

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Susan Southey / Catherine Ross
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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.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service that exceeds minimum requirements

Satisfactory: a service that only meets minimum requirements

Inadequate: a service that does not meet minimum requirements

Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is run by a local authority and provides care for four young people between the ages of 10 and 17 years with emotional and behavioural difficulties or learning disabilities.

Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be **good**.

The promotion of young people's physical and emotional well-being and healthy diets is good at the home. Staff effectively build young people's self esteem by encouraging them to engage in purposeful leisure activities. A broad range of activities are available and young people are encouraged to develop both new and existing talents. Young people are given praise and support for their achievements by the staff team. Young people confirm that they feel safe in the home.

Young people are supported in education. A dedicated staff team supports young people to make effective use of their education and most young people have positive outcomes. Staff work in partnership with other agencies to ensure young people have the opportunity to access education, training or work placements to meet their individual needs.

Staff ensure that contact with family and those that are important to young people is supported. They are encouraged to have contact in the community and if appropriate family members and friends can visit the home.

Overall, young people make good progress in relation to their starting points across all aspects of their welfare and development, underpinned by effective staff support to meet their individual needs. Areas that require improving relate to records kept, staff training, notification of events to the relevant agencies and employment procedures. Any breaches of regulation 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
21	ensure the registered person makes suitable arrangements for	13/01/2012

(2001)	the recording, handling, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of any medicines received into the children's home. With particular regard to any self-administered medicine being safely self-administered by that child (Regulation 21.3)	
30 (2001)	ensure that if any 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))	20/01/2012
26 (2001)	ensure that the registered person shall not allow a person to whom paragraph (2) applies to work at the children's home unless that person is fit to work at the children's home. This is with particular regard to checking why a person who has previously worked with children or vulnerable adults left their employment. (Regulation 26 (2) (d))	20/01/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure that when any sanctions, disciplinary measures or restraints are used, children are encouraged to have their views recorded in records kept by the home. (NMS 3.18)
- ensure that staff have appropriate training, supervision and support if they are required to supervise and facilitate contact. (NMS 9.2)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people are supported by staff to engage in constructive activities in the home, for example, a garden project enables them to grow their own vegetables. Staff promote a healthy diet for young people encouraging them to eat the produce that they have grown. In addition, this physical activity ensures the young people have regular exercise. This shows creativity in promoting good health by encouraging physical activity whilst undertaking a purposeful task in addition to promoting healthy diets.

Young people are encouraged to develop their existing talents and develop new skills. Creative activities are available from a local community project where young people have made mosaics and paintings displayed in the home. This helps young people to make good progress to develop a positive self-view.

Most young people have good attendance in education and make good use of their opportunities. Young people who are post 16 are encouraged by staff to enrol in education, training or work placements. A supportive staff team celebrate the young

people's achievements. They give praise and encouragement for regular attendance and success. Staff collaborate with other agencies to support young people who are reluctant to enrol at college or on work placements. Other agencies working with young people say that the staff work in partnership with them and provide excellent support for young people.

Staff promote contact between young people and family members well. Provision of transport or funding is given to young people and staff facilitate contact for those young people who need support with arrangements. In addition staff are supportive to young people should issues arise for them following contact visits. Appropriate visits to the home from family members and those that are important to young people are also supported by staff. Regular contact with family members promotes a knowledge and understanding of the young people's background and sense of belonging.

Quality of care

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

Young people have positive experiences at this home. An efficient staff team listen to the young people and offer guidance and support. Young people's communication with staff is positive. They appear relaxed in the company of staff and interact with them well. Young people are encouraged to participate in the preparation of meals and menu planning. This encourages young people to be involved in the running of the home and promotes independence.

Young people are encouraged to give their views, facilitated by staff through young people's meetings and reviews. Requests made by young people are acted upon whenever possible. Young people have participated in holidays and outings and have had musical instruments following requests that they have made.

Young people know how to make a complaint; a welcome pack contains a young person's service user guide. Information given includes the home's complaints procedure and leaflets to access support from independent agencies. This empowers young people should they wish to make a complaint or seek support.

Care plans are in place and updated on a regular basis. One young person confirmed that they are involved in their care planning by completing a young person's survey. A parent also confirmed their involvement in their child's care plan. Care plans and key worker sessions show that young people and those who are significant to them are included in care planning.

Medication administered by staff is dispensed in line with policies and procedures. However, young people are assessed as being competent to self-administer medication but there are no agreements in place to ensure that the young people safely administer the medication or store it appropriately to prevent others from accessing the medication.

Staff encourage young people to attend education or training programmes. They work with other agencies to ensure that young people are given the best opportunities to complete their education. Other professionals respect partnership working with the staff. A college lecturer working with the young people said, 'Communication is very good and the staff are extremely supportive to maintain college placements.' Comments from other professionals working with the young people are also positive, they report that staff work in partnership with them and provide excellent support to encourage young people to reach their full potential.

Young people are offered a range of purposeful and enjoyable activities. Motivated staff support young people to engage in recreational activities of their choice. They are encouraged to build their self-confidence and social skills. Visits to theme parks and camping holidays are available to the young people. They also have the benefit of a snooker table, computers and games consoles situated within the home.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people confirm that they feel safe and protected in the home. They can openly talk about their feelings and worries and feel that staff listen and care about their welfare. Individual risk assessments are in place to help keep young people safe.

Young people's behaviour is mainly positive, staff use de-escalating tactics to calm young people when they are displaying challenging behaviour. Physical interventions are rarely used, and recording of these is appropriate and monitored by the Registered Manager. However, young people's views are not always recorded when disciplinary measures are taken. Therefore records do not evidence that young people are offered the opportunity for discussion or reflection on the incident with staff.

The appropriate recruitment procedures are followed. However, additional checks to verify the reasons for resignation with previous employers where staff have left an employment in which they were 'working with vulnerable adults or children' are not monitored. The impact of this for young people is low but more robust measures would reduce risk, further preventing unsuitable people having the opportunity to harm young people.

Staff are pro-active when there are incidents of bullying. Records show that strategy meetings have been held when young people have been bullied. Young people attend these meetings and have the opportunity to discuss the issues which have caused conflict. They are also made aware that bullying will not be tolerated. In addition the home's development plan has targets for combating bullying. The plan includes annual reviews of the in-house bullying policy which will involve young people. The focus is for staff and young people to develop an understanding and impact of bullying on individuals, and responses to these behaviours. This will promote a reduction in young people suffering bullying incidents.

Leadership and management

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

The Registered Manager demonstrates a capacity for continuing improvement plans. This year young people have the opportunity to be involved with a visiting community art project. Young people have also been involved in the development of a vegetable garden in the grounds. Further plans for improvement are evidenced in the home's annual development plan. Consultation with young people is planned ensuring that their feedback is acknowledged and responded to in a timely way. The plan also includes training for person-centred planning. Staff will improve their care planning skills and monitoring. Young people will also be given more opportunity to give their views on their care plans. Young people will be able to give their view and wishes to staff and significantly influence the delivery of their care.

Previous requirements and recommendations have been acted on with the exception of the recommendation to ensure each child has a clear, accurate written health plan in place which details medication and health requirements. Lack of clear up to date recording of health requirements could result in a young person's health needs not being appropriately met.

The manager actively consults with young people facilitated through young people's meetings and supervision sessions with key workers. The manager ensures that staff have regular supervision. Team meetings are held weekly and a representative from the adolescent mental health team attends monthly offering advice and guidance, supporting staff to offer more individualised therapeutic care to young people.

Staff receive a comprehensive induction programme to meet the needs of the young people. Additional opportunities are available with an ongoing training schedule. The Registered Manager has taken prompt action on new guidance issued by the organisation for safeguarding. Staff are currently undertaking updated child protection training following the publication of the Munro report. This will ensure that they have current knowledge of safeguarding procedures for young people and that they are able to promote the safeguarding of young people.

Staff take appropriate action when serious incidents take place and police involvement is required. Regulations are that Ofsted be notified of these events but not all incidents are reported. However, this does not affect the safety of young people.

Young people have good quality care plans, they are updated and reviewed regularly. Risk assessments for each young person are on file and meet their individual needs. However, supervised contact agreed for a young person moving to the home at the time of inspection lacked planning. No risk assessment or training for staff to undertake supervised contact was in place. The manager is exploring alternative arrangements to ensure protection for young people and staff.

Equality and diversity practice is **satisfactory**.