

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	01/08/2013
Inspector	Amanda Ellis
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Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	19/06/2013
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is operated by a private company and provides care for up to four young people. The home is registered to provide care for young people who may have 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**.

At the previous inspection on 19 June 2013, the overall quality rating for this home was judged as inadequate with 11 requirements and three recommendations made for improvement. Ofsted have undertaken a further full inspection of this home in line with Ofsted policy and procedure.

The home provides an adequate quality of care, where young people are cared for in line with their individual placement and care plans. The staff team effectively monitor and review young people's plans. This means it is clear to see the progress young people make from their starting points.

The staff team set clear and consistent boundaries for young people and, as a result, young people understand expectations of their behaviour. Young people are positive about staff and enjoy sound relationships with them and others.

Young people's health needs are well met. They are encouraged to have a well-balanced diet and active lifestyle. Young people make improvements in engaging with education and training. Preparation for independence is well managed by providing opportunities for young people to develop skills for independent living.

Young people are kept safe through safe working practices, which are risk assessed. Significant events are notified appropriately to the relevant authorities; however, the management of missing from care episodes are not managed in accordance with local protocols. This means the home are not clear about how the police respond to young people missing from care.

The Registered Manager has systems in place to monitor the home. However, development plans are not sufficiently detailed to promote improvement. Staff are supported through team meetings, training opportunities and formal supervision. This means young people benefit from consistent approach in care provision.

The requirement and recommendations from the last inspection have been met. There is one statutory requirement and four recommendations set as a result of this inspection. This is to ensure the statement of purpose is updated, improved missing from care practice, improvements to the home's development plan, ensuring a well maintained and homely environment and ensuring comprehensive training records are kept.

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 a copy of the Statement of Purpose is provided to Ofsted which shall consist of a statement as to the matters listed in Schedule 1, with particular reference to the provision of a current staff list and includes the. (Regulation 4 (1) (2))	10/10/2013

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 and decorated. Avoidable hazards are removed as is consistent with a domestic setting. Risk reduction does not lead to an institutional feel (NMS 10.3)
- ensure that where a child is absent from the home and their whereabouts is not known (i.e. the child is missing), the home's procedures are compatible with and have regard to Runaway and Missing from Home and Care (RMFHC) protocols and procedures maintained and managed by the police or by the local authority for the area where the home is located (NMS 5.6)
- ensure the registered person has a written development plan, reviewed annually, for the future of the home, either identifying any planned changes in the operation or resources of the service, or confirming the continuation of the home's current operation and resource. With particular regard to specifying how the home will develop and improve the quality of care (NMS 15.2)

- ensure the home has and implements a written policy that clarifies the purpose, format and content of information to be kept on the registered person's files. Staff understand the nature of records maintained and follow the home's policy for the keeping and retention of files, managing confidential information, and access to files (including files removed from the premises). With specific regard to the maintenance of all training records. (NMS 22.1)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **adequate**.

Young people progress to develop a positive self-view and emotional resilience. They develop trusting relationships with staff and say that they can talk to the staff about their concerns. Outcomes for young people improve because they receive sound care.

Young people are supported to engage with education. Where young people have had disrupted educational histories, they benefit from receiving individualised support from staff. Consistency in structure and routines enables young people to engage with educational opportunities. This means that the young people are able to explore their potential.

Young people benefit from improved health and are encouraged to have healthy lifestyles. Outcomes for young people's future health are improved due to them accessing health care. Some young people engage in potential harmful activities, such as smoking. However, they benefit from advice and guidance to enable them to understand risks and access support when required.

Where appropriate young people benefit from contact with family, friends and other people who are important to them. Staff work closely with others to facilitate and promote contact so that young people can have a meaningful relationship with those who are important to them.

Young people are encouraged to develop the skills for leaving care. Independence skills form part of the daily routine of the home. Formal independence planning systems are in place, which allow for the assessment of a young person's abilities. This means young people's independence skills and abilities are known when moving on into their new placements or independence.

Quality of care

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

Young people benefit from a child-centred and dedicated staff team. There are positive relationships between the staff and young people which enable young people to feel valued. Young people stated that they liked living in the home and that staff are 'Great...we can have a laugh and they are firm but fair'.

Staff encourage young people to express their views and take into account their wishes and feelings. Young people's views are taken into consideration through regular residents meetings and within key work sessions. Staff also help young people understand why their wishes cannot always be acted upon. Young people often accept these decisions due to their positive relationships with staff.

Young people express that they know how to make a complaint to staff. The complaints procedure is freely available throughout the home and in an appropriate format. Young people have access to their own telephone to make private calls which means they can express any concerns they may have independently of the staff team.

Risk assessments and behaviour management plans reflect the young people's individuality. Young people are aware of their care plans and are consulted with regards to its content. This means young people participate in their care planning and have opportunities to record their views.

Young people currently living in the home have completed their formal education. They are actively engaged in vocational and key skills programmes, with a view to commencing college. Some young people have had gaps in their education and difficulties with schooling. The staff team ensure opportunities for learning are accessible. Therefore the home is effective in promoting the education of young people.

Young people engage with social activities within and outside of the home. They are encouraged to identify activities of their choosing and staff participate and support these activities. One young person told me that he enjoys days out fishing, playing pool and Tobogganing with the staff team.

When a young person is admitted, they are registered with local health providers, and statutory health appointments and routine health needs are met.

The maintenance and the décor of the home are of a generally adequate standard. There were some areas of improvement which need attention, such as an uneven kitchen floor surface, decoration and plaster work within some bedrooms and carpet cleaning. The home is comfortable but the environment is institutional in some respects, such as some of the health and safety signs are excessively large for a domestic dwelling. While the home is newly decorated in some areas the lack of personalisation detracts from a homely environment.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are safe and say they feel safe. The staff team ensure that young people are safe and learn to keep themselves safe. The home has systems in place to ensure that young people's safety is promoted and protected.

There have been no complaints or allegations from young people since the last inspection. Young people report no incidents of bullying within the home.

Young people have gone missing from the home since the last inspection. The home has its own procedures in place should a young person go missing. While there are good working relationships with the local police, the home's policy is not compatible with current local police protocols. This means the staff do not always have an understanding of local police arrangements and cannot ensure effective action on occasion that young people go missing. When young people go missing, staff are proactive in locating the young person and ensuring they are responded to positively on their return.

The use of physical restraint in the home is minimal with no restraints since the last inspection. Staff who undertake any restraints are suitably trained. Staff promote positive behaviour for young people at all times. Staff demonstrate a sound understanding of the young people's individual needs. Each young person has an individualised risk assessment which identifies risk factors in specific areas. There are clear strategies in place to address these risks and prevent harm to young people. Young people learn to manage their behaviours and develop more positive ways of coping.

Health and safety are managed well in the home. Detailed risk assessments and fire safety checks are undertaken to promote the safety and well-being of young people. The manager ensures that all checks are completed and action taken where necessary. Staff are conscientious in their duties with regards to the safety of young people.

While there have been no new staff recruited since the last inspection, young people are safe because the home has good systems in place for the recruitment and vetting of all new staff.

Leadership and management

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

The last inspection of this home resulted in an inadequate judgement. The home has sufficiently rectified previously identified shortfalls, which resulted in 11 requirements and three recommendations for improvement. However, further shortfalls have been found at this inspection.

The requirement to ensure the proper provision for the welfare of children has been met. Planned training for the staff team includes working with young people who self-harm and/or use drugs or alcohol. While this training has not yet been delivered, the home does not currently have any young people who have these behaviours and will not accept such young people until all staff have undertaken the training. Training needs have been further improved in ensuring all staff have undertaken first aid and safeguarding training.

Improvements to record keeping have been implemented. Physical intervention records now include the views of young people. The physical, emotional and mental health needs of young people are now better met with improved key working systems and monitoring of care plans. Young people's records now provide a comprehensive overview of health and educational needs and the activities undertaken.

Improved arrangements for the safekeeping of medication have been implemented with a raised staff awareness of the need for a robust approach to security. Vehicle safety and maintenance has become more stringent, with clear communication and regular vehicle checks and maintenance. Security within the home has been further improved with daily checks of the interior and exterior of the home twice a day. Fire drills are now conducted with all young people and staff at regular frequencies.

Internal and external monitoring and quality assurance processes have now been improved, by seeking the views and ensuring consultation with young people, staff, parents and stakeholders.

The recommendation to ensure all young people communicate their views on all aspects of their care is better met with weekly young person's meetings, supporting young people to read and comment on their records and consulting with young people within key work sessions. The young person's guide has been amended to include up to date contact details for Ofsted. Lastly, the recommendation to improve methods to counter potential bullying has been addressed within the staff team and through the review of the homes bullying policy.

The home has experienced some staffing changes since the last visit with transfers between the provider's homes. This has not had a negative impact upon young people and ensures a balance of skills and experience within the staff team. There are sufficient numbers of suitability qualified and competent staff deployed in the home.

Staff receive regular supervision which helps them to provide effective care to young people. Regular team meetings further ensure that the staff team feel supported and the quality of care is reviewed.

The home's Statement of Purpose is comprehensive and accurately reflects the facilities offered to young people and their parents and carers. However, the staff list is not up to date and a copy of this document has not been submitted to Ofsted as required under regulation. This has no direct impact upon on young people, however restricts Ofsted's ability to review the staffing arrangements.

A development plan is in place for this home; while pragmatic in planning for improvements, it is lacking sufficient detail as to how the service can effectively develop in relation to specifically improving upon outcomes for children. This limits the home's capacity to improve.

Records are generally clear, up to date and stored securely, however, some staff training records are incomplete and do not easily reflect current staff training needs or experience.

All significant events relating to the protection of young people in the home are notified as appropriate and actions taken as required.

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.