

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	20/06/2013
Inspector	Dennis Bradley
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	24/01/2013
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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 **adequate**.

Overall this home provides a satisfactory quality of care. Staff endeavour to promote improved outcomes for young people. However, some young people regularly engage in risky behaviours that place their welfare at risk.

Young people receive good, personalised support from staff and benefit from having individual care plans. They receive support and encouragement from staff to attend and engage positively in their education. Some of the young people make progress in their education and attainment. However, when young people decide not to engage in their education the routine of the home is not organised in such a way as to encourage their participation.

Staff have built positive relationships with young people whose behaviour, at times, can be very challenging. They actively seek, and take into account young people's wishes and feelings about how they should be cared for. Overall young people are positive about the care and support they receive and make satisfactory progress in their placements.

The management team works hard to try to ensure the home is managed efficiently and effectively. There are satisfactory arrangements for monitoring the home and the quality of care provided to the young people.

One requirement and six recommendations for improvement have been made as a result of this inspection. These relate to young people's activities and education, recording risk assessments and implementing the home's policies and procedures.

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
18 (2001)	ensure the routine of the home is organised so as to further young people's participation in education. (Regulation 18(1)(b))	04/09/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure young people's safety and welfare is promoted, in particular ensure young people's risk assessments are comprehensive and up to date (NMS 4.1)
- ensure young people take part in age appropriate activities within the home (NMS 7.5)
- ensure staff know and implement the local authority's policy in relation to children going missing and their role in implementing that policy. Ensure the home's procedures are compatible with the procedures of the local authority (NMS 5.2 and 5.4)
- ensure staff are equipped with the skills required to meet the needs of the young people, in particular ensure staff receive fire instruction at the frequency specified in the home's fire log (NMS18.1)
- ensure all the staff and young people who have witnessed an incident where a young person has been restrained by staff, or been involved in any way, have the opportunity to be debriefed about the incident to inform the strategy needed to prevent any recurrence (Volume 5, statutory guidance, paragraph 2.102.)
- ensure that, during visits carried out under Regulation 33, the person carrying out the visits speaks in private with the parents or relatives of young people living at the home. (NMS 21.7)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **adequate**.

Young people receive support from staff to be healthy and stay healthy. They have

access to a range of health services to promote their well-being. Staff also provide guidance on keeping safe and being healthy, such as advice on the dangers of smoking and illicit drug use. However, some young people choose not to take the advice and continue to put their health at risk by, for example, smoking.

Since the last full inspection, the attendance and achievement of young people in education has been variable. Some young people make satisfactory progress, taking into account their starting point when they moved into the home. However, sometimes young people do not always receive appropriate support and encouragement to engage in their education. For example, some young people who choose not to participate in their education have been able to spend their time during normal school hours watching DVD's or playing computer games. This does not help provide them with the incentive to participate in their education.

Young people have the opportunity to participate in activities which help them acquire skills that they will need when they leave care, such as, preparing and cooking meals and using public transport. Some young people make satisfactory progress in this regard.

Young people also receive support and engage in positive activities within the local community, such as swimming and going to the gym. Young people are also able to take part in a range of activities within the home, but some have also been allowed to watch age inappropriate DVD's and play on age inappropriate computer games. The manager said these young people are only allowed to do this in their own bedrooms and only with the permission of their parents. However, allowing young people to have access to age inappropriate DVD's and computer games may have a detrimental effect on them. There was also evidence that, on at least one occasion, some of this material had been left in the communal areas of the home and could have been accessed by other young people.

Young people receive appropriate support and guidance about how to stop engaging in risk-taking behaviours, such as going missing. But some choose to continue engaging in such behaviours and resulting in significant concerns about their safety and welfare.

Most young people benefit from appropriate contact with family members and friends and staff actively support this. This enables young people to maintain links with people who are important to them and, for some, facilitates their move back home.

Quality of care

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

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Safeguarding children and young people

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

Staff try hard to protect young people's welfare by implementing the home's safeguarding procedures, risk assessments and reporting procedures. However, the risk assessment for one young person does not address all their risky behaviours. Also, the risk assessment for another young person had not been updated to reflect growing concerns about the risks to them when out in the local community. The lack of accurate and comprehensive risk assessments fails to minimise the risks to young people.

Staff understand their roles and responsibilities in keeping young people safe and

take appropriate action to safeguard young people. Most young people said they felt safe living at the home. Professionals agreed that staff understand how to protect young people and safeguard their welfare. Staff receive regular safeguarding training which helps them do this.

It is a key part of the home's ethos that any bullying is unacceptable. Young people said staff deal well with bullying if it happens.

Staff endeavour to minimise the risk to young people when they go missing or fail to return to the home at the agreed time. For example, they try to actively monitor the whereabouts and behaviour of young people who are at risk of going missing. They also try to help young people understand the risks to their safety and welfare. However, staff do not fully implement the local authority's missing from care procedures. Although they notify the police and the young person's placing authority, they do not notify the local authority in which the home is located when a young person is missing. Young people's welfare is therefore not fully safeguarded. The frequency young people go missing has not always reduced over their time at the home.

Staff follow detailed behaviour management plans and risk assessments to help them manage the behaviours displayed by some young people. Positive behaviour is promoted by staff and they agree individual targets and rewards with young people. Staff rarely use sanctions and there have been no sanctions given to young people for over a year. Staff only use physical restraint on young people as a last resort. There have been a number of incidents in the last few months where staff have used physical restraint. Records demonstrate it was used to protect young people injuring themselves or others. However, the records do not demonstrate that staff involved in these incidents were given the opportunity to be debriefed afterwards. The manager said they would have this opportunity in their formal supervision sessions. However, this could be weeks after the occurrence of the incident and too late to inform strategies developed to prevent any recurrence.

The provider has appropriate recruitment and selection procedures which help make sure only suitable people are employed to care for the young people. Young people live in a home that is, overall, safe and secure. However, the arrangements for providing staff with regular fire instruction are not satisfactory. The home's procedures recommend staff receive fire instruction every three months but some staff had not received any for almost a year. Providing staff with regular fire instruction helps to make sure young people are protected from the risk of fire.

Leadership and management

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

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.