

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	10/10/2012
Inspector	Stephen Graham
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	13/12/2011
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is run by a private company and provides care and accommodation for up to five young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties, or learning disabilities, or mental disorders.

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 living at the home receive very good encouragement and support from the staff team to discuss their individual care needs and to be involved in planning how these needs can be met. The support and advice they receive regarding their personal health care needs is also good. They are encouraged to participate regularly in a broad range of healthy leisure activities in their local community. They are supported to practice their self-care skills. They receive good support and advice to help them attend their education and employment regularly. The home is decorated and furnished to a good standard. It provides a very safe and comfortable environment for the young people who live there.

Young people feel safe living at the home and the staff team give them appropriate advice and support to help keep them safe. The home is generally well led and managed. There are good arrangements to plan and implement further improvements to the service. There are some shortfalls within the monitoring records and other records available at the home. However, these shortfalls have had only a limited impact on the good quality care that young people receive overall from the staff team and manager.

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
17A (2001)	ensure that a written record is made within 24 hours of any measure of control, restraint or discipline used at the home, which includes all required information (Regulation 17A(3)(h))	30/11/2012
33 (2001)	ensure that visits to monitor the conduct of the home take place at least once a month and report on all matters required. (Regulation 33 (3) & (4) (b))	30/11/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the written procedure for considering and responding to complaints are followed on each occasion (NMS 21.10)
- ensure that visits to monitor the conduct of the home report on all matters recommended. (NMS 21.7)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

The outcomes achieved by the young people who live at the home are good. They discuss their personal care plans with the staff team very regularly. This ensures that the care they receive while living at the home meets their individual needs. One young person describes how the staff team are 'easy to get on with'. Another describes how in their experience the 'staff do good'. The staff team ensure that the individual achievements of each young person living at the home are clearly documented and celebrated. Social care professionals linked to the home believe strongly that equality and diversity are central to the work the staff team undertake with the young people who live there.

The staff team work well with social care work professionals and parents and carers where possible to achieve good outcomes for young people. One social care professional describes how the home 'offers a very individual programme of care for each young person.' Another describes staff as 'proactive' with regard to information sharing and describes how social workers are kept 'in the loop' by the staff at the home.

Young people living at the home enjoy a healthy and active lifestyle. They participate in a good range of activities within their local community. The staff team have access to a range of specialist advice which they encourage young people to use to help them achieve and maintain good health outcomes. Social care professionals agree

strongly that young people living at the home enjoy access to appropriate health care services. Young people confirm that the staff team look after them if they are ever unwell.

Young people enjoy good outcomes in their education and additional employment opportunities. The staff team develop good links with local education providers and employers and work very effectively to improve educational and employment outcomes for young people living at the home. Social care professionals with links to the home believe that the learning of young people is supported by the care they receive. There are good arrangements in place to support young people to practise and develop their self-care skills. Young people feel that the staff team help them to learn how to look after themselves and help them to prepare for their independence.

Quality of care

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

Young people living at the home receive good care and support from the care staff team at the home. Care plans are monitored regularly by the manager and staff team. This helps to ensure that the individual needs of each young person are known and addressed positively in their individual care arrangements.

Young people know about their placement plans and can help to write them. They describe the time spent with their key workers and the care and support they receive at the home as being 'good' or 'very good'. Social care professionals with links to the home describe the service provided to young people overall as 'good' or 'excellent'. Regular meetings are organised to review the effectiveness of care plans. Young people are encouraged to participate fully in these meetings. They can contribute their views personally or in writing. Staff team members also attend these meetings and provide very detailed reports regarding the progress being made by each young person. One social care professional commended the quality of the written reports prepared and provided by staff at the home in advance of these meetings. They also commended the quality of the supplementary verbal information provided by staff at the meeting itself.

The staff team at the home have detailed admission procedures which they use very effectively to admit young people safely. Introductory visits to the home are organised to help young people to settle in quickly. The home is well furnished and decorated and meets the needs of the young people who live there. Each young person has their own bedroom and there are sufficient bathroom facilities. One young person highlights both their bedroom and the area that the home is located in as being some of the best things about living there. The location of the home provides young people with good access to a broad range of local community facilities.

Young people are encouraged to eat well and to enjoy a healthy diet. They are regularly involved in menu planning and food preparation. The home has a dedicated cook and the food provided includes a range of healthy choices and examples of food

from a variety of cultures. To further ensure that the health needs of young people are met, staff team members are given training in safe food hygiene, first aid and the safe administration of medication.

The staff team work hard to promote and sustain very positive and constructive relationships with each young person living at the home. Each young person has an agreed plan in place. These plans are used by the staff team to help manage the behaviours of young people very positively and effectively. Young people are encouraged and supported to give their views and be involved in the overall running of the home. Social care professionals, parents and carers are also asked what they think about the service and how it might improve. One social care professional commends the 'excellent communication' they enjoy with the staff team at the home.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

The home has good arrangements in place to help safeguard young people. The staff team receive training to help them protect young people from abuse and have access to agreed safeguarding procedures and guidance. Young people receive good advice to help them understand how they can protect themselves. Young people confirm that they feel safe living at the home. Detailed care plans are completed by the manager and staff team in partnership with young people and their placing social workers. These plans identify risks and protective factors for each young person clearly. They are monitored and reviewed very regularly to ensure that they remain effective in helping to keep young people safe.

The staff team use the agreed procedures in place to help ensure that where young people have gone missing from the home, they have been found and kept safe, as quickly as possible. The staff team are trained to use physical restraint where this is necessary to keep young people safe. Positively, the use of restraint at the home has reduced. However, the records maintained where it has been used have not always been completed fully or monitored clearly. There are a range of agreed sanctions and incentives in place which the staff team can use to promote and support the positive behaviour of young people. Overall, the relationships between the staff team and the young people who live at the home are very positive. Young people themselves are encouraged and take positive responsibility for their own behaviour.

The manager and staff team work to ensure that the home provides a safe and comfortable environment to the young people who live there. Regular health and safety checks are completed to help minimise any risks to young people. The staff team know what to do in any emergency and they practice this very regularly with young people. Arrangements are in place to complete checks on new staff team members to ensure they are suitable to work with children. Any visitors to the home are supervised by staff to help ensure that children are kept safe when they are present.

Leadership and management

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

The overall arrangements in place to lead, manage and monitor the quality of the service provided at the home are adequate. The manager creates reports regarding the quality of care provided to young people. They work effectively with the staff team and young people themselves to plan and implement further improvements to the service. Social care professionals with links to the home believe strongly that improving outcomes for children is the clear priority of the manager and staff team. The home has a written procedure for considering and responding to complaints. However, the outcome of each complaint is not always clearly recorded in the records maintained for that purpose. The home has a Statement of Purpose in place which accurately describes the service provided. Young people receive their own summary guide to the home which is well presented and contains some good information.

The staff team working at the home includes some very experienced staff team members. The manager arranges additional training opportunities. This helps the staff team to further develop and maintain the knowledge and skills they require to care for young people successfully. The manager ensures that the staff team receive appropriate supervision. They monitor the daily staffing levels at the home to help ensure that young people receive the care and support they need. Overall, the home maintains very good relationships with the local community and their neighbours.

Independent monitoring visits to the home are completed on behalf of the registered provider. However, these visits do not take place at the frequency required or report on all required and recommended matters. For example any complaints received at the home or any restraints or sanctions applied to young people by staff.

There were no recommendations made or actions raised at the previous inspection visit.

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.