

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC034083
Inspection date	18/06/2012
Inspector	Bill Drumm
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	27/02/2012
--------------------------------	------------

© 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 home is run by the local authority and provides care and accommodation for up to six boys or girls aged between 12 and 17-years-old. The home is registered to care for young people with emotional or 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 **adequate**.

Young people who live at the home are both happy and well cared for with some having lived there for several years. The home is both well organised and efficient and provides a supportive environment in which young people can live. Members of staff are both lively and enthusiastic and provide young people with consistent levels of care. Some young people have been placed in the home without their social workers providing detailed information about their care and health needs, and how they will be met. Statutory reviews take place at regular intervals and written records of the outcome of these reviews are retained in the home. Each young person has their own key worker. Key workers meet with young people regularly to discuss their changing needs and how they can be supported. The relationships between staff and young people are friendly, warm and based on mutual respect. Young people have positive views about living in the home and all are engaged in education or training.

The behaviour of young people is well managed and the use of restraint is seldom, if ever, used. However, staff do not provide a coordinated and consistent approach to behaviour management. Although the negative behaviour exhibited by some young people is challenged appropriately, the use of sanctions is not clearly and comprehensively recorded. In addition, the records relating to the use of restraint do not fully comply with regulations. Records relating to when a young person has been missing from home do not record the whereabouts of the young person. Staff and the police will not know if a young person is being harboured by anyone or if they are going missing to be with specific individuals.

Discussions between the independent visitor to the home, staff, young people and

their parents or relatives take place. However, the independent visitor does not consistently record details of these interactions. Important information about the care young people receive is not recorded.

The home has admitted young people in an emergency. This is not consistent with their Statement of Purpose and does not comply with the overall aims and objectives of the 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
4 (2001)	ensure that the children's home is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its Statement of Purpose (Regulation 4 and The Care Standards Act 2000, Section 24)	31/08/2012
17 (2001)	ensure that no measure of control or discipline is excessive or unreasonable (Regulation 17 (1))	31/08/2012
20 (2001)	promote and protect the physical, emotional and mental health of children accommodated in the home. (Regulation 20 (1))	31/08/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure that each young person is cared for in line with their individual placement plan (NMS 25)
- ensure that the circumstances of all incidents when a child accommodated in the home goes missing, including the whereabouts during the period of absence are retained on each young person's file (NMS 5)
- ensure that the independent visitor to the home, records fully their interactions with young people, their family members or relatives and staff. (NMS 21)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people living at the home receive help and support, which helps them to learn new things and to experience new activities. Young people are involved in making

decisions about their lives and the home through statutory reviews, key worker meetings and young people's meetings. In addition, young people have recently met with the new assistant director for children's services. The home is currently being refurbished. The opinion of young people has been actively sought with regard to the redecoration of the home and their individual bedrooms. This helps them to grow in confidence and improve their self-esteem. Young people have regular meetings with their key workers. The key working system is effective in helping young people to express their opinions, achieve their agreed goals and to develop new ones. Members of staff are aware of each young person's strengths and they provide a supportive and enthusiastic environment in which young people can develop their independence. Young people are encouraged to become involved in the local community and further afield. Examples of this include joining a local rugby club and playing golf.

Members of staff display a committed approach to caring for young people and offer advice and support on how to stay fit and well. All young people are registered with local primary health care providers, and any who fall ill or suffer accidents are quickly attended to. However, one young person does not have a comprehensive health care plan in place, which outlines how their emotional health, as well as their physical health will be promoted. In addition, the young person's placing social worker has not provided detailed information about the young person's immunisations or health care history. This means the health care needs of this young person will not be fully safeguarded. Young people are encouraged to take regular, physical exercise and are supported to use a range of community facilities and resources. Staff within the home endeavour to promote the health and well-being of young people and help them to understand the importance of staying healthy and in taking regular exercise.

Young people receive a consistent level of help and support to learn new things and to develop their independence. Young people are encouraged to take part in meal preparation and to prepare their own snacks. In addition, the home has introduced a formal system to encourage young people to learn skills associated with daily living. Young people are supported to develop a positive self-image and to be aware of their own personal hygiene needs. Members of staff adopt a sensitive approach to this and support young people to be as independent as possible. This helps to prepare young people for their transition into adulthood and independent living.

The education of young people living at the home is both promoted and actively supported by all staff. All young people living at the home are involved in formal education or training and their regular attendance is encouraged. As a consequence, their actual attendance is good. Regular school attendance and the opportunity to learn new things helps young people to achieve their full potential.

Quality of care

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

The home provides a warm, friendly and supportive environment in which young people can develop both physically and emotionally. Placement plans, and the

comprehensive assessment of the individual needs of young people have not always been carried out by placing social workers prior to young people moving into the home. However, the home has developed individual care plans for each young person. The care plans provide sufficient detail to meet the immediate needs of the young person concerned and staff work hard to ensure they are met.

Regular monitoring and review of the care provided to young people takes place. This enables staff to evaluate the care they provide. Written records of all statutory reviews undertaken are available within the home. The changing needs of young people are met in a prompt and timely fashion.

Young people's files are detailed and well ordered. Written information retained within the home provides an extensive record of each young person's life there as well as the help and support carried out by staff. Young people are involved in the running of the home and are able to help identify any improvements that can be made. Young people know that their opinions are listened to and that they can influence change within the home. Within the home there is a culture of promoting each young person's rights and in ensuring they are able to participate in a wide range of activities. This helps young people to develop their confidence and self-esteem.

The home has a clear, organised admissions process for young people which allows, where possible, for the young person to visit the home prior to being placed there. Members of staff are committed to ensuring each young person enjoys a positive experience while living at the home and is able to develop both physically and emotionally. This process helps to overcome any anxieties the young person may have and to ensure the home can meet their needs.

Young people enjoy living in a residential area close to the town centre. Each young person has their own bedroom and they are encouraged to make them as comfortable and personal as possible. There is a comfortable lounge where young people can relax and socialise. The home also has a dining area where members of staff and young people can talk and enjoy a meal together. A programme of refurbishment and redecoration is underway within the home. This will help to ensure that the home continues to provide a comfortable and pleasant environment for young people to enjoy.

Young people are encouraged to enjoy a healthy lifestyle. Individual dietary needs are catered for and members of staff have undergone training in safe food hygiene. Each young person has written consent forms in place in order for members of staff to administer medication or first aid where this is necessary. Members of staff have also had training in the safe handling and administration of medication. The welfare of young people is safeguarded.

Relationships between members of staff and young people are both warm and friendly. Members of staff actively strive to provide an environment in which young people can be happy and flourish. Young people and members of staff were observed to have a warm, friendly relationship. Young people spoken to said, 'the

home's ok.' No complaints have been made by young people, they make good progress and appear happy living at the home.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

There are clear systems in place within the home to safeguard young people and young people themselves said they felt safe and looked after. There has been a number of occasions since the last inspection when young people have been missing. Written records show the date and time that the young person went missing and what action was taken by staff to try and locate them. However, the actual whereabouts of the young person once they have been located is not recorded. This means that the identity of anybody who may harbour young people, or locations where they visit is not retained. There are no recorded incidents of bullying having occurred within the home. The manager and all members of staff are fully trained in safeguarding and receive regular refresher training to keep their skills and knowledge up to date. This helps to ensure they are both confident and competent in dealing with any safeguarding issues should they arise.

Members of staff promote a culture of positive behaviour within the home and where possible, prefer to use their skills and competencies to encourage young people through reward systems, by listening to them and by diverting their attention to more appropriate behaviour. Young people are supported to take responsibility for their actions and punitive measures such as sanctions and restraint are therefore seldom, if ever, used. Records relating to the use of sanctions do not comply with regulations. In some instances several sanctions have been imposed for one episode of negative behaviour. In addition, the reasons why a sanction is being imposed and the effectiveness of the sanction are not fully recorded. This means that, essential information relating to what sanctions are most effective in helping young people develop socially acceptable behaviour is not retained. Young people rarely engage in disruptive or challenging behaviour and are generally well-behaved.

The home's manager carries out regular checks of the home's fire systems, smoke detectors and emergency lighting. Young people take part in fire drills and the time at which fire drills take place are fully recorded. Young people live in a safe environment because the home has a thorough and systematic approach to risk management. Risk assessments are clear, focused and regularly reviewed. Regular checks of gas installations and electrical equipment also take place.

Young people benefit from a friendly, stable staff team. There have been no new appointments since the last inspection. The home operates a thorough, detailed and robust recruitment policy. This helps to ensure young people are looked after by suitable people and are protected from potential abuse. Visitors to the home are asked to identify themselves on arrival and to sign the visitors' book.

Leadership and management

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

The home's manager is an experienced and well respected professional who provides effective and competent leadership. Staff members work as a team, are highly motivated and actively encouraged to create new opportunities for the young people living at the home. The home's Statement of Purpose has recently been reviewed and updated. The Statement of Purpose sets out the aims and objectives of the home and the admissions process. No reference is made to admitting young people in an emergency, something which the home has recently done. This means that, young people are not fully consulted about who moves into the home and may be unaware that a new admission is imminent.

The home's manager provides daily support to the staff team and regular formal supervision. This helps staff members to know what is expected of them and to feel supported in their work. Young people receive consistent care from a well-supported staff team. Members of staff generally understand each young person's individual strengths and needs, although this may not be the case in relation to those admitted to the home at short notice or in an emergency. Working practices are consistent in enabling young people to develop both physically and emotionally, in increasing their self-esteem and in helping them to achieve their potential. Young people are supported to learn new skills and to participate in how the home is run.

The organisation demonstrates a commitment to training all staff and in ensuring their training is kept up to date. This helps to ensure staff members retain the skills and competencies they have and are encouraged to develop new ones.

Young people live in a home that is effectively managed. The home's manager provides effective management and has systems in place to ensure that the quality of care is regularly monitored. Problem areas which may be identified are quickly highlighted and swift action is taken. The manager has written a detailed development plan for the home. The manager and staff know what the strengths and weaknesses of the home are and what improvements they wish to make.

Monitoring visits from someone independent of the home take place every month. The person undertaking these visits talks, where possible, to young people, their parents or relatives and staff. However, the visiting officer does not consistently and formally record all these interactions within the same report. These visits help to ensure that the home is run properly and that young people are well cared for. In addition, the knowledge and understanding of parents and staff about what strategies may work to help young people develop their independence and maturity is borne in mind.

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.