

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	13/06/2013
Inspector	Chris Scully
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Date of last inspection	07/01/2013
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home provides care and accommodation for two young people 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's needs are well met through personalised care planning, which meets their personal preferences and individual needs. Consequently, young people are able to make good progress across all aspects of their welfare and development. This is supported by staff's understanding of each young person's diverse needs. This ensures they continue to receive the help, guidance and support they need on a daily basis.

Young people's opinions, wishes and feelings are valued and are central to the planning and organisation of the home. They benefit from positive relationships with staff, which are built upon honesty and trust. Young people are safe and feel safe. This is because of the effective safeguarding and missing from care procedures as well as the health and safety checks implemented within the home.

The home is well managed by a highly committed Registered Manager and staff team. Most records and documentation are generally well maintained although there are some minor shortfalls with regards to child protection concerns, notifications and the home's documentation for children new to the home. The home is generally well maintained although there are issues around some items currently stored in the home. There are good systems in place for monitoring the quality and standard of care provided.

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
30 (2001)	ensure if any of the events listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 5 takes place the registered person shall without delay notify the persons indicated in respect of the event in column 2 of the table. (Regulation 30 (1))	31/07/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure the home provides a comfortable and homely environment and is well maintained, with particular regard to the removal of unwanted items stored in the garden, dining room and games room and the frost damage to the external wall (NMS 10.3)
- ensure there is an updated development plan in place which identifies any planned changes in the operation or resources of the service, or confirms the continuation of the home's current operation and resource (NMS 15.2)
- ensure there is a clear and comprehensive summary of any allegations made against a particular member of staff, including how the allegation was followed up and resolved and a record of any action taken and the decisions reached (NMS 20.7)
- ensure records are clear, up to date and stored securely, and contribute to an understanding of the child's life. With particular reference to ensuring the home's own day-to-day care plans, health plans and risk assessments are in place for young people new to the home. (NMS 22)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people new to the home are developing a positive self-view. They are forming positive relationships with staff. This is supported by the very good transition arrangements put into place for young people. This enabled them to meet with staff prior to the move, to visit the home for tea, stay overnight and ultimately begin to form relationships with staff. Consequently, in the short time they have been here they feel settled. Young people who have very recently moved on to other placements developed very positive self-images, which enabled them to successfully

move on to the next phase in their lives. Social workers comment upon the effective, personalised support young people received in the build-up to moving into the home.

Young people make a positive contribution to the home through regular key worker sessions and regular young people's meetings. Young people meet regularly with their key worker and this ensures their wishes and feelings are taken into account in their care planning. Young people are forming and sustaining positive relationships with the staff and each other. As a result, they are gaining a more positive view of themselves.

Young people are in full-time education and their attendance is improving. They understand the importance of education and have increased opportunities to achieve, develop their knowledge and skills, pursue their talents and gain qualifications. Consequently, young people remain confident to continue with their education and pursue their goals of further education.

Overall young people enjoy good health and mostly healthy lifestyles. They take more responsibility for their personal care and enjoy healthy diets. They have very good access to a full range of health services, and receive support and information about any specific health problems. As a result, they are developing an understanding about the importance of healthy lifestyles and key health risks. Young people are engaging with a range of healthcare professionals in order to promote their health, well-being and self-esteem.

Young people benefit from appropriate contact with family, friends and those significant to them. This means they retain a sense of identity and belonging. Contact arrangements are regularly reviewed and any concerns are fed back to a young person's placing authority.

Young people are being well prepared to develop the skills they need for independence. For example, they carry out tasks such as planning menus, cooking and general household tasks. This increases their confidence and self-esteem as they prepare for adult life. Young people play a central role in deciding about their futures, with staff helping them to consider their options and what they want for the future.

Quality of care

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

Young people are responding well to the consistently good standard of care provided. Staff have high aspirations for all young people and are proud of how well young people are doing. Staff are fully committed to enabling young people to lead happy and fulfilling lives. They are patient, friendly, approachable and have created an environment where young people feel cared for and able to accept advice and guidance. They have a detailed knowledge of the young people they work with, ensuring that young people receive very good individual support and guidance.

Young people's well-being is at the centre of the home's practice. Young people feel valued as staff listen to their wishes and feelings about every aspect of their lives and the running of the home. Social workers comment on the high levels of consultation with young people and feel this enables them to feel secure and grow in confidence. Staff take young people's views seriously and ensure that they are fully taken into account. Young people are provided with appropriate and reasonable explanations as to why specific requests cannot be granted, such as staying out later with their friends. Staff use excellent communication and interpersonal skills to develop positive relationships with young people.

Young people know how to make a complaint should they have any concerns. Young people's meetings are promoted, thereby ensuring they are held regularly and that young people are consulted about menus, daily routines and activities.

Social workers confirm young people are being cared for in line with their care plans. Young people's placement plans are detailed and provide a clear picture of their individual needs and how these will be met. Young people have contributed to their plans and are encouraged to sign them. Staff work well with young people to help them to understand why they are placed in this home. Young people are supported to attend their review meetings. Staff regularly consult with social workers to ensure young people receive the right level of support. Social workers say the home has worked well with them to ensure young people's needs are continually met. Independent reviewing officers say young people are well supported, their care plan is adhered to and staff work well to meet the aims and objectives of their plan and work well with other agencies.

Staff understand the importance of a well-balanced diet and help young people understand this. The home ensures young people have access to healthcare services to meet their needs, including access to child and adolescent mental health teams. There are robust medication procedures in place. This contributes to keeping young people healthy and safe.

Young people are provided with regular opportunities to engage in a variety of activities in the local area. Staff support them to develop hobbies and interests, such as visiting television sets. This means young people's self-esteem and feelings of self-worth are strengthened.

Young people's bedrooms are highly personalised with their belongings and posters of their particular interests. Young people's views have been integral in the redecoration of their bedrooms and purchasing of new furniture. Social workers comment that this has been a very positive experience for them.

Recently the home has been asked to store items from another home. Consequently there are several large boxes and items placed around the home, which are detracting from the homely environment. The storage of these items is impacting upon young people's access to the games room. There are also several large items of furniture in the garden which are awaiting removal, and the boundary walls are showing signs of frost damage to the brickwork. The Registered Manager states

there has been a delay in these items being removed and in the repairs to the wall.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people's welfare is of paramount importance. Young people are supported to overcome any difficulties they may face so they have an opportunity to lead happy, fulfilling lives. Young people live in a safe environment where they are protected from harm and have a strong sense of safety and well-being. They say they feel safe and are able to talk to any member of staff if they have any concerns.

Young people are protected as staff have a secure understanding of the home's safeguarding procedures. They give young people's safety the highest priority and are trained in relation to safeguarding. Consequently, staff are clear on the action to take should they have any concerns regarding a young person's safety or well-being. However, on one occasion there is no clear audit trail in relation to an allegation made by a young person; this is an oversight by the home. However, this was reported to all appropriate persons who took action to deal with the issue, which was resolved within 24 hours.

Young people have gone missing from care. The home works well with police and other agencies to ensure young people return home quickly and safely. Staff are proactive should a young person be missing; they actively search for them to try and locate them. Staff are aware of the risks associated with each young person and are working with them to help them reduce these and keep themselves safe. Records pertaining to young people being missing are appropriately maintained.

Young people know and understand the house rules, for example, the times to be home each night. Staff implement clear, consistent boundaries, which means that young people know what is expected of them and what is unacceptable. Staff are positive role models who are very good at encouraging positive behaviour by offering high levels of praise and encouragement. Consequently, young people are able to consider their action and how they can handle situations differently in the future.

Young people live in a physically safe environment. They are protected from any hazards by a comprehensive range of health and safety procedures, risk assessments and checks. Staff carry out regular health and safety checks to ensure the premises are safe and young people know what to do in case of an emergency. The recruitment and selection arrangements for people working at the home are thorough to make sure young people are protected. The provider carefully ensures that staff have the skills and competencies to meet the needs of individual young people. The vetting of visitors to the home is robust and ensures the safety and well-being of young people.

Leadership and management

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

The qualified and experienced Registered Manager and the staff team are highly committed to providing a quality service. Their nurturing approach, combined with consistent parental guidance, enables young people to achieve good outcomes. The home is well resourced and employs a sufficient number of staff to maintain good cover. Staff speak highly of the support and guidance from the Registered Manager, especially during a particularly challenging period based around the needs of the young people placed at that time. Staff commitment to young people is commendable and enables the young people to make steady progress.

Staff benefit from regular staff meetings, supervision and personal development plans, which means their training needs are regularly reviewed and addressed. There is a rolling programme of training provided, including refresher training in mandatory areas. Staff have also undertaken training on brain synapses and attachments, child sexual exploitation and pathological demand avoidance. This has enhanced their knowledge and understanding of these areas and enables them to provide effective support to young people.

The home has a detailed Statement of Purpose and children's guide. Information is regularly reviewed and updated. This means young people, their families, placing authorities and other professionals have a clear understanding of the type of care and support provided to young people. The home has a business plan in place but this has not been updated to reflect this year's outcomes for the home.

The home has a history of good compliance. One requirement and two recommendations were raised at the last inspection. The home has improved upon the recording of any physical interventions and ensures young people are spoken to after the event by a member of staff who was not involved. This enables the young person to voice their opinions on the incident and talk it through with staff. Risk assessments for when young people go missing from care are more robust and young people are encouraged to have their views recorded in the records made about them.

The home's written records provide information about individual young people's needs, development and progress. However, the home's internal day-to-day care plans, health care plans and risk assessments have not yet been formalised for some young people new to the home. The impact of this is minimised as staff have a clear understanding of their needs, vulnerabilities and risks associated with them. There are generally robust systems in place to notify Ofsted of any significant issues that may occur within the home or with regards to the young people placed. However, on one occasion the home did not notify Ofsted of a significant event. This did not impact upon the care provided to young people. This ensures that there are good systems in place to promote the welfare of the 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.