

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC025812
Inspection date	30/11/2011
Inspector	Caroline Wilson
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	20/12/2010
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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 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).

Overall effectiveness

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

Staffing from this home have amalgamated from the organisation's other children's home. The young people from the other home have been transferred to this home. Leaders have attempted ensure that this transition is as smooth as possible and where relevant, additional training to promote the welfare of young people is in place. This period of transition has been unsettling for staff and young people. This has not affected the day to day care of young people. Leaders and managers have a very good understanding the strengths and weakness of the home and ensure that they keep updated with legislation and practice issues that promote the needs of young people. Young people make good progress in relation to their starting point across all aspects of their welfare and development, underpinned by effective support from staff to meet individual young people's needs. Staff in the home demonstrate a good understanding of safe working practices which meet individual young people's needs. The home has a separate educational service that young people can access, which provides young people with an outstanding environment in young people can learn.

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people are making good progress in respect of developing their emotional resilience. There has been a big improvement in young people attendance at statutory reviews and in their confidence in airing their views about plans being made for their future. Staff work diligently to promote positive images and exposure to stereotypes in instances where young people have a negative self image. This is in order that they can positively embrace themselves and gain acceptance of themselves.

There has also been improvement in the frequency and quality of contact between young people, their families and friends. Young people also make informed choices of how they spend their spare time and engage in activities outside of the home which helps them to engage with the wider community. Activities pursued, such as going to the gym and martial arts, help promote young people's sense of achievement and enjoyment. No limit is put on the variety of activities that young

people can participate in. Managers state that it is important that young people are provided with a range of opportunities to try new things in order to expand their horizons.

Young people have access to a range of health services and receive good support with any health issues that they may have. Young people who are of an age and/or who have the understanding are encouraged to administer their own medication, with the support of staff if required. This helps promote young people's developmental skills in taking responsibility for caring for themselves and to help them to be self sufficient in living good, healthy lifestyles. Young people are also provided with support and information to help them to have good physical, emotional and psychological health, in respect of matters including sexual health and drug and alcohol misuse.

Young people are making good progress in respect of their educational attainment. Staff understand their responsibilities for enabling young people to overcome educational barriers. They work closely with the educational authority to ensure that young people who are not on roll are supported and enabled to resume full time education. The home has an advantage over other homes in this respect, as part of their organisation includes a school, which provides excellent educational facilities for young people without a school placement.

Quality of care

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

Staff have a good understanding of young people and always place their well-being first. They have a good understanding of the young people that they work with and ensure that they provide them with good, individualised support and guidance. Placement meetings are held soon after young people's arrival in order that they can ascertain young people's support needs. Staff use the information that they have obtained to compile their own placement plans that set out how the young people's needs are to be met on a day-to-day basis. Services are then put in place that meet their individual needs, particularly in respect of their health, education and contact arrangements.

Young people are supported to live healthy lifestyles. Staff have good links with services within the local community, such as the looked after children (LAC) nurse, which ensures that young people receive regular health checks. Staff are trained in the administration of medication and first aid in order that they can provide primary medical care in the event of a medical emergency.

Young people know and understand what behaviours are expected of them. Staff work consistently with young people to help them develop appropriate responses to situations that they may face. Key work sessions are undertaken to help young people to understand the impact that unsociable behaviour will have on their future

in respect of opportunities that may be available to them. As a consequence, the reporting of significant incidences have been minimised. Sanctions imposed relate to the rule that has been broken. Reparation is used only in instances where there is damage to property, although young people are not happy when this occurs. However, young people are only expected to repay a percentage of the overall cost.

Young people have easy access to information on how to report any concerns they have that may have an impact on their well being, including bullying, safeguarding concerns and how to make a complaint so that their welfare is promoted. Complaints by young people and others in the community are taken seriously and progressed in timescales, Staff work well with young people and others and use the information to improve the service that that they offer.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Staff view young people's safety as a priority and take good steps to ensure that they feel safe and that they are protected from harm. Staff are regularly trained in safeguarding matters and show a good understanding of how to recognise and respond to any allegations or suspicions of harm. Safeguarding matters are dealt with in accordance with local procedures. Appropriate steps are taken to ensure that young people are protected in the event of an incident of child protection occurring.

Staff know and understand the signs and the impact of bullying to young people and effective monitoring is in place to prevent incidences taking place. This subject is regularly discussed with young people during 'Teen Talk' sessions, where young people get the opportunity to air their views about the care that they are receiving as well as any issues that they may face as a result of living in a group setting.

Staff have good knowledge and understanding of the risk factors that relate to individual young people. These are identified in their care plans. Risk assessments are in place which ensures that any issues are effectively managed both in the home and the wider community. Staff balance the need for protection with young people to take reasonable risks as part of their growth and development.

Incidents of young people going missing and being recorded as unauthorised absent are rare. Staff ensure that they have information with regards to young people's networks, so that appropriate steps can be taken to locate them in instances where they are unauthorised absent. Where this occurs, staff remain in regular telephone contact with young people and they are debriefed by staff and the police on their safe return home in accordance with the Runaway and Missing from Home and Care protocols.

Restraints are only used in incidences to prevent likely injuries to young people, others and property. Careful records are recorded in a book kept for this purpose. Information from these records is kept in order that staff can review young people's

behaviour and can respond promptly to any issues or trends that may emerge. Good care is taken to ensure the right matching of young people in the placement in order that the home can meet their needs.

Young people live in a physically safe environment. Staff undertake regular health and safety checks, including weekly fire equipment testing, to ensure that these are effective in the event of a fire taking place. Relevant inspections are also undertaken by external organisations, such as the electrical and gas testing to ensure that equipment in the home is well maintained and fit for use.

Leadership and management

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

The purpose of this home has recently changed. The organisation's other home is now closed. Young people and staff from the children's home are now based at this unit. The age range of this home has changed. It now caters for young people aged 13-17 years old. The home's primary function is no longer to prepare young people although this remains an element of the care that staff provide. Training has been implemented for staff to ensure that they can continue to promote the welfare of young people placed based on their individual needs.

There are now two registered managers in place who jointly share responsibility for managing this home. The additional manager previously worked at the organisation's other children's home and has the appropriate qualifications and experience to competently undertake this role. Both managers evidence a very good understanding and expertise in meeting individual young people's assessed needs. Both managers and their staff team demonstrate a strong commitment to promoting and safeguarding the welfare of young people. They ensure that the individual needs of young people are met and this is evidenced in the progress that they have made in the relatively short period since they have been placed.

The home evidences a capacity for continued improvement. The statutory requirement to ensure that weekly fire testing takes place has been met. Managers also shows 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. Staff state that supervision is an important part of the work that they do as it provides them with a good understanding of how to respond well to the needs of young people as well as highlighting any developmental needs that they may have. The good outcomes in young people's progress illustrates that staff have put into practice what they have learned effectively. There is always a sufficient number of competent staff on shift at any one time that ensures that the individual needs of young people can be met.

Arrangements for staff training are good. They are kept up to date and informed of

training courses that are offered. Staff have access to a wide range of good quality training that is provided to them by local authorities, as the home is on the 'preferred providers' list of a number of local authority consortiums. This ensures that staff have the relevant skills and understanding of how to meet the needs and promote the welfare of young people placed.

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.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.