

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Shaun Common
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is provided by a local authority and is registered to care for up to six 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 **good**.

Young people receive good quality care. They have individualised care plans that identify their diverse needs. These plans are delivered effectively by a committed and knowledgeable staff team. This results in young people having positive outcomes.

Young people are consulted about life at the home and their care. Their views are taken seriously and acted upon. They have good relationships with staff and access to a range of professionals who support them with their needs.

Young people state they are safe and feel safe. Policies and procedures are delivered in practice by staff, which ensures good safeguards are in place for young people. Any shortfalls are identified and addressed by the acting manager with the support from senior staff, to ensure improvement in the quality of care.

Some areas for improvement have been identified: ensure the effectiveness of sanctions is recorded; that young people are able to have their comments recorded about any incident of physical restraint; that young people are able to see a nurse or medical professional after any restraint and that staff undertake formal training in self-harm.

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
17B (2001)	ensure the sanction record includes the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure. (Regulation 17B(3)(f))	31/10/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure that where there has been a physical restraint, young people are always given the opportunity to be examined by a registered nurse or a medical practitioner (NMS 3.16)
- ensure that where restraint is used, young people are encouraged to have their views recorded in records kept by the home; specifically that young people's views are recorded in the volume kept for the purpose (NMS 3.18)
- ensure staff are equipped with the skills required to meet the needs of young people; specifically, that staff undertake formal training in self-harm. (NMS 18.1)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people's health improves leading to positive health outcomes. They have access to a range of relevant health services to meet their individual needs. Their health needs are identified and good support is provided by staff to assist young people to meet with health professionals and access health services, which improve their overall health, mental health and wellbeing.

A healthy lifestyle is encouraged with young people engaging in regular physical activities that they enjoy and which promote their health and wellbeing. Staff provide advice and guidance to young people about the risks of smoking, alcohol, substance misuse and sexual health and engage with relevant professionals to provide support to young people as appropriate to their needs. Young people therefore have developed an understanding of key health issues and risks to live healthier lifestyles.

Young people's self-esteem and knowledge develop positively as a result of forming good attachments with a skilled and caring staff team, whom young people speak highly of. Young people's confidence grows during their time at the home. They receive on-going positive support from staff and where appropriate professionals who specialise in assisting young people with their emotional needs. A social worker spoke highly of the overall care of the young person they have placed at the home and feels the young person is making positive progress in all areas.

Young people make good progress in improving their attendance at school or college. Careful planning, liaison and work with relevant education professionals, means that young people settle into the home, develop good routines and make good progress in their subject areas, achieving their potential.

Contact arrangements with family, friends and others are clearly recorded. Plans are implemented in practice, which ensures that young people are supported to develop and continue positive relationships with those important to them.

There are good arrangements in place that ensures young people develop skills for adult life and where appropriate, independent living. Young people are assisted by staff to learning basic skills such as cooking, cleaning and care of their clothing and belongings. Staff also help to educate and advise young people so they develop broader knowledge and skills in important areas such as budgeting, where to get advice and other matters such as banking, public transport and access to public services.

Quality of care

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

Care plans are developed on admission for each young person. These are detailed and comprehensive documents that set out young people's diverse and individual needs and how these needs will be met. Plans clearly show where an identified need has been met with a clear link to supporting evidence. This demonstrates that needs are assessed and met and that young people make positive progress in all aspects of their lives. There are examples in the home's records and practice that show how personal and sensitive equality and diversity matters are, assessed planned for and met, ensuring young people feel involved and a positive outcome is achieved.

There are very positive relationships between staff and young people. Young people speak highly of the relationships they have and value. This provides young people with solid foundations to develop attachments, trust and confidence.

Young people are consulted about their care and the running of the home. Regular meetings are held with young people and these are recorded. The minutes of these meetings show young people's views are valued and formal responses to requests are clear and detailed, which gives young people direct feedback that their views are important. Young people are involved in formal reviews so their wishes are considered. One young person recently chaired their own review meeting, which helped them develop confidence and have a significant say on their care and future plans. Each young person has an allocated keyworker and spends regular time with them talking about life at the home, their care, their needs and receiving guidance and support. Additionally, the local authority holds regular children's council meetings. Young people are invited and attend, to have a say on, and influence, broader care and service issues within the local authority area.

Complaints are rarely made by young people. There have been no complaints made since the last inspection. Young people stated that this is because they are able to speak with staff at any time who help them to sort out any problems or concerns they may have. Young people have free access to complaint forms that they can post directly to the local authority's complaints department, which is independent of the children's home.

Young people have access to a range of key health services and receive good support from staff with their education. Young people are able to see doctors, dentists and opticians as well as having access to broader health services such as sexual health and mental health provision to promote their wellbeing. Staff liaise closely with schools and colleges as appropriate to young people's needs. The links formed with relevant professionals ensures that the best possible support, advice and guidance are given to young people to assist them to achieve their potential. A young person stated that staff help with homework and offer good support to help them achieve.

The home is well decorated and furnished throughout and is conducive to the positive care of young people. Young people are able to personalise their rooms and get to have a say how the home is decorated and furnished.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people stated they have no concerns and feel safe. They feel they can talk to staff if they have any worries. Bullying does occur, however this is challenged robustly by staff and young people did not report bullying as a concern.

A child protection procedure is available and staff are trained in child protection matters. They know how to implement the procedure to help to ensure that young people are kept safe. There has been one child protection concern since the last inspection, which involved an incident outside the home. This matter was dealt with appropriately and fully by staff and investigated by the local authority through safeguarding procedures. Staff acted appropriately to protect young people and keep them safe.

Children occasionally go missing. There is a protocol and procedure in place with the local authority and police that is implemented fully by staff to help keep young people safe. Young people return quickly to the home and robust practice ensures that statutory guidance is followed and implemented. For example, young people are seen by police for a 'safe and well check' and are seen within 72 hours of their return by someone independent of the home. Robust risk assessments are developed, implemented and reviewed regularly. Staff ensure full and accurate records are completed of each incident and have close working relationships with local authority professionals, police and others to ensure relevant and appropriate actions are taken to keep young people safe.

Staff build positive relationships with young people and encourage positive behaviour. They use appropriate sanctions where needed to address negative or inappropriate behaviour. Sanctions are not used often and are fully recorded. Young people have the opportunity to write their comments and/or sign the record. This promotes their rights and assists them to develop understanding and responsibility. However, the effectiveness of the measure is not recorded on all occasions to determine whether the measures being used are having the desired effect of stopping negative behaviour.

Physical restraint is rare and staff are trained so they can use this safely with young people where needed. Restraint is used appropriately and incidents recorded. There has only been one incident requiring the use of physical restraint since the last inspection. Records show the details of the incident and how this was managed. However, the record does not show clearly whether the young person was offered the opportunity to see a health professional, though does refer to whether there were any injuries or whether medical attention was needed. The young person has not had the opportunity to write their comments in the volume kept for the purpose or to sign the record. However, a full debrief was undertaken so the young person did have the opportunity to discuss the incident with staff and the manager.

There has been no new staff employed since the last inspection. There is an appropriate procedure in place for the recruitment of new employees to ensure they are suitable to work with vulnerable young people. Senior staff are trained in safer recruitment practices.

Leadership and management

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

The Registered Manager recently left post and the deputy manager is acting as manager of the home. Ofsted were formally notified of the arrangements to manage the home, which are suitable and appropriate to ensure the continuity of care of the young people. A new manager has been appointed and they are due to start work at the home on 1 October 2013. The deputy manager has managed the home effectively with the support of senior staff. The quality of care of young people has been maintained at a good level with young people having positive outcomes.

The Statement of Purpose for the home is a comprehensive and detailed document. It contains required information that is relevant and suitable for parents, professionals and others. It sets out the objectives of the home and what it provides for young people. A children's guide is also provided and available for all young people. It tells young people what the home is like, what to expect and is in a suitable format.

Staff are experienced, qualified and knowledgeable of the needs of young people and have undertaken a range of relevant training to help them deliver good quality care. For example, staff are trained in safeguarding children, food safety and in issues such as child development, sexual health, child sexual exploitation and substance

misuse. Senior staff have undertaken some informal in-house training with the staff team on self-harm. However, this is not sufficiently robust and does not fully support staff to comprehensively care for young people with needs in this area.

Staff are supported in their role of caring for young people through regular formal supervision. They also have an annual appraisal, which sets out their developmental needs so they can develop their skills of caring for young people through training and qualifications.

The home continues to demonstrate capacity to improve. The statutory requirement and recommendation made at the last inspection have both been fully addressed. These relate to staff progressing with and completing qualifications and the independent visitor under regulation 33 consulting parents as part of their visit. These matters contribute to improving the overall quality of the service provided to young people. A social worker commented positively about staff and the good levels of communication to ensure that together they can effectively deliver the objectives set out in the young person's care plan.

Monitoring of the home continues to be good and contributes effectively to improving the quality of care for young people. External visits by an independent person are carried out monthly. These cover all required matters reflecting the strengths of the service and identifying any areas for improvement. Internal monitoring by the manager is regular and effective. Any shortfalls are identified and acted upon.

A development plan is in place for the home. This identifies objectives where the home intends to change or develop its provision further in order to improve the quality of care and outcomes for 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* and the evaluation schedule for the inspection of children's homes.