

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	03/10/2013
Inspector	Peter Harrell
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	09/01/2013
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This home provides care and accommodation for up to five young people who may have emotional or behavioural difficulties. The home is managed by the local authority.

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**.

Overall, the home provides young people with a good quality of care, where they receive support from a committed staff team. Young people enjoy positive relationships with staff.

Good progress is made by young people, in relation to their starting points, this occurs across several aspects of their welfare and development with account taken by staff, of individual and cultural needs. Safeguarding policies and procedures are also effectively implemented by staff who promote young people's safety and their welfare.

Shortfalls are identified which relate to complaints responses and procedures and removal of hazardous materials. Recommendations have been made concerning the physical conditions of the home, lines of accountability and notifications. The Registered Manager is aware of these areas for improvement and is committed to improvement.

The home's strengths are the provision of good quality attentive care to young people. Staff receive regular support from the registered and assistant managers and are helped to carry out their tasks through regular supervision and a detailed programme of relevant training.

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
23 (2001)	ensure that all parts of the home to which children have access are so far as reasonably practicable free from hazards to their health or safety and any hazardous materials are safely stored Regulation 23 (a)	01/11/2013
24 (2001)	ensure that a written record is made of any complaint or representation, the action taken in response and the outcome of any investigation. In addition, record all relevant matters and any learning points within one complete record. Also that complaints known from advocacy services external to the home are promptly addressed and the outcome recorded. (Regulation 5).	31/12/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the home provides a comfortable environment and is well maintained and decorated (NMS 10.3)
- ensure that managers and staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities. The level of delegation and responsibility of the manager and staff, and the lines of accountability are clearly defined. (NMS 21.4)
- a collated written record is kept which includes details of the action taken and the outcome of any action or investigation, following a notifiable event. (24.2).

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people are supported to develop worthwhile practical and personal self-care and daily living skills appropriate to their age and understanding. Measurable outcomes are achieved in these areas, with young people becoming more self-sufficient. As a consequence, young people grow in confidence, and become more secure in their identity.

The home's high level of staffing. helps young people to settle and progress well. Interaction between staff and young people is positive. A childcare professional, who provided feedback for this inspection, commented; ' I do feel that my young person

can now feel a level of belonging in the home. The outcomes for this young person are most definitely improved'.

The home has put in place a range of activities for young people. The home supports young people to pursue their own leisure interests and this develops their skills and builds their confidence within the community.

The educational needs of young people are well supported and positive outcomes are achieved in relation to their learning, taking into account starting points. Attendance and participation at college and school have increased. This is achieved through active encouragement, together with well-established routines and consistent messages of support.

Young people are making good progress in the home, learning practical and associated self-care skills which prepare them for independent living. Comprehensive and individual independence plans are in place for young people. They are enthusiastic about the range of activities available to them and the support they receive. This enables young people to be more able to develop the skills necessary to achieve an increased level of independence and prepares them to move successfully into independent living.

Relationships of significance are maintained by young people, who are supported and encouraged to make telephone calls and visits. Young people benefit from extra emotional support by staff at these times.

Quality of care

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

Young people benefit from living in a nurturing and supportive environment. This is a key strength of this children's home. The consequence is that young people progress well, taking account of their starting points, in many aspects of their lives. Social workers are positive about support provided to young people and comment: 'The home is absolutely fantastic, I am kept well informed and staff go the extra mile, like outreach work when a young person leaves'.

The established, experienced and stable staff team which is mixed in gender and ethnicity further enhances the care the young people receive. Young people are also actively encouraged to express their views and opinions through regular key work sessions and residents meetings.

There are policies and procedures in place to look at any concerns and complaints; these are outlined in the young person's guide. Young people confirm that they know how to raise matters of concern. However, a complaint raised by young people with an advocacy service, was referred to in the staff team meeting minutes in a negative manner and it was not mentioned at the beginning of the inspection or logged in the complaints book. The lack of a robust system for reflecting on matters raised and managing and monitoring complaints, detracts from the home's commitment to

improving the quality of care provided to young people.

Staff at the home promote health matters and healthy lifestyles. Young people are encouraged to make appropriate choices in relation to food. Support is available for young people to attend appointments with health professionals and to obtain relevant advice. They have access to suitable, preventative medical treatment whenever this is needed. Procedures for the secure disposal of medication are in place, together with correct administration.

Young people live in a caring, welcoming and relaxed environment, with large communal spaces. The home's location and design is suitable for its function. The manager has taken action to have improvements made to the home, but some communal areas need some redecoration and broken items of furniture need replacing. These matters take away the worth of the homely feel which staff at the home attempt to maintain.

Young people are provided with their own bedrooms which are personalised to their individual tastes. This, together with sufficient bath, shower and toilet facilities, meets the individual needs of young people. The doors to these facilities are fitted with locks which are suitable to promote the dignity and privacy of young people.

Recently some young people successfully moved on to living semi-independently. There is good support and preparation for this transition to adult life, including outreach work for a period of time when young people leave.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Managers at the home are knowledgeable regarding safeguarding policies and procedures. Young people report that they are safe and feel safe, they are further protected by the use of detailed and individualised risk assessments. All young people say that there are people they can talk to if they have any concerns.

The home has an appropriate procedure for the use of physical intervention. In order that young people are managed safely, should any incidents take place, staff and the managers find supportive strategies to deal with behavioural issues. For example, receiving training updates on behaviour management. As a consequence of this, there has been a reduction in the frequency and duration of physical restraints since the last inspection.

The Registered Manager has put in place procedures in the employment of new staff which follow the local authority's safer recruitment practices. There has been an audit of all staff files with a detailed checklist put into place in all files, which are securely held in the home. Since the last inspection, two new members of staff have been appointed following the closure of another nearby local authority home. Correct checks and references on these people are completed. These safer recruitment practices make sure there is a more robust approach to preventing unsuitable people

being recruited to work at the home.

Young people have guidance regarding what action they should take in the event of a fire at the home. Records confirm that alarm systems are tested regularly and procedures are in place to ensure the correct maintenance of equipment and installations. Risk assessments are used to identify and reduce hazards around the building, grounds and activities. However, industrial cleaning material was left in the unlocked communal and accessible toilet, instead of being kept in a locked cupboard away from young people. Even though these materials were removed at the time of the inspection, this matter had the potential to impact negatively on young people's safety.

Young people benefit from comprehensive risk assessments and sufficient staffing ratios which minimise the risk of incidences of them going missing. Staff are clear about how to act should young person not return to the children's home. The home has clear protocols and regular dialogue with the local police. This ensures that there is a prompt response if a young person's whereabouts is not known.

Leadership and management

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

Young people experience good care from a team of staff who want them to do well. Staff are supported in this aim by the registered and assistant managers who ensure that there is a clear commitment to improve further, all young people's outcomes.

Established checks are in place for monitoring how the home is run, which include managers checks linked to team development and action plans. In order to make sure that scrutiny of the home is effective, registered provider visits happen regularly, as required, several of which are also unannounced. The children's home meets the objectives that are set out in its Statement of Purpose. Young people receive information on the home in a guide which is accessible and allows them to have a clear understanding of what to expect from the home.

Recently, a decision was made that the minutes of staff team meetings are recorded by an administrator. This unusual stance raises trust issues which exist between management and staff at the home, and demonstrates a previous lack of clarity regarding the distinct areas and responsibilities of staff and the children's home's management.

At the last inspection, one recommendation was made. Young people are now recording and signing their individual key working sessions and young people are also reading and signing their views during house meetings.

There have been eight notifications since the last inspection, one of which was a child protection incident. All relevant agencies were notified promptly and the incident was managed appropriately. However, additional record entries and conclusions of this and several other incidents are located in different places in the

homes paper and electronic records. A centrally held place which details all the actions following these matters would ensure a clearer overview of these important statutory records.

Young people are helped to understand their progress and achievements with regular sessions with keyworkers.

There are sufficient numbers of staff present to deliver care and attend to administrative tasks. This ensures the young people can regularly meet with, and feel supported by adults working in the home.

Young people benefit from being cared for by staff members who are supported in their work through regular supervision, training opportunities and access to Registered, assistant managers and senior managers in the local authority who oversee the home's progress.

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.