

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC028598
Inspection date	29/08/2013
Inspector	Angus Mackay
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	09/07/2013
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2013

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

This home is privately operated and provides long-term residential placements to up to four young women. The home has now extended its services to offer care and support to expectant and young mothers. Young women are able to reside at the home with their babies for a specified amount of time.

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 overall effectiveness of the home following this inspection is judged to be good. The manager of the home has successfully addressed previous enforcement action, requirements and recommendations, improving the safe care of young people. The monitoring of the service is improving and the manager has involved the whole staff team in the process of improvement. The development plan for the home shows how the improvements to the service are being implemented. Improvements to the monitoring of key information, such as young people missing from care, are improving the early identification of patterns of high risk behaviours. As a result the home is engaging positively with placing authorities to address these high risk behaviours in a timely manner to keep young people safe.

Staff are knowledgeable about the backgrounds of young people and are good at meeting their diverse cultural needs. Young people enjoy good relationships with staff and make good progress in developing self-help and independence skills. Staff have a strong focus on safeguarding young people and provide them with good advice on how to remain safe in the community.

Shortfalls identified during this inspection were: permissions for some health care; the engagement of children in the home; and gaining up to date educational information from local authorities.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure that each child has prior written permission from a person with parental responsibility for staff to administer first aid and non-prescription medication (Volume 5, statutory guidance, paragraph 2.54)
- endeavour to take account of the views of children the service is providing for when conducting annual staff appraisals (NMS 19.6)
- ensure staff have up-to-date information about each child's educational progress and school attendance record. (NMS 8.7)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **adequate**.

Young people say that they have made progress in many areas since coming to the home. Young people with English as a second language have increased their vocabulary and learned how to interact appropriately with others. Young people's confidence has improved as this has helped their developing emotional resilience. They have clear plans for their future which they are able to express. Some young people have used coaching and role play exercises with staff to prepare them for successful college interviews. They are continuing to develop verbal skills to help them to successfully engage in college courses.

Young people benefit from a healthy life style including healthy eating and exercise. Young people explained that they are continuing to cook traditional meals from their own cultures and learn other ways of cooking. They are also learning how to budget and shop for food. One young person showed how she understood budgeting through a practical example, balancing an increased expenditure with a saving elsewhere. Young people value the respect shown to their own culture and welcome the exposure to other cultures. Young people are gaining independence skills and broadening their understanding of living in a multicultural society.

Young people are learning how to care for themselves and say their personal hygiene and awareness of health issues has improved. Young people make their own health care appointments with prompting and guidance from staff. Improved recording of appointments and health care needs ensures that staff can accurately track young people's appointments. Young people confidently rearranged missed health appointments that this tracking highlighted. They have regular key working sessions, which include discussions on health care. This is improving their understanding of health risks and helping them to avoid these risks.

The educational achievement of young people is satisfactory given their known starting points. Local authorities have, on occasions, failed to supply up to date educational information making accurate tracking of progress difficult. Some young people have been supported with home tuition and have been successful in gaining college places.

Young people have some opportunities to contribute to the running of the home.

Generally, this is done on a one to one basis as group meetings have not been successful. Young people have chosen the décor in the home and their own rooms. The menu is dominated by their individual choices and reflects the diversity of the group. They have some engagement in staff selection meetings with all prospective candidates, showing them around the home and commenting on them to the manager. All of these activities support their feeling of belonging in the home and in their developing sense of responsibility.

Young people are completing a detailed preparation for independence programme which has increased their capability to care for themselves. As well as the cooking and budgeting skills they are addressing managing anger, saving money, accessing community resources, building networks and developing healthy relationships. One young person commented on this saying, 'I am learning how to look after myself, life skills. I can already cook meals from my culture and the staff are teaching me how to cook other meals. I go out and do shopping as well. The staff here help me to think for the future.' Young people say they have maintained family and community links as well as developed healthy relationships with significant others. One young person says, 'I go to my family and do not go out with the kids who were getting me into trouble. I have been in no trouble here, I have left my old friends.'

Quality of care

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

Since the last inspection, the staff have thoroughly audited young people's files ensuring they now contain all relevant care information. Despite recorded efforts by staff to gain all education information, social workers have failed to supply some education information, such as personal education plans. Staff have followed education targets, identified in care plans, ensuring young people received appropriate education. Managers have reviewed and updated care plans, support plans and risk assessments, providing structured guidance to staff interventions with young people. The manager and deputy manager are developing behaviour management plans to coordinate the positive behaviour strategies contained in these different plans. The staff complete detailed monthly summaries for social workers, covering all aspects of the care and behaviour of the young people. Social workers describe these as detailed and helpful. The home is particularly good at identifying and meeting all aspects of the young people's cultural needs, aiding their engagement in the home, education and the community.

Young people were observed interacting comfortably and appropriately with staff. Staff sensitively addressed issues such as incorrect use of English and appropriate ways of asking for things. Each young person has a keyworker who spends time with them, providing them with assistance in achieving their aims and giving good advice about important issues. For example key working sessions recorded discussions on many issues including personal hygiene, dress sense to stay safe, safety in the community, sexually transmitted diseases and career advice. The staff provide young people help with education and preparation for college interviews. They model good behaviour and positive interactions for young people. Staff set appropriate boundaries for young people such as how to behave outside the home, times to

return and what to do if they encounter difficulties. Young people are engaged in discussion about their issues, with staff managing difficult behaviour verbally. Consequently, young people feel valued and listened to and make good progress in addressing behavioural problems. There have been no complaints since the last inspection.

Staff place pressure on the placing authorities to support educational programmes for the young people. As a result young people excluded from school have received tutoring in the home. Young people have benefitted from staff coaching on interview techniques and gained admission to local colleges. The staff continue to coach young people who have English as a second language to enable them to engage successfully at college.

Since the last inspection health plans have been reviewed and updated. All health information, including professional's names, is clearly recorded. Health plans now show what actions have been taken to address health needs, by whom and when. Appointments are clearly recorded and if missed are rearranged. During the inspection young people were observed making their own appointments, with some assistance from staff. Young people are engaged in discussions about health issues including the use of contraception and cultural or religious issues associated with this, cosmetic dental work and the dangers of drug taking. Young people engage positively in these discussions gaining confidence to address issues personally with health professionals. All files have appropriate permissions for medical treatment but not for emergency first aid or the issuing of non-prescription medication. Young people engage in making decisions about their health care ensuring they receive appropriate treatment. The improvements ensure that young people's health needs are monitored and uniformly met.

The home plans admissions very well, ensuring they can meet all of the care needs of the young people living there. They are particularly good at addressing the cultural needs of young people. One senior social worker described the innovative approach in welcoming young people into the home. Staff arranged for a young person, from the new young persons' own cultural background, to greet and introduce her to the home. The senior social worker said of the planning, 'we were impressed at the level of detail and thought they put into the introduction. Prior to coming the young person was difficult to engage and went missing for long periods. This helped her to feel welcome and to settle.' The staff provide young people with assistance to follow their interests and, in particular, those that help them to maintain their cultural identity.

The home is attractively decorated and well resourced. Young people have en-suite facilities providing them with privacy and giving them a sense of being valued. Bedrooms are lockable and decorated as the young people wish. All areas are bright, clean and well maintained, providing a calm pleasant environment for the young people. Additional resources include a games room in the garden and a comfortable lounge. Young people arrange to have friends visit and families visit where appropriate. This enables young people to maintain and develop their cultural identity.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Since the last full inspection, the number of incidents relating to young people going missing or frequently absent without permission has decreased for some young people but remains high for others. A senior social worker said of one young person, 'the home has done excellent work with her. They have more or less stopped instances of her going missing.' The home has worked closely with placing authorities to address high risk behaviour. They have attended and contributed positively to multi-agency meetings where young people were continuing to go missing. Strategies to keep young people safe have been agreed with placing authorities who say, 'the feedback about the efforts of the home was very positive. They have made every effort with the young people.' Young people confirm that the staff constantly talk to them about staying safe including advice on dressing appropriately, safe use of public transport and potential hazards in the community. One young person says, 'staff talk to me about staying safe when I am out and give me advice about what to wear, how to talk to people and how to travel.' Managers now regularly review and update risk assessments reflecting changes in behaviour and where risks have decreased or increased. Updates on risk assessments have included the risks of young people going missing, and reflect both successful and unsuccessful interventions with young people. This work ensures that work with young people is targeted and timely improving their safe care.

The home has revised its policies and procedures in relation to children missing from care. The manager has used the local runaway and missing from home and care, (RMFHC), protocols and procedures to advise this updating of guidance to staff. Staff are familiar with the new guidance and recorded discussions in team meetings and interviews with staff show a clear understanding of these. All young people are responded to appropriately when they return to the home and staff work closely with young people, police and social workers to identify reasons for these absences. As a result the home and other agencies are now safeguarding young people from their high risk behaviours.

Young people are looked after by staff that they feel safe with and who provide them with clear support and guidance. All staff train in managing challenging behaviour but physical interventions are rarely used and have not occurred since before the last two full inspections. Behaviour is managed by positive staff interventions, supported by regular key working. Managers are revising the behaviour management programmes for young people. Behaviour management plans are designed to include the detailed staff knowledge on how to successfully manage risks and behaviours. Behavioural programmes are good at identifying cultural norms, expectations and differences, helping staff to successfully engage with young people.

Staff selection procedures ensure that only appropriate staff are employed to work with young people. Recent changes to the homes' managing of disclosure and barring scheme, (DBS), checks ensure that all staff, including sessional workers who

become full time, meet the homes' selection and appointment criteria. Staff are vigilant in checking the identity of all visitors to the home. The effective checking and supervision of all visitors enhances the safe care of the young people.

Since the last inspection the staff have successfully completed in-house training on: working together to safeguard children; updated procedures on safeguarding; updated procedures on children missing from care and updated risk assessment procedures. The home also continues to enrol staff on courses on child protection and safeguarding provided by the Local authority. Through these initiatives staff are knowledgeable about the current framework to protect and safeguard children and apply it in their work. Young people live in a home which prioritises their safety and ensures that staff can identify potential risks and address them.

The home provides a safe environment for young people. All health and safety checks are up to date and fire safety equipment is appropriately checked and maintained. Fire drills are regular and all staff have practiced emergency evacuation of the building. The regular checking of all equipment, installations and procedures ensures this continues to be a safe environment for young people.

Leadership and management

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

The strengths of the home, and strategies to address weaknesses, are clearly outlined in the comprehensive development plan. The Registered Manager is also the responsible individual and works closely with the deputy manager in the day to day running of the home. The manager delegates certain tasks to the deputy manager, as defined in her job description and shares decisions on key areas, such as admissions and discharges. The manager is on the rota to work with the young people between two and three days a week and on other days works from an adjacent office. The staff are clear that the manager is accessible at all times and will attend the home in minutes if required. Placing authorities, staff and young people have a positive opinion about the manager. Placing authorities say her communication is excellent, exemplified by good quality reports and her regular updates on the young people placed there.

The manager has improved her monitoring of the service, in particular improving the analysis of information. The quality assurance report has been revised to include more detail on key areas. For example the report provides commentary on young people missing from care, ensuring that appropriate actions are taken to minimise risks for young people in the community. Social workers confirm that the home alerts them to young people's patterns of behaviour and takes part in multi-agency meetings to address these and contain the risks presented.

The manager has revised the Statement of Purpose ensuring it accurately describes the service provided to young people and is in line with current legislation and guidance. The home has produced revised copies of the children's guide, in young people's first language, aiding their understanding of how the home functions. Young

people confirm that the staff explain the rules to them in a way which they can understand.

The registered person notifies appropriate authorities of all significant events relating to the protection of young people accommodated in the home. This aids in maintaining a safe environment for young people.

Staff benefit from access to a wide range of courses supplied by the Local authority. Young people benefit from the staff's heightened awareness of issues which may affect them including sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation, drug and alcohol abuse and trafficking of children and young people. The training programme has been expanded to ensure that all staff receive refresher training on areas identified at the last inspection. Courses are now in place to cover identified gaps in training and update all staff. The staff team is well qualified with all staff being qualified to a minimum of an appropriate level 3 qualification and many with enhanced qualifications. Additional training is available on request and includes key areas such as mental health in adolescents. Training to meet specific needs of young people is supplied as required.

The guidance, risk assessment and policy in relation to lone working has been updated and shared with all staff. Staffing levels reflect the identified risks and ensure that both young people and staff are appropriately supported.

The staff receive regular supervision of good quality. The staff say they find supervision helpful and that it allows them to discuss young people, training needs, any difficulties they are experiencing personally and career development. The staff receive annual appraisals but, to date, the manager has not attempted to incorporate the views of young people into these.

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.