

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC062013
Inspector	Elaine Clare
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	After Care (N W) Limited
Registered person address	31-33 Hoghton Street SOUTHPORT Merseyside PR9 0NS
Responsible individual	Timothy Arthur Blundell
Registered manager	POST VACANT / Ian Wilson
Date of last inspection	30/01/2014

Inspection date	02/07/2014
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Previous inspection	satisfactory progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	adequate
Outcomes for children and young people	adequate
Quality of care	adequate
Keeping children and young people safe	adequate
Leadership and management	adequate

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	adequate
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The level of care provided to young people is adequate. There are some shortfalls and as a result there are three requirements made. Staffing consistency is poor and as a result relationships between agency staff and the young people are fractured. Young people don't like waking up not knowing who is working downstairs. This causes anxiety for young people and in turn a reluctance to start their day positively. A requirement has been made around the sleeping arrangements for staff should the home be fully occupied with three young people. This results in the sleeping member of staff having to sleep in the dining room. Furthermore the office is a cupboard under the stairs and this does not make effective working conditions. A final requirement has been made about consultation with people who may have contact with the home and the young people but may not necessarily work there. These include parents and carers or education staff.

There are also been two recommendations made. These are relation to the homes' vehicles which are badly damaged and the shared space of the staff bedroom and dining room.

Despite the above shortfalls there are some positive features in the home. In particular, there has been some creative work around children going missing and as a result, instances of young people going missing are reducing, making young

people safer. Outcomes are variable in relation to education but young people are now accessing education for some of the day and there are some good examples of improvements in this area.

Young people are listened to and have a voice in this home. The views of young people are established and integral to their care and the running of the home generally. The care planning process is individual, with young people always being at the centre. Young people's contacts and relationships with relatives and friends are improved because of the support that they receive from staff in this area. This assists young people to reflect on their own personal situation and to make sense of what's happened in their life. Also young people are fully able to reflect on their life in the home and to celebrate their success. They are encouraged to keep photographs and keepsakes so that they can remember their time at the home in later life.

Full report

Information about this children's home

A private organisation operates this children's home. It is registered to care for up to 3 young people, of both genders. The home cares for young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/01/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
03/06/2013	Full	good
06/11/2012	Full	adequate
19/06/2012	Interim	not judged

What does the children's home need to do to improve further?

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
25 (2001)	ensure that the employment of any persons on a temporary basis at the children's home will not prevent children from receiving such continuity of care as is reasonable to meet their needs (Regulation 25 (2))	30/07/2014
31 (2001)	ensure that the location, physical design and layout are suitable for the purpose of achieving the aims and objectives set out in the home's statement of purpose; with particular regard to sleeping arrangements for staff and office requirements (Regulation 31(1))	30/07/2014
33	ensure the independent person, when carrying out	30/07/2014

(2001)	a visit shall interview, with their consent and in private, such of the children accommodated there, their parents, relatives and persons working at the children home as appears necessary to form an opinion (Regulation 33(8)(a))	
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Recommendations

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

- provide a comfortable and homely environment that is well maintained and decorated; with particular reference to the home's vehicles (NMS 10.3)
- ensure bedrooms are not shared between children and staff or adult visitors; regards to the communal dining room also being used as a staff bedroom (NMS10.14)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **adequate**

Effective links are maintained with education establishments and these promote and support young people's attendance and progress. Staff have a good understanding of what young people's educational needs are. However young people who have been frequently missing, have therefore not attended education until very recently. Whilst efforts have been made to ensure that young people are as engaged as they can be in education and the young people are now attending part of their school day, their missing episodes have impacted negatively on their progress and attendance at school.

Young people are in good health. They have appropriate contact with medical professionals and attend regular appointments with doctors, dentists and opticians to ensure that they stay healthy. In addition, emotional wellbeing is considered. Some young people who have previously refused to access mental health services, have attend an appointment at the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and the organisations own counselling service. As a result, some young people are being supported successfully for the first time with emotional wellbeing issues. Also there are opportunities for young people to explore their own identity. With the support of the staff, they are able to reflect on their background and their life at the home through discussion and photographs, that allows young people to reflect on their backgrounds and their life at the home.

Young people's contacts with their family and friends have improved and this has assisted them in developing important relationships which could help them both now and in the future. Young people have progressed to overnight stays with parents. Staff are very aware of the sensitivities for some young people around contacts. They know when young people need additional support in relation to their contact and relationship issues and this support assists young people and their families to make progress with relationships.

Young people benefit from opportunities to develop practical knowledge and life skills during their stay at the home. This supports the development of their independence and helps them become more self-reliant and responsible. Such skills include self-care, shopping, preparing meals and banking. Continuous guidance and help, which is tailored to individual needs, promotes young people's confidence and self-esteem and effectively supports their preparation for independence.

Quality of care **adequate**

Young people make some progress with their behaviour and staff try to make sure that they provide a consistent approach. However, there are times when behaviour is not effectively managed. The home does not have a full complement of staff and as a result relief or agency staff are sometimes used and staff also work alone at times. The combination of lone working and use of relief staff results in young people not wanting to engage with staff they do not know and as a result choose to disengage. Despite this, there are clearly some very good relationships between staff and young people and young people confirm that they like the regular staff and feel well supported by them. Young people's behaviour is disruptive at times. There are instances of disruptive behaviour which has resulted in some damage to the home and the home's vehicle. This has also led to a recent complaint from neighbours.

Staff are good at promoting and improving contacts for young people, they are responsive and look for opportunities for improvements. Young people are listened to and staff understand how hard it can be for some young people to come to terms with their family situation. As a result, young people are well supported and relationships with people important to them are developed.

Young people sometimes access the local community facilities. There are times when staff work hard to find opportunities so that young people are able to try new experiences and find out what their interests and talents are. However, staff are not always pro-active in engaging with young people. For example, where young people have been missing, but are now in the home more frequently, there is a delay in organising young people's activities. This does not ensure that they are as engaged as they could be in a short time and could also lead to opportunities for development being missed.

Young people are fully involved in discussions about their care. Their views are actively sought in a variety of ways, giving them choices about how their individual needs are met and in relation to the running of the home. For example, they have regular informal support from staff, individual work sessions, and young people's meetings. As a result, young people feel listened to and changes are made because of this consultation. For example, changes have been made to contact arrangements and there is new equipment in the home as a result of listening to young people.

Care planning is effective and based on individual needs. This promotes diversity in the home. Each young person is valued by staff as an individual and for their attributes and personality. Staff listen to young people's views about their own life. For example, their family backgrounds, their identity, culture, preferred routines, and likes and dislikes. This helps staff to understand the needs and difficulties that young people face. Staff are very familiar with the care planning arrangements, which work well to ensure that all young people's needs are met. The documentation is very effective in capturing the young people's developing needs, progress and difficulties they face.

The home's locality provides good access to a range of local amenities, services and

transport links. Each young person has their own room which they like. They are able to personalise their room with their own belongings and a choice of décor and soft furnishings. They are able to keep their possessions safe. The layout of the home is not suited to the needs of the young people however The home can accommodate three young people, and when this arises staff members have to sleep on a sofa bed in the dining room. The arrangement is not conducive to a satisfactory night's sleep or to the well-being of staff. There are no effective office facilities and staff use a cupboard office arrangements are impractical as they are currently a cupboard under the stairs for this purpose. This results in staff working on paperwork in the kitchen which is not practical and makes it more likely that highly confidential paperwork will be seen by young people.

The homes vehicles are damaged and dented. One car has a cracked window screen, while another has a slow puncture. Young people don't like travelling around in them as they are embarrassed about their condition.

Keeping children and young people safe adequate

Young people feel safe in the home. Individual plans contribute to keeping young people safe; these include risk assessments that help to inform staff of risks for individuals. These risk assessments set out what staff must do to protect young people. The risk assessments are detailed, understood by staff and therefore work to reduce risks.

Where young people have been frequently missing, this has now started to reduce. Staff have been pro-active in ensuring that they inform the relevant professionals on each occasion they are missing, despite the frequency and regularity. In addition, staff have followed clear procedures in the home to keep trying to find and keep in touch with young people.

Young people are successful at making changes to their behaviour. This is because incentives, praise and reward feature highly in the behaviour management plans in the home. Young people feel this helps them to make progress. Few sanctions are given and there have been no physical interventions, showing that this would be a very last resort.

Whilst staff are good at promoting some areas of safety, staff training with regard to safeguarding, first aid and behaviour management is unclear. With the constant movement of staff it is difficult to see which staff are trained and if the training is up-to-date. However, in practice staff are trained in these areas. In addition, staff are aware of the important and complex, safety and welfare information about individuals, which promotes the safety of young people.

The home has some health and safety arrangements in place which work well. For example there are risk assessments for young people which are of a reasonable

quality and help to protect individuals. In addition, the arrangements for the checking of fire equipment in the home and regular fire drills ensure that equipment is in good working order and that young people, staff and visitors know what to do in the event of a fire.

Arrangements are in place to complete checks on any new staff members to ensure they are suitable to work with young people. The manager ensures that no new member of staff starts work in the home until all the necessary checks are completed and they are satisfied.

Leadership and management

adequate

There is currently a new acting manager in post who has recently taken over from the previous Registered Manager. The organisation has continued to keep Ofsted well informed about the changing management arrangements and Ofsted have now received an application for the acting manager to become registered.

The new manager has already impacted positively on the running of the home. There is a development plan. He has a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the home and demonstrates an enthusiasm for improvement. The young people feel supported by him. In addition, staff and senior managers all comment positively on his performance to date.

The new manager already has plans in place to improve the quality of care and management. In particular, he plans to involve young people more in quality assurance, and to make improvements to staff training. He hopes that this will improve staff knowledge and practice further.

The three requirements from the last inspection have all been met. The Statement of Purpose has been updated, and the Regulation 33 reports are sent into Ofsted in a timely manner. The organisation has appointed a manager. One of the two recommendations has been met and records are now more accurate and kept up to date. A further recommendation concerning staff consistency has not been met and has now been made a requirement.

The staffing levels in the main ensure that young people's needs are adequately met and ensure their safety. Staff follow a lone working policy which assists in keeping young people and staff members safe during the day and night. Teamwork is good and thorough handovers ensure that staff are working with the most up-to-date information about the emerging young people's needs. This helps to provide consistency so young people know what is expected of them and can make progress, however the home is sometimes staffed by members who are still on their probationary period. As a result sometimes young people's needs are not being met as staff don't have the experience to manage them.

Staff training is adequate but it is difficult for the manager to know which training courses have been completed by which staff and when their refreshers are due. This could impact on young people because there is the potential for staff not to be up-to-date in their knowledge about young people's welfare or safety. However, a picture of staff training in the home was established for the purposes of inspection. This demonstrated that staff hold the required training certificates and qualifications to meet the young people's needs.

Monitoring of the home is generally suitable. There are regular announced visits from the independent visitor to monitor the quality of care and monitoring is also undertaken by the manager. The monitoring systems of the service are starting to be more evaluative but this is work in progress. The regulation 33 visitor does not currently consult with people outside of the home to ascertain their views on the care of the home. For example neither parents nor the education placement have been contacted.

Records are maintained and securely stored and young people's case files reflect their development and progress. The home is managed and operated in line with its Statement of Purpose. This ensures that staff and placing social workers are clear about the aims and objectives of the home. A young people's welcome guide informs young people about what they can expect from the home so that they can themselves measure the care that is delivered.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
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.

Information 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 framework of inspection for children's homes.