

## Inspection report for children's home

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| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC049189        |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 18/07/2013      |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Sarah Oldham    |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | Full            |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>       | Children's home |

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| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 27/02/2013 |
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## Service information

### Brief description of the service

The home provides care and accommodation for up to three young people, who may be experiencing emotional or behavioural difficulties. The home is owned and managed by a private company.

### 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**.

The home provides children and young people with an adequate level of care taking into account the short period of time that they have lived there. Some young people were admitted on a planned basis, whilst others were admitted on an emergency basis. This has impacted on the stability of some of the placements and the home is currently ensuring that there is an appropriate matching process undertaken for any further young people being admitted to the home.

Young people say that they have settled into the home reasonably well and are beginning to build relationships with staff. However, there has been some changes within the staff team with some staff moved to other homes to assist when there is a shortage of staff. This does not always ensure continuity of support for young people and enable them to form positive attachments with staff.

Young people say that they are consulted about the care and support they receive. This is through keyworker sessions, one-to-one support and attending young people's in-house meetings. They are also supported to contribute to their care plan and reviews. This ensures that they are involved in their placement and the overall running of the home.

Individual activities are supported and these are enjoyed by the young people. They have the opportunity to be involved in planning, shopping and preparation of meals and to develop skills for independence.

As a result of this inspection there are a number of requirements and

recommendations made to improve the quality of young people's care. These relate to ensuring that risk assessments are completed in a timely manner and that the home is decorated and maintained to provide a homely environment. As well as ensuring consistency of staffing with appropriate qualifications to meet the needs of young people and that the Statement of Purpose reflects the staff working at the home and their qualifications.

## 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<br>(2001)  | ensure that the Statement of Purpose shall consist of a statement of as to all matters listed in Schedule 1 (Regulation (4)(1))                                                                                                     | 30/09/2013 |
| 25<br>(2001) | ensure that there is at all times, a sufficient number of suitably qualified, competent and experienced person working at the children's home (Regulation 25 (1)(a)(b))                                                             | 30/09/2013 |
| 31<br>(2001) | ensure that all parts of the children's home used by children are of sound construction and kept in good structural repair externally and internally; kept clean and reasonably decorated and maintained. (Regulation 31 (2)(d)(e)) | 16/09/2013 |

### Recommendations

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

- ensure that where any sanctions are used, children are encouraged to have their views recorded in the records kept by the home (NMS 3.18)
- ensure staff actively promote the welfare of children living in the home (this is specifically in relation to developing risk assessments within appropriate timescales) (NMS 4.2)
- ensure that staff members who are placed in charge of the home have substantial relevant experience of working in the home and have successfully completed their probationary period (NMS 17.5)
- ensure continuity of staffing so that children's attachments are not overly disrupted. (NMS 17.8)

### Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **adequate**.

Young people receive an adequate level of care and support to enable them to make some progress from their initial starting point and to begin to increase their self-confidence. They say that they are beginning to settle in at the home and that they are building relationships with some staff members.

Young people are consulted about their care and contribute their views to their individual care plans. They are encouraged to make a contribution to their home and engage in activities within the local community. However, some negative behaviours within the local community has resulted in a complaint being made about the home. This does not ensure that young people contribute effectively at all times, to the community in which they live.

Young people's health care needs are adequately promoted. They are registered with doctors, dentists and opticians and, where required, additional health care professionals, including access to children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS). Exercise and physical activities are encouraged and supported. They have access to a healthy diet but do not always choose to follow this. They also continue to smoke, even though smoking is discouraged. This impacts on their overall health and development.

Young people's educational needs are identified within individual placement plans and personal education plans. Although young people are not in formal education, they are supported on educational trips, activities and are pursuing vocational educational training. This is in accordance with the request made by the placing authority. Due to the short space of time that young people have been at the home and the school holidays, education progress is limited.

Contact is promoted in accordance with agreed individual plans. These plans are adhered to by staff to promote safety and welfare. Young people say that they are happy with these arrangements.

## **Quality of care**

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

Young people have individual placement plans in place. These plans outline the level of care and support that they require and how these will be met. Plans are discussed with young people, their placing authority and, where appropriate parents. These plans are kept under review to enable care to support to continue to meet their individual needs.

Young people say that they 'get on alright' with staff and have settled at the home. However, during the short period of time that the home has been admitting young

people again, there has been some inconsistency of staffing. This impacts on the continuity of care that young people initially received. The home has begun to address this and there is now a core staff team in place. This will enable young people to have consistency of support to enable them to feel secure and promote progress.

Young people are able to discuss their views and contribute to the running of the home through one to one meetings and regular young people's meetings. Where it is not possible to act upon their wishes, staff explain the reasons why and records are maintained of meetings. Young people are consulted on and contribute to their statutory reviews. This enables them to be fully aware of and involved in their future plans. They are aware of how to make a complaint and are confident that any complaint that they make will be responded to appropriately.

All young people are registered with health care professionals, including doctors, dentists and opticians. They are supported to attend health care appointments. Records maintained of these enable staff to have a clear understanding of specific health care needs of young people and how to support them. Where additional specialist health care is required, the home ensures that appropriate referrals and appointments are made. Young people have the opportunity to contribute to the menus and staff encourage young people to have a healthy diet. However, some young people have a history of poor diet and refuse to engage fully with healthy eating. Staff continue to encourage and support them with this.

Young people are supported with their education. However, due to the short timescale following admission of young people to the home and the pending summer holidays, it is not possible to comment on their educational progress. Plans are in place to access vocational educational activities in the near future in accordance with agreed educational strategies and plans.

Activities are encouraged and supported and include using community based resources as well as undertaking activities within the home. Staff encourage and support young people to try a range of activities to give them informed choices about what they can take part in.

The home is good at promoting contact for young people in accordance with agreed contact arrangements. Staff liaise with family and provide support with transport if required. These measures ensure that young people are enabled to maintain their links with family and have a sense of their individual identity and history.

The home is situated within a residential area, with access to local shops and transport links. Some areas of the home are decorated to a comfortable standard. However, some areas require further decoration and furnishings to create a homely environment. This includes décor within one of the young people's bedrooms, the dining area and flooring to the dining room.

## Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people say that they feel safe at the home. There are no issues with bullying but if there were, staff are aware of the signs to look out for and say that they would be proactive in addressing this with both the young person being bullied and the instigator of the bullying.

Staff have undertaken training in child protection and demonstrate an understanding of how to protect young people from abuse. Staff know what to do in the event of a young person missing from care and follow agreed protocols. However, there have been a number of missing from home involving young people placed recently. On some of the occasions, young people have encouraged their peers to leave the home. Therefore placing themselves and others at risk. The manager is reviewing the home's matching and admission procedure to ensure that the risk of this is minimised.

All young people have individual behaviour management plans. These outline the strategies that staff can use to help young people manage their behaviours. Sanctions used are explained to young people and are appropriate. Young people are asked about their views on sanctions but these are not always recorded. Physical interventions are only used as a last resort to promote the safety and well-being of young people. All staff have received appropriate training and clear records are maintained.

Individual risk assessments are in place for all young people to ensure that staff are aware of risks and the appropriate action to take to minimise these. However, some risk assessments are not completed in a timely manner and lack specific detail. This could impact on the initial support provided to the young people.

Recruitment and selection procedures are good. All staff have references checked and any gaps in employment explored. Criminal record checks are completed prior to any staff member commencing duty. These measures demonstrate that the home has taken reasonable steps to ensure that people who are unsuitable to work with vulnerable children are not appointed.

Household risk assessments are in place and regular health and safety checks are completed. These include checks to portable appliances, the building and fire safety. Staff carry out regular fire drills to ensure that the young people know how to safely leave the building in the event of a fire. These measures contribute to the safety of the young people living at the home and the staff working there.

## Leadership and management

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

The home has a Registered Manager who has the necessary qualifications and

experience to provide leadership and support to staff. All staff receive regular supervision and annual appraisals to support them within their role. Staff say that they feel that they are well supported.

The home has been unoccupied for a period of time and has only, within the past three months, had children and young people in placement. Some of the young people were only in placement for a limited time period. Therefore, it is difficult to assess progress and outcomes for young people over a limited period of time.

At the last interim inspection, there were no requirements or recommendations made. A compliance visit was undertaken at the beginning of July following a complaint received by Ofsted in relation to young people's behaviours. As a result of this, a requirement was made to ensure that a record of complaints were maintained and the action undertaken to address the complaint. The home has addressed this.

The staff team at the home have all undertaken an induction period and completed appropriate induction training. However, few staff at the home hold a Level 3 qualification in Caring for Children and Young People and this could impact on the care provided to young people with complex emotional needs. On some occasions, staff left in charge of the home have not had suitable qualifications. To address this, all staff are currently enrolled on Level 3 training and some are due to complete this shortly. Mandatory training is undertaken with clear records outlining the training undertaken. This demonstrates a commitment by the home and staff to undertake training to meet the needs of young people.

Staff demonstrate a commitment to providing appropriate care and support to young people. They endeavour to create positive links within the local community. However, there has been some complaints received regarding the behaviours of young people living at the home. This could impact on how well they can access their local community in a positive manner. The manager and staff have responded to this by meeting with local neighbours, liaising with police, reviewing behaviour management strategies and ensuring that staff have the necessary skills to meet the needs of the young people.

The home meets the aims and objectives of its Statement of Purpose. However, some information regarding the staffing levels at the home is incomplete. This includes information regarding some staff members' qualifications. In addition, the list of current staff includes staff who work at other homes but may work some additional shifts at the home. This does not provide clear information about the home's current staff team. Discussion with young people, placing social workers and information received from parents confirm that they are aware of whom the main staff team at the home are and say that they are confident in the level of care and support provided.

The manager ensures that consultation with placing social workers is held on a regular basis. This enables consistent and joint working to be maximised. The views of placing social workers, independent reviewing officers and parents are gathered on a regular basis and contribute to the overall monitoring of the home.



Independent monitoring of the home is undertaken on a monthly basis and a report provided to the home and Ofsted. This outlines how the home is functioning and identifies any areas for improvement. Along with the managers monthly monitoring, these documents are used to inform the homes development plan.

Young people's records are stored securely to ensure confidentiality.

## 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.