

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	23/07/2014
Inspector	Alicea Churchward
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	31/01/2014
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The service is run by an established private provider. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four young people with attachment disorders.

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 **adequate**.

Young people living in the home say they feel cared for and are safe. The home provides a welcoming environment in which young people are comfortable and at ease. The young people have positive and supportive relationships with staff and this enhances their development and promotes their overall wellbeing.

The staff are competent in their work and the staffing arrangements are appropriate to meet the assessed needs of young people who live at the home.

The manager is new to the home and has been in post for three weeks at the time of this visit. The home has partnership working with a range of professionals such as those relating to safeguarding, health promotion and education services.

Areas of development identified as a result of this inspection include; young people's access to a telephone, timely submissions of independent visitor reports and notifications to Ofsted, repairing the fencing to the home and improving the overall maintenance, improving the information contained within staff recruitment files, encouraging young people to have their say about any restraints that happen and chasing information from placing authorities so that it represents this home.

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
15 (2001)	ensure that young people have access to a telephone upon which they may make and receive calls in private; without reference to person's working in the home (Regulation 15 (4)(a))	30/09/2014
31 (2001)	ensure that all parts of the children's home used by children are secure from unauthorised access; in this case the perimeter fencing to the home (Regulation 31 (2)(b))	30/09/2014
26 (2001)	ensure that where a person has previously worked in a position whose duties involved work with children or vulnerable adults, so far as reasonably practicable verification of the reason why the employment or position ended and ensure recruitment files contain documentary evidence of any relevant qualifications. (Regulation 26 and Schedule 2 (4)(5))	30/09/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure that young people benefit from a home that is well maintained (NMS 10.3)
- ensure that notifications are made within 24 hrs (NMS 24.1)
- ensure that there are clear and effective procedures for monitoring and controlling the activities of the home by ensuring that Ofsted receives timely reports of independent visitor reports (NMS 21.1)
- work with the responsible authority to ensure effective sharing of information held in the responsible authorities records (NMS 22.7)
- ensure YP are encouraged to have their views recorded; for example in restraint records. (NMS 3.18)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people are generally making good progress at the home. Young people said they like living at the home and consider staff look after them well. All young people

in placement are encouraged to attend regular therapy sessions. This helps young people share issues that are of concern and assist in helping them understand their feelings and emotions. Information about how to work with young people experiencing difficulties is shared with specific staff in the home; this is good because it promotes a consistent approach.

Young people are assisted well by staff to attend school and attainment levels have increased for some young people. Individual examples provided confirm young people overall are doing well and are making progress from their starting points since admission to the home.

Young people are encouraged to lead a healthy lifestyle through having a good diet, taking exercise and having access to health professionals for specialised advice and support; however more could be done regarding assisting those young people who do smoke, to stop. They are helped to understand the importance of good health and are encouraged to have regular daily hygiene routines which help prepare for the future and builds self-esteem.

Young people benefit from a range of activities and individual pursuits such as; attending cadets; swimming; scooter and bike rides; visits to the park and outdoor pursuits. This is good because it builds young people's confidence and self-esteem.

Young people's sense of identity and belonging are promoted through meaningful contact with their families. They benefit from staff who understand the importance of maintaining strong family links wherever possible. Young people are assisted through therapy and keyworker sessions to gain an understanding about their life history and background so that they develop a sense of identity.

Quality of care

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

Young people have good relationships with staff. They say they like staff, can talk to them and feel listened to. Staff support young people to participate in weekly house meetings to enable them to give their views about their care, routines and general running of the home. This includes changes in the home for example staff leaving and new young people being admitted; this makes young people feel listened to and promotes inclusion to the daily running of the home. They also choose activities and are helped to personalise their bedrooms.

Young people know how to make a complaint; records of complaints demonstrate that they are dealt with promptly and outcomes are clear. Young people have access to contact details to make a complaint independently of the home. However, a telephone is not provided to them unless they ask staff for the use of it. Where there are restrictions placed upon contact or safeguarding concerns this would be appropriate but none of these matters are problematic or relevant for the current group of young people living in the home.

Staff have a good understanding about the individual needs of the young people and are knowledgeable about their placement plans. A mix of young people in terms of age, needs and abilities live at the home. Staff promote young people's welfare but show concern about the negative behaviour displayed by some for example frequently leaving the home and being reported missing. This behaviour brings about episodes of disruption which can impact negatively on other young people; for example if others are drawn into this behaviour. The manager confirmed plans are in place for a review of individual placements to establish the suitability and compatibility of the young people to live in the home.

Staff are committed to improving young people's life chances through education. Staff work hard to develop working relationships with the organisation's educational provision and the education authority for individual young people. All young people attend school and for some young people this has improved significantly; which enables them to reach their individual potential. For others the placement is in infancy.

The home is a detached, spacious and comfortably furnished property. It is located in a private residential area and overlooks open fields. The decoration and overall maintenance of the home is adequate. Some matters were being addressed during the inspection and work was underway to the lower brickwork to the home to address better ventilation. The perimeter fencing to the home requires repair to prevent unauthorised access to the home and grounds.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people say that they feel safe and are well cared for at the home. Staff undertake child protection training which supports them to promote young people's welfare. Staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities and confirmed they know what action to take should a safeguarding situation arise.

Young people say that bullying is not an issue in the home and records show that there has been an incident that was appropriately dealt with. There are occasions when young people have disagreements and can find each other's behaviour irritating. Staff deal with these matters properly and undertake key worker sessions and group discussion with young people about appropriate behaviour so they can understand the impact of their behaviours on others.

Staff follow the local police protocol for missing from care episodes. There have been several incidents recently that are a cause for concern; however they are being managed between the police and the home to try and reduce further occurrence of this.

All incidents are fully considered and reviewed to promote young people's welfare. Staff work with the young people to raise their awareness about keeping safe both in and outside of the home. Sanctions are used mainly for reparation with regard to

damage caused at the home. Several entries in the recording of these are incomplete which shows these are not routinely monitored to ensure clear and accurate records are kept.

Risk assessments and placement plans assist staff to manage young people's behaviours appropriately. Since the last inspection there have been occasions when staff have had to restrain young people. Records of these interventions are generally good. However, young people are not routinely having their views recorded in the dedicated book.

The provider follows generally sound recruitment and employment procedures. This process helps to ensure that young people are looked after by suitable people. However, two shortfalls were identified in the files sampled, these include; no proof of qualifications on one file and in another file where previous employment has been with vulnerable people, continued suitability has not been established. This means that the recruitment procedures could be more robust to further protect young people.

As mentioned previously action is necessary to ensure that the premises are inaccessible to unauthorised persons; currently there is open access to the side of the home's grounds to a neighbouring field.

Leadership and management

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

The home's Registered Manager has left the organisation. The organisation has recruited another manager to the post who is in the process of applying to register with Ofsted. They have been previously registered and are suitably qualified in the management of residential childcare.

The staff are clear about their responsibilities and priorities in relation to their role. They receive good supervision from the management team with regard to their work and professional development. The staff are appropriately trained and the majority have a suitable childcare qualification. This assists them to meet the diverse needs of the young people in their care.

Staff are focused on improving outcomes for young people across every aspect of their care and there is consistent use of self-evaluation mechanisms. This means that generally shortfalls are identified in a timely and effective way. As part of the home's monitoring process, the provider ensures there are monthly independent visits to the home. The visitor consults with the young people and obtains their views about the home and their care. However, timely submissions of these reports to Ofsted is not a strong feature, for example; the last report received for this service was dated May 2014 and was received by Ofsted in July 2014. This means that the reports do not fully reflect the home's current functioning.

The previous recommendations made at the last inspection have been met. Staff say

that they receive regular supervision and appraisal and young people's records now make the distinction between staff and young people.

The Statement of Purpose sets out what the home intends to provide and young people are given a children's guide upon admission. This ensures that placing authorities, parents and children are given all the necessary information about the service.

Ofsted has not always been notified of all incidents at the home. The submission of notifications is not always within 24 hours as outlined in the standard. Consequently Ofsted does not receive the information in a timely way in order to be able to assess the current functioning of the home.

Young peoples' records provide them with an accurate picture of events, achievements and decisions made during their time at the home. However some of the documents from a local authority do not relate to this home and there is no evidence of the home pursuing this information from placing social workers.

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.