

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	22/08/2012
Inspector	Elizabeth Tanner
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Provision subtype	Children's home

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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 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**.

This home provides good quality care for young people. Care planning and practice are highly personalised and because of this young people make good progress across all aspects of their welfare and development.

Young people have positive relationships with staff and say, 'staff are respectful and reliable.'

Young people are consulted about all aspects of their care and this ensures they feel involved in the running of the home and are actively involved in the planning process.

One requirement and four recommendations are made to improve practice and outcomes for young people. These mainly relate to minor shortfalls in recording and quality assurance systems and have minimal impact on 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
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33 (2001)	interview with their consent and in private, such of the children accommodated at the home, their parents and relatives as appears necessary in order to form an opinion of the standard of care provided in the home.(Regulation 33(4)(a)) and Volume 5,statutory guidance, paragraph 3.13).	30/09/2012
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Recommendations

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

- ensure there is written confirmation that all children and staff are given an opportunity to discuss incidents of restraint they have been involved in, witnessed or been affected by, with a relevant adult (NMS 3.17)
- ensure that if a child is absent from the home and their whereabouts are not known, 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 staff have appropriate training if they are required to supervise and facilitate contact (NMS 9.2)
- ensure there is a record kept of the telephone enquires made to referees as part of the selection process.(NMS 16.1)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people develop a positive self-view in this home. This is because they are cared for in a consistent manner and with clear boundaries. Young people are encouraged to take responsibility for their behaviours and through this they develop and mature. Staff help young people to understand the impact their life experiences have on their behaviour and their emotional resilience and young people are helped to make positive changes.

Staff encourage young people to lead healthy lifestyles. One young person said their key worker, 'did me a healthy eating programme....they take me to the gym.' Young people are supported to visit their doctor, dentist and optician. Young people's health plans are monitored to pick up any underlying health matters. Young people significantly reduce their use of drugs and alcohol in this placement. They are actively discouraged from smoking.

Young people are engaged in educational activities and attend regularly. They progress well and their achievements are celebrated. Young people have aspirations for future careers and this is a significant achievement given their starting points.

Young people make a positive contribution to their home. They help with general chores and through this develop a sense of responsibility for their living environment. They are enabled to voice their opinions and views at their house meetings and through individual meetings. Young people know and understand how to make a complaint.

Young people are supported to maintain good quality contact with family and friends in line with their care plans. One young person said, 'staff are concerned about me and are always talking to my parents.' A social worker commented on the positive relationship between staff and parents. Through this young people are able to maintain family links and strengthen their sense of belonging and identity.

Young people are making steady progress in preparing for independence. Their preparation is gradual. For example, preparing and cooking simple meals and keeping their bedrooms reasonably clean and tidy.

Quality of care

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

A young person said the best thing about this home is that the staff, 'look after you well.' Another young person said they, 'got on,' with the staff. Good quality and constructive relationships within the home enable young people to engage positively and develop appropriate behaviours. Their views and feelings are central to the running of the home.

Young people are cared for by a diverse and caring staff team who support and celebrate individuality. Care plans are tailored to the individual young person and focus upon measurable outcomes such as improving educational attendance.

A significant improvement since the last inspection has been the ability of the staff team to engage and maintain young people in educational or college placements. There has been success in accessing short courses and work placements for young people. Because of this young people have personalised learning opportunities that are appropriate to their individual needs. This helps young people to engage and achieve in education.

Young people have access to a range of services that promote their health and welfare. Staff work proactively with these agencies to secure positive outcomes for young people. Because of this young people have made good progress and criminal activity is much reduced. Young people are proud about their reduction in alcohol and drug usage.

Young people live in a large and comfortable home. The home is well decorated and provides enough space for young people to have privacy as well as join in communal activities.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people feel safe in the home and with the staff who look after them. A young person said, 'staff would act' if young people were not safe. Young people are cared for by a staff team who are fully trained in safeguarding and show confidence in implementing the policies and procedures of the organisation. Young people said that bullying was not an issue for them in this placement and were aware that such behaviour would not be permitted.

Young people have significantly reduced the frequency with which they go missing from this home. Staff are alert to triggers that may lead to this behaviour occurring and work with young people to prevent this from happening. Staff act within the procedures of the home to ensure the safety and swift return of young people. There is prompt liaison with the local police. However, the Registered Manager has not ensured that the home's procedures are compatible with the protocols maintained by the local police or the local authority and a recommendation is made about this. The impact of this shortfall is minimal as the communication and procedures in place are effective to safeguard young people.

Positive and proactive behaviour management strategies are applied in a consistent manner. Although sanctions are sometimes used to address poor behaviour, the staff focus upon rewarding positive behaviour. Individual incentive charts are used to good effect. The use of restraint in this home is minimal. When used it is done so by appropriately trained staff and recorded accurately. However, there is no written confirmation that young people and staff are given the opportunity to discuss a restraint after the event. This means the Registered Manager does not have all relevant information to evaluate the consequence of a restraint. A recommendation has been made about this. Young people themselves confirmed that restraint is rarely used and a young person said that when restrained, 'staff deal with you nice.'

Staff working in the children's home are carefully selected and vetted. Staff files are well maintained and recruitment processes are strong. Not all files indicate that telephone enquiries have been made of referees and a recommendation has been made about this. Because the recruitment process is robust the impact of this shortfall is minimal. However, this shortfall means that the home cannot always provide evidence of its good practice.

The home is physically safe with appropriate risk assessments in place to ensure young people are protected from accident or injury.

Leadership and management

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

The home is effectively and efficiently managed by an appropriately qualified Registered Manager. There have been no complaints since the last inspection. All

significant events are notified to the appropriate authorities as is required.

All requirements and recommendations from the last inspection have been met. The Registered Manager is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the home and is working hard to address these. The improved outcomes for young people in terms of their behaviour and engagement in education is evidence of the good progress being made.

The manager and staff receive regular supervision and guidance. Staff confirm they feel supported and say they receive good quality and regular training. This ensures staff have the opportunity to develop their practice to meet young people's needs. To improve practice further a recommendation is made about staff receiving appropriate training in respect of the supervision of family contact.

Monitoring systems to review and assure the quality of care for young people are in place and conducted within the required timescales. Regulation 34 monitoring reports are evaluative and are effective in identifying patterns of behaviour. This enables changes to be made to ensure improved outcomes for young people. The Regulation 33 monitoring reports are basic and not consistently capturing the views of young people and their parents about the quality of care offered. This can restrict the identification of strengths and weaknesses within the home and a requirement about this has been made. The impact of this is minimal because of the effective internal monitoring of the home.

The home is well resourced and staffing levels appropriate. Plans are in place to improve the outside space and make more effective use of the garden area.

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.