living routine. They use equipment such as bicycles which provide them with regular exercise and keeps them fit and healthy. Young people understand the importance of exercise on their well-being and explore local leisure centres with their local community. Healthy eating is part of their everyday lives. The reduction of fizzy drinks and sugary foods in their diet has had a positive effect on their physical health. Young people's emotional needs are met. They take advantage of staff's availability and will regularly speak with them about any issues that they are not happy with or need further advice on. Young people maintain good sexual health and are aware of the effects that misusing alcohol and drugs will have on their well-being. Young people with specific health issues are supported by the home to promote their mental and physical health.

Young people enjoy regular and constructive relationships with family members and their peers. Young people have made good relationships with other young people within the locality where they feel part of the local community. Young people have improved relationships with their family which had lead to an increased frequency in contact with these and other important people in their lives. Young people take ownership of their home and will only bring trusted friends to their home and

consideration is also given to ensure that these friends are of a good disposition and will conflict with other residents who live there. Young people also have a good understanding of the behaviours that are expected on them. They feel comfortable challenging house rules that they feel are unreasonable, such as bringing members of the opposite sex into their bedrooms, however, will abide by the rules once the rationale for this has been explained to them. Young people make good use of 'Teen Talk' forums, where they have the opportunity to discuss a range of issues that relate to group living which includes any house-keeping matters. Young people feel comfortable at constructively challenging various aspects of living at the home and plans for their future.

Young people look forward to living independently and they have the confidence in their ability to be able to successfully support themselves practically, financially and emotionally. They spoke with pride about their skills in being able to cook, clean and budget and being able to prioritise essential items such as food, transport costs and utilities before buying luxury items. Young people also know about basic DIY skills that are needed to run a home including changing a plug.

Young people understand the benefits of achieving the highest educational standards as they possibly can. All young people are engaged in education or training which includes getting a better understanding of the English language or corresponds to a career that they wish to pursue in life. Some young people have sought additional work in their chosen field to provide them with vital work experience to give them an advantage amongst other applicants when they go on to seek full-time employment.

Young people's diverse needs are met. They have access to language services where English is their second language. Young people live in a community which is racially and culturally diverse. They can access a number of services in the locality which can meet their social, dietary and personal care needs.

Quality of care

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

Staff have consistently high aspirations for young people and what they can achieve. They are aware of the vital importance of young people achieving good academic progress on their life chances. Staff have ensured that all young people are involved in some form of day-time activity which engages their time constructively. This particularly relates to their education and employment. Staff encourage young people to make the best of their education and ensure that they attend regularly and punctually. Staff develop young people's individual areas of interests including gardening and cookery courses. Staff understand the challenges that looked after children face and ensure that they have the appropriate qualifications in their particular areas of interests in order that they can maximise their success in seeking employment once they leave the home. Staff have good links with local further education establishments and enrol young people on courses that meet their individual needs, such as English as an additional language courses. This equips

young people with the necessary skills to progress into mainstream further and higher education.

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. Negative behaviour is managed through building positive relationships with young people. Staff respond positively to each young person and effectively manage their individual behaviours. Staff work with parents to ensure that consistent boundaries are maintained by young people when they are out of the unit, including whilst visiting their families. This has had a positive effect on the behaviour of young people and there has been a noticeable reduction in incidences and offending behaviour. Parents commend staff on the improvement in their child's behaviour. One stated that their child has been 'fantastic, since he started to live there. He has been calmer'. They continued saying that although their child may continue to push boundaries, these incidences happen less frequently. Staff are skilful at diffusing situations and avoiding them escalating. Staff are aware of how to address specific behavioural issues and approaches that should be used and these methods of working are updated where necessary. These are communicated between staff through team meetings, handover meetings, supervision and in log books. However, these behavioural strategies are not formulated into individual written plans.

Staff teach young people essential life-skills which support their successful transition to independent living. They work alongside young people, teaching them the importance of developing financial capabilities and developing other practical skills such as cooking and keeping food. This helps young people to reach their potential and achieve economic well-being. 'Teen Talk' and key work sessions are used as forums to ensure that the views and wishes of young people are taken into account in relation to decisions made about their daily life help young people to understand why decisions have been made that are contrary to their wishes and feelings.

Incidents of restraints are rare and only used in exceptional circumstances where it is the only appropriate means to prevent likely injury to the young person or other people, or likely serious damage to property. Records relating to these have been recorded in the daily log book, rather than a separate, bound book that is made for this purpose. This is important to ensure that no information can be added or omitted and that restraints are conducted in a manner that considers the welfare of those who are involved. Sanctions for poor behaviour are clear, reasonable and fair and are in a manner consistent with the actions of any good parent. Parents are happy with the impact of behaviour strategies provided and work alongside staff to provide consistent boundaries for young people. The impact of this is clear to see and has had a positive effect of young people's interaction between themselves, family members and staff. Some parents have remarked that the change in behaviour is as such that they can see a clear change for the better and the home has achieved what they have not been able to with their child.

Good arrangements are in place to support young people from different cultural and racial backgrounds. Full attention is paid to young people's individual diverse needs.

They are encouraged to have positive views of themselves and to be proud of their identity and heritage. Staff take an active interest in learning about young people's backgrounds and how they can incorporate any customs or cultural practices into their everyday lives. Staff get external professional advice and support on matters where necessary, for example they use language line where English is not a young person's first language. This helps young people to effectively communicate their individual wishes and feelings so they are able to make their views known about the care that they are receiving and future plans. Staff are very good at balancing the individual needs, wishes and preferences of the individual young person with others in the household. This is clearly evidenced through young people's weekly activity and menu planners which they complete each week with young people individually and take into account the young person's personal needs and tastes.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are and feel safe within their home. Staff are aware of safeguarding policies and procedures and how these are implemented into day-to-day practice. They are kept up-to-date with safeguarding procedures which set out the signs of abuse and are knowledgeable of the correct reporting procedures. This ensures that they can identify if a child has been or is at risk as being abused and can take immediate steps to keep that young person safe. Staff have proactive relationships with the local police. They are regularly invited to young people's 'Teen Talk' sessions which develop positive relationships and understanding between the two.

There is a no tolerance stance to bullying. Immediate action is taken in the event that bullying takes place. This is discussed with young people on both an individual and group basis to engage with those bullying as well as those being bullied. Young people who are bullied are supported and those who bully are given help and guidance to prevent them continuing to do so. If the bullying persists, prompt and effective action takes place including disruption meetings and the termination of a young person's placement.

Young people are guided to keep themselves safe when out in the community. They have constant dialogue with staff with regards to being discerning about the company that they keep and the negative impact that being involved in gangs or with unsavoury company can have on their future. Young people are accompanied by staff to appointments in areas where they do not feel safe in order to safeguard their welfare. Staff take interest of what is going on in young people's lives so that they can support them to make right choices in respect of their relationships and their activities so that their welfare can be promoted whilst they are outside of the home.

Young people are rarely missing; the home has clear practices and agreed arrangements with the local police, that supports effective action in the likely event that they do go missing. Staff know the vulnerabilities of individual young people and are clear of their responsibilities in minimising any risks. 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 unauthorised absent or missing. This ensures that young people are protected as far as possible and treated positively on their return.

All health and safety inspections are undertaken at appropriate intervals. This keeps the environment physically safe and secure and takes into account the needs and characteristics of the young people being cared for.

Leadership and management

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

The arrangements for the management of this home are adequate. The manager of this home is the Registered Manager of another home within this organisation. Registrations are not transferrable and the manager has not submitted an application to be the Registered Manager of this particular site. Although the manager has the qualifications and experience to competently undertake this role, he has not been assessed by Ofsted as being suitable to manage this particular home. The impact of this on young people's welfare is minimised as the manager has the expertise and knowledge of how to successfully meet individual young people's assessed needs. He demonstrated a strong commitment to promoting and safeguarding the welfare of young people. This is evidenced in the continued progress that young people have made in the time that they have been there.

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 as well as Regulation 34 monitoring by the acting manager at the home. 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. However, copies of the Regulation 34 visits have not been submitted to Ofsted within relevant timescales as required by legislation.

The home evidences a capacity for continued improvement. The statutory requirement to ensure that weekly fire testing takes place has been met. Managers also show a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. Regular discussions take place with staff with regards to young people's progress and practice issues during supervision and team meetings. Supervision sessions take place at intervals that are in accordance with national minimum standards in order that staff have the relevant skills and knowledge to meet the needs of young people. Supervision is of good quality and enables staff to respond well to the needs of young people as well as highlighting any developmental needs that they may have. The good outcomes evidenced in young people's progress illustrates that staff have put what they have learned into practice effectively.

Arrangements for the training of staff are good. All staff have or are in the process of completing their Diploma Level 3 certificate. One of the senior members of staff is undertaking 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 o the responsibilities of adulthood.

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.