

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	18/09/2012
Inspector	Mark Kersh
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	22/03/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This home provides care and support for four young people of either sex with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is managed by the local authority.

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**.

Young people live in a nurturing and supportive home that provides well-planned care to target their individual needs. Positive outcomes are achieved for some young people and work continues to secure success for other young people. Specifically, young people's attendance and achievement at educational provision which has improved since their starting point in this home; this enhances their opportunities. Staff support young people to gain skills for adulthood. Young people like living in the home and have good relationships with staff and each other.

Young people are valued and develop within this home and make good progress from their starting points. Young people have positive views about their care, the staff and the home. They are able to reflect on how they have benefited from their placement and on the support at this home.

Young people are encouraged to be involved in planning and reviewing their care. They participate in the running of the home and contribute to their care. Young people receive practical support and encouragement to attend school. They are encouraged to participate in a range of activities. Young people have their health promoted and are taught how to keep themselves healthy.

Young people benefit from the skills of a manager who understands the strengths and weaknesses of the home and has plans in place to continually improve and develop the care and support offered. Some external monitoring reports of the home are not routinely sent to Ofsted or the home. Money deducted from young people's pocket money is unacceptable. Requirements have been raised to address these issues.

The home is described by the young people as 'brilliant, good here, it's alright' and 'you get to meet new people and do things.' Safeguarding policies and procedures are in place and are implemented by a well-established group of staff who actively promote the safety and welfare of young people.

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
33 (2001)	ensure that the registered provider supplies a copy of the report required to be made under paragraph (4) (c) to HMCI (Regulation 33 (5) (a))	18/10/2012
17 (2001)	ensure that the following shall not be used as a disciplinary measure on children accommodated in a children's home-the imposition of any financial penalty, other than a requirement for the payment of a reasonable sum (which may be by instalments) by way of reparation. (Regulation 17 (2) (g))	20/09/2012

Recommendations

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

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people develop a positive self-view in this home where their strengths and weakness are understood and they are valued. There are good attachments between young people and notable sustained attachments between young people and staff. This maximises the potential for developing friendships. A local councillor who visited the home during this inspection says, 'this is a good home where young people's needs are put first and staff respond well to any challenges they face, there is a good feel to this home.'

Attention to health issues is evident with young people attending regular health check appointments. This has led to addressing some health issues which had previously been neglected. Keyworker sessions have focussed on helping young people understand the importance of healthy lifestyles and address the dangers of

smoking, drinking alcohol or other areas of concern. As a consequence of this support, young people have quit smoking and there are no issues with substance misuse.

Young people in education make significant progress from their starting point. Those engaged attend regularly and are working towards their exams. Staff ensure meetings with education providers support young people with long histories of non-engagement in education. This means that suitable learning provision is found which caters specifically for those young people. For those young people above school age career opportunities are explored in line with their plans for moving into independence and adulthood.

Young people are fully supported to maintain contact with their family and friends and they benefit from the additional emotional support of staff at these times. This enables them to maintain meaningful relationships with the significant people in their life. Detailed contact plans clearly identify young people's arrangements and currently there are no restrictions on young people's contact. A telephone is available for young people to have private conversations with family and friends.

Young people receive support and encouragement to learn independence skills. They benefit from independence activities forming part of the daily routine of the home. This enables young people to develop appropriate skills in readiness for leaving care. The acquisition of life skills for those above school age is further advanced and provides young people with improved skills to live independently successfully.

Quality of care

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

Young people benefit from the quality of care provided, they enjoy positive relationships with the staff who have high expectations for them, understand their needs and want them to do well. Social workers report that, 'the staff deal with any issues and support young people well in this home' and that there are, 'effective levels of communication from staff.' This supports collaborative working and contributes to meeting the aims and objectives of young people's placements. There are close links with health agencies to provide for young people's health needs and to support their psychological development.

Staff have an ethos where young people are at the heart of their practice. Young people's meetings and key worker sessions give young people the opportunity to have their views heard. Young people benefit, knowing that staff listen and their views are respected. They are involved in their menu planning, activities and choice of incentives. As a result young people's views are encouraged and taken into account in the running of the home. Young people are involved in the local authority corporate parenting meetings, where they are consulted and can represent looked after children's views.

Young people receive an information pack and children's guide which contains

information on their care, advocacy, children's rights and the details for Ofsted. Young people know how to make a complaint to staff. The complaints procedure is on the notice board in an appropriate format. There have been no complaints and the home operates a 'grumble book' to deal with any issues young people may have. This means areas of concerns can be dealt with effectively before the formal complaint stage.

Young people benefit from individualised care planning and the quality of care provided. The needs of young people are clearly identified within their placement and education plans. Young people actively attend their planning meetings and reviews and plans are subsequently updated to reflect their progress. Young people's statutory reviews are held at the recommended intervals. All of this ensures that the home can continue to meet the individual needs of young people.

All staff have a first aid qualification and know how to deal with a medical emergency to protect young people's welfare. A medical history for young people is available and includes signed consent for medical treatment and the administration of medication from those with parental responsibility. Medication is kept in a secured cabinet within a locked office and all prescribed medication is regularly checked and recorded in young people's records. This ensures that all medication in the home is accounted for and only given to young people as prescribed.

Young people are encouraged to attend their education placements and staff provide practical assistance to enable this. Staff have high aspirations for young people and liaise with education providers to identify any additional support requirements. Young people are inspired to reach their full potential and say they are working towards achieving their career aims. Education is pivotal to the structure of the home and embedded in daily tasks. Consequently, young people benefit from a consistent approach to their education.

Young people participate in a range of activities that reflect their personal interests. Staff actively engage with, and stimulate, young people to vary their activities to develop new skills and share new experiences. Subsequently, young people develop a greater sense of self-confidence. The home is proactive in addressing equality and diversity considerations. Young people are encouraged to celebrate their individualism and culture and embrace this in others. This means that young people have an understanding and knowledge of their backgrounds.

The home is suitably located and maintained to a good standard. Young people have been involved in choosing colour schemes and furnishings. As a result, young people live in a comfortable and suitably decorated home.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are safe in this home; they appear confident and comfortable around one another and the staff. All staff have undertaken child protection training and

know what to do to safeguard the welfare of young people should there be any evidence or suspicion of abuse. A worker from an agency charged with protecting young people confirms there are no concerns in relation to the young people living in this home. Young people say that they feel safe and that the support from staff has been 'brilliant', there are no issues with bullying in this home.

Young people have individual missing from care plans which set out the likelihood of young people being absent or missing from care and detail the steps to be taken. Prompt referrals are made to the police and other relevant agencies in accordance with the local police protocol. Young people have a de-briefing session with the police on their return in order to assess whether they have been involved in any risk-taking behaviours in their absence, such as associating with any inappropriate adults. Multi-agency risk management meetings are requested where young people are persistently absent or missing so that strategies can be put in place in order to promote and safeguard their welfare.

Young people have individual behaviour management plans which enable all staff to understand the particular vulnerabilities and needs of each young person. Acceptable and positive behaviour is encouraged through the use of incentives and rewards. All staff are consistent in their approach to de-escalate behaviour and restraint is only used as a last resort. Sanctions imposed are few and fair. However, young people who at times are missing from care, have a daily amount deducted from their pocket money as they have not resided at the home. Staff say this is then returned to them when they leave this home. This is unacceptable and has had no impact on changing this type of behaviour.

Young people live in a physically safe environment in which health and safety issues are well managed. Written records show that staff carry out routine health and safety checks around the home. Safety and insurance certificates are current and direct work with young people takes place to ensure they are aware of an emergency evacuation route in the event of a fire. A robust recruitment process is in place and staff take appropriate steps to verify each visitor's identity to protect young people.

Leadership and management

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

A Registered Manager is in post, dedicated to providing the best possible service to young people and meeting their diverse needs. They have the confidence of staff and are supported by an experienced and enthusiastic deputy manager.

Of the two requirements made at the previous inspection, one has been complied with and one has been carried forward following this inspection. There are now good systems in place to consult with outside professionals about the quality of care the home provides. The responses from consultations are analysed to inform improvements within the home. There is evidence of monthly Regulation 33 monitoring visits taking place. However, the reports following such visits in July and August 2012 have not been forwarded to Ofsted or the home at the time of this

inspection. The one recommendation made at the previous inspection has been complied with. Records for young people missing from care have been changed and are more accessible than before. This allows better monitoring of incidents to identify any patterns or trends.

The home's Statement of Purpose is comprehensive and accurately reflects the aims, ethos and facilities offered to young people. The service provides a young person's guide which is appropriate and accessible and contains relevant information about the services young people can expect to receive.

The strengths and weaknesses of this home are understood and plans are in place to continue to develop the service. Amongst several changes since the last inspection are the implementation of monthly meetings and consultation between keyworkers and parents and monthly meetings with the police community support officers.

The Registered Manager and deputy lead a suitably experienced and well trained staff team that is able to understand the needs of young people. Staff say they feel empowered and involved in the development of the home and praise the commitment of the manager. They say they receive regular and effective supervision and participate in staff meetings. Staff are delegated specific tasks looking at outcomes for young people in relation to the new guidance published by Ofsted.

Young people's individual records are securely stored for confidentiality reasons. Staff understand the nature, purpose and sensitivity of these records, and young people contribute to them and can see what staff write about them. Reviews are held regularly and young people are actively included in the planning and attendance of these meetings whenever possible. All staff know the procedure to follow in the case of a significant event and notify the appropriate authorities; this further safeguards young people.

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.