

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC026991
Inspection date	31/07/2012
Inspector	Pamela Nuckley
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	

Date of last inspection	12/01/2012
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2012

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

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 **good**.

The home is well managed. Staff are properly supported to enable them to carry out their duties effectively. The manager makes good use of established monitoring systems to review the quality of care provided. There is a strong commitment in the home to continuous improvement of the care that is given to young people.

Young people receive highly personalised, well-planned care, taking into account their individual needs. This coupled with a positive and nurturing ethos enables young people to make good progress, in relation to their starting points across all aspects of their welfare and development.

Staff value the importance of building meaningful relationships with young people and work hard to achieve this. As a result, young people are settled and say they enjoy time with staff. Young people have the opportunity to contribute to their own care planning and the running of the home and they are regularly consulted on all aspects of their care.

Safeguarding is a high priority in all aspects of young people's care. There is a strong focus on behaviour management that significantly enhances positive behaviour. Staff work hard to provide a safe environment in which young people feel safe.

Competent, well-trained staff demonstrate the right balance of skills and experience and provide very good quality care for young people. Having a detailed knowledge of the individual young people they care for and by consistently providing the support guidance and stability required staff enable young people to mature and thrive.

Areas for the home's development include ensuring that all documents are signed by the author, that records are legible, that any restriction on contact is clearly identified and that young people's privacy is respected. Further to this, some staff are not able to demonstrate that they clearly understand the missing from care protocol. These shortfalls are not currently impacting on the care received by young people but they have the potential to do so.

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
34 (2001)	ensure the system for improving the quality of care provided in the children's home has recordings that are all legible and documents that are all signed by the relevant author. (Regulation 34 (1) (b))	30/09/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure that all staff working within the home know and implement the local authority missing from home protocol (NMS 5.2)
- ensure that contact arrangements are in line with and agreed in the child's care and placement plans. Specifically in relation to ensuring that any restrictions on contact are clearly identified within a young person's contact plan (Volume 5, statutory guidance, paragraph 2.10)
- ensure that children's privacy is appropriately protected. (NMS 3.7)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people are making good progress in the home because of individualised and consistent support and care from the whole staff team. As a result, they are forming and sustaining positive attachments with staff and make good progress in developing emotional resilience.

Young people say that they are aware of their placement plan and have been able to contribute to it. Staff have in-depth knowledge and understanding of the complex individual needs of young people in their care. They support young people to make good progress in developing a positive self-view. This enables young people to form and sustain attachments with the staff and their family members. The home promotes a positive ethos that embraces diversity and recognises individuality. As a result, young people begin to truly appreciate the significance of differing values and are actively learning to have respect for each other.

Young people's physical and emotional health is good. They receive support from health professionals and staff to understand the importance of making healthy lifestyle choices. Young people eat a well-balanced diet and are encouraged to take part in planning, preparing and cooking meals. Young people are also encouraged to develop self-awareness about the benefits of good personal hygiene. This helps to increase their self-esteem and self-image.

Staff discuss different events available to young people within the community. This means that young people are given the opportunity to engage in a range of activities. Staff consult with the young people and ensure that their views, wishes and feelings are taken into account on a range of things.

Young people all attend either mainstream school or the company's own registered school. Their educational needs are assessed on admission and the home works in partnership with the young people and education authorities to identify the optimum provision for them. Young people's attendance at school is excellent. There is strong evidence that over time they make exceptionally good progress with their education. For example, young people who have a history of none attendance are now fully engaging in education. One young person says, 'I am moving schools in September and I am really nervous but staff are helping me. I have been for a visit and feel a lot better about it.'

Young people benefit from appropriate contact with family, friends and other people who are important to them. One young person says, 'I have stayed overnight at several of my friends from school, this is great because I can be part of normal life.' This ensures relationships continue to develop and strengthen. However, not all restrictions of contact are clearly identified. Therefore, young people and staff safety could be compromised.

Each young person is supported by a key worker who encourages them to actively participate in making every day choices and with more complex decisions about their lives, for example, attending statutory reviews. One social worker said, 'this young person has never attended their review before and I am really happy that the staff have been able to encourage them through discussion and with emotional support.' This shows that the relationships built up through excellent key working sessions are truly beneficial to young people.

Some young people say that on occasions, staff do not knock on their door before coming into their bedroom. Therefore, this impacts on the young person's feelings of

privacy and mutual respect.

Quality of care

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

Staff deliver good quality care and fulfil young people's placement plans which specifically identify young people's diverse needs. These plans are regularly revisited to take into account young people's changing needs and development. Staff make good use of formal and informal key working opportunities to address specific aspects of the placement plan and emerging issues, which enables young people to reflect on their own behaviours and progress.

Young people confirmed that they enjoy very positive and constructive relationships with staff in the home. One young person says, 'they look after you like your mother would'. Young people confirmed that they know how to make their concerns known and how to use both the provider's and placing authority's complaints process. Support provided by external advocates and objective information about children's rights from care staff ensures that young people have several options to voice any concern. One young person confirmed that they had an independent visitor who visits fortnightly who they could talk to if they wished. The home deals with all concerns in a formal way to ensure transparency and good practice.

The views and wishes of young people influence the running of the home and they feel confident to express their feelings to all staff. As well as regular opportunities to speak with key workers on an individual basis, there are weekly house meetings and mealtimes are used to promote open discussion.

Staff are proactive and consistent in supporting the educational achievement of young people. They engage daily with teachers at school receiving feedback mainly about behaviour and relationships, so that there is continuity in behaviour management. Staff also read regular school reports about young people's academic progress, so that they are aware of young people's strengths and weaknesses.

Young people's health needs are identified and services are in place to meet these needs. There are good health plans which record all areas of a young person's health including appointments. Medication is stored appropriately. Clear records are maintained in the administration, disposal of and any likely side effects or contra-indications of any medication. All staff are trained in the administration of medication and hold a first aid certificate. All accidents are recorded and consent has been gained to administer non prescribed medication such as a soothing cough syrup. This ensures that young people receive medical assistance when required and get their medication safely in line with their prescription.

Staff support and encourage young people to engage in a wide range of activities, both educationally and for pleasure. This enables young people to benefit and experience different activities and promotes community awareness.

The home has set routines which includes; cleaning, shopping, mealtimes and bedtimes, which are all known and understood by young people and staff alike. These routines cater for each young person's individual needs and promote their learning about the importance of healthy lifestyles. The home is comfortable and well appointed and the layout gives young people adequate privacy when they want it. This gives young people living here the sense that they are valued and deserve to live in a nice environment.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people report that they feel safe and can talk to an adult when they are concerned. Staff are suitably trained in safeguarding and the home has extensive policies and procedures in place which underpin effective practice. Comprehensive recording confirms active liaison between the home, placing authority and local children's services, using the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures. By having access to independent advocates external to the home, young people's rights are fully promoted.

Young people have supportive and caring relationships with the staff. They also get on well with each other. One young person says, 'there is no bullying and we usually get on well together'. Positive ways of managing the behaviour of young people are utilised effectively. Reward systems in place positively influence good behaviour and young people confirm that they liked this system. Good behaviour within the home is also enhanced through the quality of the relationships between young people and staff.

Sanctions for misbehaviour are appropriate and recorded in sufficient detail, with evaluation of how effective they are. The staff receive regular training on how to safeguard and promote young people's welfare. They clearly understand how to respond to allegations, suspicions or evidence of harm and to keep young people safe.

Young people are at different stages of development and understanding of keeping themselves safe and of having an awareness of how their behaviour can significantly impact on others. Care staff are trained in methods of care and control and they respond positively to challenging behaviour. Restraint is only ever used as a last resort and staff and young people are both debriefed after the event to ensure that lessons are learnt from it. One social worker says, 'there has been a significant reduction in this young person being restrained since being placed here and I contribute this to the excellent relationships and behaviour management plans in place for him. I also receive information and comprehensive reports on any incident.'

There have been no incidents of young people going missing from home. Although the home has the local missing from home protocol in place, some staff are not aware of the detail needed such as classification categories. This means that police response times would be compromised if a situation occurred. However, staff

demonstrated that they fully understood the home's procedure and that the welfare of the young person would be their priority.

Young people live in a physically safe environment. An extensive range of health and safety procedures, risk assessments and preventive checks, are implemented, and this protects young people well. Staff carry out regular fire drills, to ensure the premises are safe and young people know what to do in case of an emergency. Although not fully inspected on this visit, the provider follows a robust recruitment and selection process ensuring that staff working with young people are suitable. Young people say that staffing commitment and stability is a positive aspect of their home that makes them feel safe.

Leadership and management

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

The manager is appropriately qualified and has an excellent range of relevant experience to guide leadership of the staff team. The manager is competent and confident and well able to promote positive outcomes for young people. There are clear and appropriate arrangements for covering her absence. The manager has exceptionally high expectations of the staff team and is proactive in ensuring all staff receive a full training programme to equip them with specific skills relevant to the young people accommodated. There is clear evidence of how the care and support provided by the whole staff team have improved outcomes for young people.

The home is operated in accordance with its Statement of Purpose confirming that it is well organised and managed. The comprehensive Statement of Purpose document provides young people, their families and social workers with a clear description of the services and support provided by both the home and the registered provider. The young person's welcome guide is readable and presented in an age appropriate format. Young people confirm that they have found the guide helpful.

The manager and staff team demonstrate a strong commitment to providing good quality childcare practice tailored to address the individual needs of each looked after young person. This encourages young people to make significant progress across the many aspects of their lives, including accessing educational provision, sustaining their emotional development, accessing health provisions and keeping themselves safe.

The stability, close working relationships and good communication developed between staff contributes to the effectiveness of daily routines and helps provide young people with a nurturing safe environment. The home is proactive in linking its activity with therapeutic advice and strategies to ensure consistent working relationships.

Staffing numbers provide sufficiently for the levels of support needed to promote recreational activities, visits and attending appointments for all the young people. Through the provision of training and regular one-to-one supervision staff are

confidently supported by their qualified and experienced manager and deputy manager. Staff say they feel valued by colleagues and enjoy working with the young people in placement.

When asked what was the best thing about the home, a member of staff stated, 'the manager is fair and approachable, she works alongside us and gives up a lot of her time to ensure that everything is fine.' Another member of staff stated, 'the best thing about this home is that we constantly discuss issues and support each other, therefore young people receive consistency of care.'

New staff receive induction training to the standard set by the Children's Workforce Development Council and they complete it in the appropriate timescale. All the established members of staff are qualified in the National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in care. Staff complete all mandatory training. They also receive additional therapeutic training which supports young people's individual needs. This ensures that young people are cared for by a suitable qualified staff team.

All staff attend monthly team meetings where they evaluate how young people's individual needs are being met and how their challenging and potentially unsafe behaviours are being managed consistently. As a result, staff have seen improvements in young people's engagement with staff and reductions in risk taking behaviours.

The manager has established robust relationships with the local police and a range of health and education professionals. The manager demonstrates excellent awareness of the development needs of the service and there is strong drive to improve care practices throughout. Quality assurance systems, in terms of monitoring under Regulation 34 by the manager and visits in line with Regulation 33 on behalf of the provider organisation, are good. However, not all paperwork is signed by the author and some records have become illegible due to alterations or crossings out. These errors were not picked up by the monitoring systems and therefore impacts on the robustness of these systems.

The home's written records are securely stored; data protected and provide a comprehensive but practical picture of individual young people's needs, including diversity, development and progress. Young people's records contain up-to-date information about them, including the relevant documents provided by or requested from placing authorities such as the reporting of significant events.

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.