

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC051513
Inspection date	29/08/2013
Inspector	Judith Longden
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	15/01/2013
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is run by a local authority and provides care for four young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties or learning disabilities.

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 make good progress in all aspects of their welfare and development. They are achieving good outcomes in their education, relationships, independence skills and the development of confidence and self- esteem.

They receive good quality care that is well planned and based on the individual needs of the young person. They are involved in their care and in the running of the home. Young people have positive relationships with staff, behaviour is well managed and continues to improve.

Young people feel safe and are kept safe. Staff have a good understanding of safe working practice. Young people are supported to understand their own risk taking and develop strategies to keep themselves safe.

The management of the home is strong. Staff receive good induction, training and supervision. Staff are involved in reviewing the progress the home has made since the last inspection and identify any areas of weakness to inform the development of the service. There is one breach of regulation in relation to notifying Ofsted of a significant event. This shortfall does not significantly impact negatively on the welfare or safety of 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
30 (2001)	ensure that if, in relation to a children's home, 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))	11/10/2013

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people make good progress in achieving positive outcomes in all areas. Young people's progress is recorded and reviewed with them which further enhances their confidence. Some young people maintain daily diaries where they record their feelings and this enables them to develop a positive self view. One professional said of a young person, 'their outlook on themselves and of life in general has improved since moving into this home.'

Young people generally enjoy good health. They benefit from a healthy diet and variety of food. They contribute to menu planning and are encouraged to try new foods. A variety of leisure activities such as bowling, golf and walking promote active and healthy lifestyles for young people. Staff work hard to help young people understand health risks such as smoking and as a result young people are utilising various methods to reduce or stop smoking. Young people who have previously self-harmed are helped to understand their behaviour and develop strategies to prevent further harm. Some young people engage in offending behaviour which is addressed through discussions with the young people and through good working relationships with the police. This ensures issues are dealt with promptly and young people learn from their behaviour.

Young people enjoy a range of activities in the home and the surrounding area. The home provides a large games room where young people enjoy snooker, pool and a computer. Other activities include trips to the local park, picnics, bowling, theme parks, and camping trips. Young people are encouraged to participate in activities with their family such as go-karting. This has enhanced their relationships with family members as well as providing new and exciting activities for young people to enjoy.

Young people are achieving good attendance and attainment in their educational placements, given their starting points. One young person who had not been

engaged in education due to a number of placement moves has progressed to full time education in a period of six weeks since coming to the home. Their tutor commented, 'they have high attendance levels and increased engagement and have made a good amount of progress in the couple of months that they have been in their new home.' This means young people are achieving their educational potential.

Young people benefit from improved contact arrangements with their parents, family and friends. Staff work hard to strengthen family relationships and support joint activities in the home and community. They communicate well with families and engage them in decision making about their child's care. This has resulted in increased good quality contact and for one young person this has culminated in a return home.

Young people participate in independence programmes tailored to their individual needs. They learn practical skills such as money management, use of public transport and cooking and also learn important life skills such as establishing a network of support. A number of agencies, organisations and further learning programmes are identified to support young people to ensure that transition to independent living is as smooth as possible. This means young people acquire skills and receive care to help them prepare for adulthood.

Quality of care

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

The home has good policies and procedures in place for the admission of young people into the home ensuring young people are made to feel welcome when arriving at the home. Extensive work is undertaken pre-placement, where possible, to ensure the home can provide the care required to meet the needs of individual young people. Young people who are moving on are supported to ensure the transition is well planned and appropriate. An Independent Reviewing Officer stated, 'there is a fantastic support plan in place for the young person moving on, I am so impressed.'

Young people benefit from good care management procedures. Young people are encouraged to complete their own aims and objectives for their placement and to identify how they wish to be cared for on a daily basis. Young people complete their 'listen to me' booklets pre-review so their views and feelings about their care can be presented to their care reviews if they do not wish to attend in person. Daily records provide a reflection of how young people are cared for and the achievements they have made. Young people also make good use of key work sessions to discuss any specific issues relating to their care and the progress they are making towards their goals. This means young people receive good care based on their individual need.

Young people benefit from attending house meetings where they are able to discuss their feelings and progress with staff and request activities and menu choices. As a result young people are able to exert some influence on the day-to-day running of the home. Young people are aware of how to complain and feel supported to do so.

Young people enjoy good relationships with staff who are committed to providing a good service to them. An Independent Reviewing Officer said, 'staff passion for young people comes through, they have the best interests of young people central to their work, I am very reassured that young people are well cared for.'

Young people's health needs and medical history are clearly detailed and action plans identify how best to meet these needs. Young people benefit from support from a variety of health professionals including psychologists and sexual health advisors. Young people are encouraged to make their own appointments and staff support them to attend if required. This means young people receive the services and support they need to meet their holistic health needs. Staff are trained in first aid and the safe administration of medication and this ensures the arrangements for dealing with medication are safe and effective.

Staff encourage young people to take part in a wide range of leisure pursuits and activities in the home and the community. These include healthy pursuits such as walking and bowling as well as planned fun activities such as trips to theme parks. Young people visit places they have not had the opportunity to go to before, such as London. This provides them with new experiences and broadens their understanding about other places. Staff support young people to engage with their peers in activities and this has included organising a fun day event where their families and young people from neighbouring homes were invited to enjoy a range of activities. This supports young people to socialise and make appropriate friendships.

Staff are proactive in supporting educational attendance and achievement. A range of educational opportunities are sourced to ensure each young person benefits from the most appropriate educational package to meet their needs. Young people have access to computers and a quiet space in the home to learn. A social worker said 'the home has provided good structure with education and a range of activities.' As a result, young people are supported to achieve their educational potential.

Young people live in a homely, safe and generally well maintained environment. A number of rooms have recently been decorated and a refurbishment plan is in place to provide en-suite facilities for all the bedrooms and to redecorate the hallway. Young people are involved in the decoration and furnishing of the home. The home is close to local amenities and leisure facilities providing a range of opportunities for young people.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are supported to develop socially acceptable behaviour. Staff implement a positive behaviour management strategy based on a foundation of trusting, positive relationships. Young people say they feel safe because staff are there for them and they are able to talk to staff. Staff are trained in behaviour management and physical intervention. They use a variety of techniques to diffuse

situations and where restraint has been used it is as a last resort and appropriate action has been taken. There have been two physical interventions since the last inspection, these have been thoroughly debriefed and reviewed with staff. This has resulted in different techniques being employed and no further incidents have occurred since these were reviewed.

Staff focus on implementing restorative justice rather than punitive measures. For example, young people were involved in an incident causing mess and some damage to a room, young people discussed various consequences with staff and took part in restorative activities such as cleaning up, wiping down paintwork ready for painting and creating art work for the room. This means young people take responsibility for their own actions and understand the consequences for negative behaviour.

Young people are encouraged to discuss their feelings and any issues they have with living together. Bullying has been an issue and staff have worked hard to address this through key work with individuals and group discussions in house meetings. This means previous incidents of bullying have been dealt with promptly and effectively and young people are reassured that any future incidents will be handled in a similar manner. This means young people have a sense of safety in the home.

The home has good policies and procedures for safeguarding practices in respect of child protection, handling allegations and recruitment. Staff receive good safeguarding training and are clear on their role in the safeguarding process. Young people are protected from unsuitable people gaining employment by a good recruitment process and their involvement in interviewing candidates enhances the selection process. The monitoring of visitors to the home further ensures young people are protected from significant harm.

A range of proportionate risk assessments enable young people to experience new challenges and develop new skills whilst remaining safe. Young people are encouraged to explore issues of risk, boundaries and behaviour through group work and individual work with staff. One parent said, 'staff keep my child safe, there are boundaries and my child is developing their own understanding of things which helps keep them safe.'

Staff are aware of the dangers young people may be exposed to when absent from the home and the safety of vulnerable young people is a high priority. The home has positive relationships with the local police and a detailed missing from care procedure and protocol. Staff work with young people to explain the risks associated with going missing and discuss their absence on their return. This ensures young people are protected as far as possible. One young person, when absent, used to walk long distances in an attempt to calm down. Staff have worked on keeping them safe and discussing other options to this behaviour. This has resulted in the young person now walking in a circle in the immediate location of the home and as a consequence they are kept as safe as possible when they wish to be away from the home.

Fire drills are held and fire alarm systems are checked as required. Any shortfalls in fire drills are discussed with young people to ensure that they understand the

evacuation procedure and are kept safe. One young person who was afraid of the noise of the alarms now undertakes the regular alarm checks with the maintenance person to familiarise themselves with the noise and prevent them panicking during a drill. A range of risk assessments is in place for the building and equipment that identifies hazards and how to control them. All required health and safety checks are carried out in a timely manner. As a result the building is safe and appropriately secure and young people are protected from harm.

Leadership and management

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

Young people live in a home that continues to improve and as a result their care, safety and outcomes have strengthened. A parent said, 'the home and staff create a real family environment, I am always made welcome, my child has made such progress, is kept safe by staff and has good relationships. I have no concerns.'

One requirement is made as a result of this inspection in relation to notification to Ofsted. This does not significantly impact negatively on the safety or welfare of young people.

The home has a Registered Manager who is experienced and qualified and who is supported by a very competent and motivated assistant manager and staff team. All staff are involved in reviewing practice and identifying the strengths and areas for development for the home.

Staff are clear about the objectives of the home and provide a service for young people in line with the home's Statement of Purpose. The home provides each young person with a young person's guide which details the service offered. This ensures young people are clear about the care and service provided. In addition the home provides young people with a welcome pack of information regarding health, rights, activities and policies as well as useful items such as envelopes and writing paper.

Staff have a range of skills, experience and qualifications. The staff rota ensures young people's needs are met through the provision of sufficient staffing. Staffing is increased where required to meet additional needs. Staff receive a good induction into the home and continue to develop their skills and knowledge through the provision of a range of training opportunities. Staff say they receive good quality support from each other and from a strong management team. One member of staff said, 'I felt like part of the team straight away.' Supervision is effective and is held regularly. This ensures the service provided to young people remains of a high quality.

The home has effective procedures for monitoring the quality of the service provided and the welfare of the young people. The registered provider undertakes visits to the home in accordance with regulations and carries out checks to ensure the welfare of young people is monitored. The registered provider consults with young people to identify any areas for development to improve the quality of care provided. The

manager monitors records kept by the home to identify any concerns and provides a review of care to Ofsted as required. As a result young people are consulted about the quality of care they receive and how effectively their needs are met and their welfare and protection is monitored.

There have been a few significant events relating to the welfare of young people in the home. The majority of these have been notified to all agencies, including Ofsted as required and appropriate action taken to prevent future occurrences. However, one event relating to police involvement was not notified to Ofsted. Details of the event and subsequent outcome of no further action are well documented within the home but the failure to notify Ofsted means the regulator has been unable to review the incident at the time it took place.

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.