

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Chris Scully
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home provides care for four young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is one of four owned and managed by a limited company.

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 are provided with highly personalised care which effectively meets their personal preferences and their individual and diverse needs. Young people's opinions, wishes and feelings are valued and are central to the planning and organisation of the home. They confidently put forward their views, for example, about how to celebrate their birthday and activities they want to take part in. They benefit from very positive relationships with staff, which are built upon honesty and trust. Young people say staff are, 'brilliant.'

Young people's needs are met through personalised care planning. This means they are able to make good progress across all aspects of their welfare and development. This is supported by staff's innate understanding of each young person's diverse needs. The Registered Manager and staff are proactive in their responses to the ever changing needs of young people. This ensures they continue to receive the help, guidance and support they need on a daily basis.

Young people are safe and feel safe. This is because of the effective safeguarding and missing from care procedures that are implemented as well as the health and safety checks implemented within the home. Young people are confident to talk to staff and others about any concerns they may have and know that these will be taken seriously.

The home is well managed and is appropriately monitored; although, shortfalls in some records and documentation have not been identified through monitoring; for example shortfalls in the Statement of Purpose, the young people's guide, the

medication records and the health care plans. Young people live in a warm homely environment though some areas are showing signs of wear.

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 (2001)	ensure there are suitable arrangement for the recording, handling, safekeeping and safe administration of any medication received into the children's home in particular any medication prescribed is administered as prescribed and a written record is kept of the administration of medication (Regulation 21 (1) (2) (a) (b))	27/06/2013
20 (2001)	promote and protect the physical emotional and mental health of the children accommodated in particular each young person has an up-to-date health care plan. (Regulation 20(1))	27/06/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure the aims and objectives of the Statement of Purpose show how the service will meet the outcomes for young people; in particular include information regarding the numbers of children to be cared for and ensure the young person's guide reflects current practice (NMS 13.3)
- ensure the use of key pads on bedroom doors does not detract from the homely environment or lead to an institutional feel (NMS 10.4)
- ensure the home is well maintained and decorated in particular the bannister rail on the top floor and décor in hallways (NMS 10.3)
- ensure there are systems in place to monitor the quality and adequacy of record keeping and take action, where needed; with particular reference to, the sanctions records, risk assessments and the missing from care risk assessments. (NMS 22.1)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people have a positive view of themselves and are developing an understanding of their background and family ties. They show increasing maturity and are more able to deal with difficult situations in a constructive manner. Young people have strong links with their families and friends and enjoy the opportunities to see them on a regular basis. Social workers are highly complementary about staff, with regards to their commitment in helping young people sustain positive family ties and the inclusion of family members on activities.

Contact arrangements are managed very well and take into account each young person's individual needs. This means young people are able to build and sustain positive relationships with those people who are important to them. Young people talk fondly about the home's pet dog and how she is always there for them when they come home.

Young people have an understanding of their own health care needs and are generally fit and well. Young people say staff look after them when they are ill and make sure they get the right medical attention. Young people are aware of where to seek additional support if they need it. They talk proudly and with increasing maturity about how their use of recreational drugs has significantly reduced since residing here.

Young people are very aware of the support agencies available to them and have undertaken courses to improve their understanding of their sexual health. Staff say this has enabled them to be more open with them and they take responsibility for keeping themselves and others safe.

Young people enjoy a wide range of healthy home cooked meals and snacks. They talk enthusiastically about the food staff prepared at Christmas in particular the chocolate roulade; they also talk about the barbecues which they say are 'always fun'. Young people talk honestly about how they feel fitter and healthier as they are eating better and exercising a lot more. This is a massive achievement for some young people.

Young people's attendance at educational placements is at this time varied. Some attend daily and are extremely proud of their achievements. They talk confidently about their upcoming roles in several stage productions and how they see their future in the performing arts. Others have undertaken interviews for college placements, while some are considering their future options. A young person said how pleased they were to receive and subsequently spend their first wages. This has significantly fostered the young person's self-esteem as they spent this wisely and talk about how future wages can be utilised.

Young people are growing in confidence and are developing skills for life. This includes shopping, doing their laundry, preparing meals and travelling independently. They are able to make decisions about their lives and influence what happens in the future. They are involved in decisions about the home, such as the décor in the bedrooms. Young people are effectively prepared for independence at a rate that is appropriate to their age and level of understanding. This helps prepare them for a

successful transition into adult life. Individual needs are assessed and addressed in a way that promotes young people's dignity and privacy.

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy positive and constructive relationships with staff. They are confident to talk to staff about everyday events and any issues that may be concerning them. Young people's individual well-being is central to practice. Staff see young people in a positive and realistic light. Staff work with young people in an understanding, compassionate way, providing individual support and reassurance. Young people say the staff are there for them and that, 'they are sound...really good.' Social workers comment that staff always go the extra mile for young people and are helping them to 'turn their lives around.'

Young people enjoy spending time with staff. They talk enthusiastically about going to the pictures, go-karting and shopping with them as they always 'have a laugh.' Young people are increasing in confidence and self-esteem, which is evident from their ability to play practical jokes on visitors; for example, in relation to how old they will be on their forthcoming birthday.

Young people's views are actively sought. They feel valued and respected as staff listen to them and take their views seriously. This openness means staff are responsive to young people's changing needs. Young people are aware of the systems in place should they wish to make a complaint. Key working sessions provide effective one-to-one support and opportunities to discuss things privately with staff. Young people are aware that it may not always be possible to act upon their wishes.

Young people are provided with good care and support because placement plans are well written. These cover individual needs, background, culture, ethnicity and the personality of each young person. Staff ensure they have all the required information for young people who are new to the home. However, health care plans are not robust, because on-going conditions are not always reflected in them. The recording of medication is not robust. Medication recording sheets do not always show the correct times for medication to be administered and, on occasion, entries do not clearly show each time a young person refuses their medication. The effects of these oversights are minimised because of staff's knowledge and understanding of each young person's health care needs.

Young people live in a healthy environment which promotes their physical health and emotional well-being. They are fully supported to develop healthier lifestyles. Young people are registered with health care professionals and have a good understanding of how to seek additional support or advice. Young people take more responsibility for their own health as they are encouraged, where appropriate, to self-administer their own medication.

Staff continue to have high aspirations for young people. They work consistently and in partnership with educational establishments, for example attending parents' evenings and meetings. This means they are fully aware of young people's progress. Staff are proactive in helping young people overcome barriers to their learning, such as issues with engagement. This means young people are more able to engage in educative programmes.

Young people live in a comfortable, homely family house in a residential neighbourhood. The house is generally decorated and furnished to a good standard. Young people are very pleased that they are able personalise their own rooms, which clearly reflect their individuality. However, some areas of the home, such as hallways appeared 'tired' and the bannister on the top landing is not secure. Additionally, the recent introduction of key pads on young people's bedroom doors detract from the homely environment staff are creating.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are safeguarded because of staff's secure understanding of the home's safeguarding and child protection procedures. This means they are clear about the action to take should they have any concerns about a young person. Staff are committed to preserving the confidentiality, dignity and privacy of young people. Positive relationships with social workers mean staff are fully aware of any issues which may impact upon young people's safety or well-being. This enables them to take appropriate action to support each young person.

Young people occasionally go missing from the home. Staff are very aware of the young people's vulnerabilities and potential triggers for being missing. Detailed risk assessments are in place should this occur; however, these have not been updated to reflect recent events. Staff work effectively with police, family members and other agencies to try and locate young people. They contact young people via mobile telephones and encourage them to return. Staff are proactive in contacting young people's known associates and go looking for them to try and locate them. Hence, young people return home quickly and safely. Young people admit to going missing and say they do try to keep in touch with staff. Social workers are complimentary about the support provided to young people when they go missing. They say, for some, this has meant a dramatic decline in the incidents of being missing.

Young people know what standards of behaviour are expected and the possible consequences of poor behaviour. Staff are positive role models for the young people and are very good at encouraging positive behaviour by providing high levels of praise and encouragement. Consequently, sanctions are rarely used as young people are able to consider their own behaviours and the impact these have on others.

Sanctions are generally well recorded, but on one occasion this was not entered into the record. All information pertaining to the incident was recorded in other documentation. This was an oversight and was quickly rectified. The levels of

rewards for positive behaviour far outweigh any sanctions. Young people have meaningful objectives such as securing a new bedroom and are working proactively with staff to secure this.

Staff carry out regular health and safety checks to ensure the premises are safe and young people know what to do in case of an emergency. The recruitment and selection of people working at the home is thorough to make sure young people are protected. The provider carefully ensures that staff have the skills and competencies to meet the needs of individual young people. The vetting of visitors to the home is robust and ensures the safety and well-being of young people.

Leadership and management

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

The home is managed by a committed, qualified and competent Registered Manager. The home has an appropriate development plan in place, which includes an agenda for improvements. This demonstrates the home's commitment and capacity for on-going improvement and the plan shows how this will improve the outcomes for young people.

Staff are very supportive of the Registered Manager and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They say that the Registered Manager is always available to talk to and their positive attitude means any issues are quickly resolved. Staff are well supported on an individual basis and receive regular one-to-one professional supervision. This enables them to reflect upon their own practice and identify their future developmental needs. The manager has taken positive action to address the recommendation raised at the last inspection. This included updating the Statement of Purpose with information about the home's dog.

The Statement of Purpose and young person's guide are shared with young people, their families and placing authorities. These are generally well written, helpful documents which provide a clear picture of the home's aims and objectives. This means placing authorities, young people and their families are well aware of the care and support young people can expect to receive. However, these have not been updated following the recent increase to the registered numbers and do not show the age range of young people to be cared for.

Young people are cared for by a team of staff who have a range of skills and experience. This enables staff to provide good support to the young people. The staff team reflects young people's cultural backgrounds and provides both positive male and female role models. All staff hold a recognised qualification. Staff are able to maintain their knowledge and skills and meet young people's needs because a training development plan is in place. This outlines when refresher training, such as first aid, autism awareness and child protection, is required.

Records and documentation are usually well maintained and provide insight into children and young people's time in the home. The home is generally appropriately

monitored on a monthly basis by the Registered Manager and a representative of the company. However, the systems for monitoring records are not robust and have not identified the shortfalls from this inspection with regards to the recording of medication, young people's risk assessments and the sanctions record. These are recording issues and the effects of these on young people are minimised because of staff's knowledge understanding of each young person's diverse and specific needs. There are appropriate systems in place to notify Ofsted of any significant issues with regards to the children and young people.

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.