

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	28/11/2013
Inspector	Joanne Vyas
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Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	24/01/2013
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This home is privately owned and is registered to provide residential placements for up to four children with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

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 strength of this home lies in its strong, competent and highly effective staff team and manager. A member of staff said, 'It's a great feeling giving kids a good opportunity in life.' Young people like living at this home. Most have had a stable placement which has enabled them to form close attachments with staff. They clearly see this as their home.

Young people have made good progress, especially with their attendance and achievement at school and risky behaviours such as offending behaviour and going missing. Staff are skilled at delivering individually tailored care for young people. The Registered Manager clearly understands the strengths and weaknesses of the home, which enables him to successfully drive forward improvement.

Some minor shortfalls were identified: staff should not sleep in communal areas and records of administration of medication are confusing and are not tamper proof.

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
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31 (2001)	provide for persons working at the children's home sleeping accommodation where the provision of such accommodation is needed in connection with their work at the home. (Regulation 31 (10)(b))	31/12/2013
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Recommendations

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

- ensure the written record of all medication given to children is clear and tamper proof. (NMS 6.15)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **adequate**.

Young people like living at this home. They consider this to be their home and feel relaxed and happy. A young person said when talking about the home, 'It's not so bad, pretty cool.'

Young people generally make good progress with their education. They undertake GCSE and BTEC qualifications. However, some young people lack motivation, and therefore choose not to participate in further education or training. Most young people develop a positive self-view and increased confidence through regular attendance at their education provision and community-based activities such as drama club and the gym.

Young people develop skills which will enable them to successfully embrace adulthood. This includes practical skills such as cooking, cleaning and travelling by public transport independently, as well as life skills such as completing job application forms and writing curriculum vitae. Young people who have left the service also continue to make good progress.

Young people enjoy good health. They understand the value of eating a healthy diet and most benefit from regular exercise. They attend healthcare appointments where necessary. They understand their healthcare needs and exercise appropriate limitations, for example, not mixing alcohol with prescribed medication. Young people have been successful in smoking cessation, recognising both the health and financial benefits of this.

Young people benefit from contact with their families and friends as agreed by their social worker.

Quality of care

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

A young person said that her first thoughts about her new home after moving in included, 'Everything that I needed I got, and everything I said, they took into account, and staff are funny.' Staff ensure young people are well prepared for moving into the home and are supported to settle quickly. A young person said, when asked what is good about the home, 'They take care of you.'

Young people are central to the service provided in the home. A young person said, 'Staff help me with whatever I need help with.' An external professional said, 'I find the level of commitment and genuine care for the residents praiseworthy.'

Staff work in partnership with other agencies to ensure the best outcomes possible for each young person. An external professional said, 'We consider ourselves to be partners working in the best interests of the residents.'

Young people say if they are unhappy about anything they feel they can talk to staff or the manager. They feel listened to and 'things change'. One young person is already planning a vegetable garden for the summer. Another was part of two performances at a drama club last summer. Young people develop an increased confidence and resilience while living at this home.

Staff said they love making a difference to the lives of young people. A member of staff said, 'We are all together here. It's a friendly home.' Staff provide strong boundaries in the home which are applied consistently. They actively encourage young people to participate in life around the home. However, some young people continue to lack motivation despite staff's best efforts.

Young people are encouraged to attend school, education courses or seek employment. Staff ensure young people are transported to their school or education provision. Young people who are not currently in education, employment or training are helped with key skills such as writing application forms and interview techniques. This will enable young people to be well prepared for when they are ready to seek employment or training.

The health of young people is promoted through healthy diets and exercise. Young people attend healthcare clinics such as doctors and dentists as appropriate. Medication is stored securely and procedures are safe. However, records of medication administered are confusing. Furthermore, controlled medication is not recorded in a bound and numbered book, which would be best practice to ensure records are clear and tamper proof.

Staff know the young people very well. Planning documents provide adequate information for staff but are clearly reviewed and discussed with young people. Staff ensure that needs relating to a young person's cultural background or personal identity are identified and fully addressed. For example, young people whose first language is not English are given time to communicate, as staff understand their difficulty in processing information.

Young people say they like their bedrooms. They have single lockable rooms which are highly personalised. Communal areas are well maintained and decorated as well as homely. Young people appear comfortable and relaxed in this home.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people said they feel safe living at this home. Staff are knowledgeable about the home's safeguarding and whistleblowing procedures. Young people do not report bullying as an issue. Young people say they get on well with each other. Staff are effective in building strong relationships between young people and do not tolerate bullying behaviour.

A strong staff team are successful at supporting young people to discontinue with illegal activities such as offending behaviour and consumption of illicit drugs or alcohol. Young people are also successfully encouraged and supported to stop smoking.

Young people who regularly went missing from the home no longer do this risky behaviour because they are happy and secure in the home. Young people are moved on to a more appropriate location when they are at risk of child sexual exploitation and the Registered Manager has felt the home is no longer able to keep them safe. These decisions are not taken lightly and are made within a multi-agency forum.

Staff have exceptionally good relationships with young people. Furthermore, they provide strong boundaries and a consistent approach. Consequently, staff rarely use physical intervention. They prefer to talk issues through with young people. This approach appears successful.

Fire safety in the home is taken seriously. All fire checks are carried out as appropriate. Young people regularly practice evacuating the building. Young people who are new to the home practice evacuating the building shortly after their arrival. This ensures they are knowledgeable about escaping the building in the event of a fire. The home has good health and safety procedures.

Staff are appropriately vetted before starting work in the home with young people. This ensures unsuitable adults do not work with young people.

Leadership and management

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

This home has a highly effective and supportive Registered Manager who is appropriately qualified and experienced to manage the home. He is passionate about providing a high quality of care for young people. He has complied with both the recommendations made at the previous inspection.

Young people are cared for by an enthusiastic, skilled and dynamic staff team who are qualified, experienced and caring. They are well supported by each other and the Registered Manager. Staff clearly have the interests of the young people at heart. They are proud of the achievements of young people and actively nurture their talents. For example, a young person performed locally in two plays over the summer. Staff and young people from the home watched their performances to show their support for their achievements.

The Statement of Purpose is a comprehensive document with issues of equality and diversity threaded throughout. The Registered Manager demonstrates a capacity for continued improvement and knows well the home's strengths and weaknesses. The home has an adequate written development plan outlining future plans for the home. Records are comprehensive, accurate and up to date.

The home's lounge is used by staff at night to sleep in, even though there is a sofa bed in the office. However, the sofa bed is cumbersome and blocks the entrance to the office and a fire door. Although young people do not mind staff sleeping in their lounge, it means young people cannot access this room during the night.

The Registered Manager makes good use of a range of monitoring activities which includes the manager's own evaluation of the service as well as an evaluation of the conduct of the home completed by a senior member of the organisation. Both these activities contribute to ensuring the home operates to a high standard within its Statement of Purpose.

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.