

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC062248
Inspection date	27/07/2011
Inspector	Chris Scully
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	18/03/2011
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2011

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

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.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service that exceeds minimum requirements

Satisfactory: a service that only meets minimum requirements

Inadequate: a service that does not meet minimum requirements

Service information

Brief description of the service

The home offers care and accommodation for up to four young people, between the ages of 10 and 17 years old with emotional or behavioural difficulties. The home is one of several own by a private company.

Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be **good**.

This is a good home with outstanding features. The main strength of the home is its ability to provide highly personalised, well planned, exceptional care to young people. The staff and Registered Manager have young people's needs at the heart of everything that they do. This results in young people making excellent progress in many aspects of their lives. Staff provide a stable, secure and caring environment in which young people thrive and are able develop to their full potential.

The home is effectively managed and most records and documentation are appropriately maintained. However, there are some shortfalls in the recording of restraints and young people's information from the placing authority. Staff receive regular training, however, the training records are not up to date. Staff say they receive good support from the manager and have regular one-to-one supervision sessions. Systems for the Registered Manager's supervision are not as effective. These issues have resulted in one statutory requirement and four recommendations being raised.

Young people say the home is more like a family and that they feel safe here. Young people enjoy extremely positive relationships. They get on well with staff and say, 'they know how to handle me and I'm listened to when I have something to say'. They know that staff listen to them and value their opinions. Young people's views are intrinsic to the care provided. They have excellent opportunities to speak at their reviews and contribute to their care plans. Young people are consulted on all aspects of the home such as the décor and future activities. Social workers are complimentary about the staff and the support they provide to young people. They feel this has enabled young people to make significant progress in some areas, such as their behaviour and educational achievements.

Areas for improvementStatutory 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 within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, restraint or discipline a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose and includes the name of the child, a description of the measure used and the duration of the restraint. (Regulation 17a, (3) (a) (c) (4) (a))	16/08/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure there are systems in place to ensure all outstanding documentation in particular young people's placement plan are sourced (NMS 25.8)
- ensure all young people and staff have practiced the emergency escape plan in particular new young people and a record of fire drills is accurately recorded (NMS 10.9)
- ensure there is an up-to-date record of all training undertaken by staff (NMS 1.2)
- ensure suitable arrangements exist for the regular professional supervision of the Registered Manager. (NMS 19.3)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people truly benefit from highly individualised support which helps them grow in confidence. Young people are making excellent progress in developing positive and realistic views of themselves and their emotional resilience. Exemplary acknowledgement by staff of the diverse needs of the young people including race, religious and cultural differences, actively encourages young people to discuss these issues. Young people have excellent opportunities to meet with others who share their religious beliefs and cultural heritage which effectively supports their sense of identity. Young people enjoy strong trusting relationships with staff. They say, 'I get along with the staff, so much like a family', and 'we get supported, we don't get judged it's just a really good home'.

Young people enjoy healthy lifestyles. They are all actively involved in a range of activities which effectively promote their ongoing fitness such as rock climbing, swimming, horse riding and going to the gym. Young people have very positive attitudes towards healthy eating. They relish the opportunities to cook and demonstrate high levels of skill when preparing meals. They confidently give instructions to staff to ensure that they do not spoil their food when the young person leaves the kitchen for a short time. Young people comment that 'it is ok, as I

trust them'. Young people's dietary needs are embraced by staff. Staff go shopping with young people at various multicultural markets to ensure the correct spices and foods are sourced. Young people are exceptionally proud of their cooking skills and say that 'food is my passion, but it has to look good as well as taste good!'. They cook with enthusiasm for one another and encourage others to try new foods such as chillies.

Young people have an excellent understanding of their own health needs. Young people are registered with appropriate health care professionals. They knowledgeably explain how they are protecting themselves with regards to their sexual health. Young people are very aware of the support services available to them and how to access these. They explain how they feel they are doing well with regards to giving up smoking and feel well supported by the staff. Young people are able to make well informed choices about their health. This is because they receive excellent guidance and support from staff on a wide range of health related issues, such as maintaining a healthy weight and alcohol abuse.

Young people are making excellent progress with their education. Their attendance at school is very good and young people are expected to do well in their exams. Young people say that 'education is not so bad'. Young people's attainment and progress at school is fantastic. They are very proud of their personal achievements, such as the certificates and awards they have received from school. Many of which are displayed with pride around the home. Young people are able to consider their future career paths, such as applying for colleges and have excellent support from staff to achieve this. Reports from school clearly demonstrate the excellent progress young people are making. Young people are ecstatic at the prospect of moving to mainstream school and feel that this is a very positive move for them.

Young people benefit from suitable contact with friends and families. This enables them to sustain positive relationships with those who are important to them. Young people are really pleased that friends from school are able to visit them at home. Staff effectively facilitates contact visits. This means young people are able to maintain appropriate relationships with others while maintaining their safety and well-being. Staff are very aware that contact can be stressful for young people and make sure they are effectively and sensitively supported. This enables young people to make informed choices about who they wish to see and when they wish to return to the home.

Young people are being well prepared to become independent and make a smooth transition to adult life. They are routinely involved in the running of the home including doing the cooking, shopping and managing money. Young people say they get lots of support from staff who have helped them to organise their semi-independent arrangements. Staff help young people to consider other things they may need to pay for, such as gas bills and how to budget for these. Young people say they are looking forward to having their own flat and are confident that they will be able to look after themselves and have the skills to do this.

Quality of care

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

Young people are cared for by highly motivated, caring and committed staff who have young people at the heart of everything they do. As a result young people are thriving in a warm, stable environment. Young people say 'I don't want to move; this is my family, the best place ever'. Young people's views are echoed by a social worker who say that staff regularly go above and beyond what is expected of them. Social workers have noticed a vast improvement in the young people since they have moved into the home and comment upon the young people's wish to remain here. Young people are respectful and generally courteous to staff and others. Young people are aware that some banter can be seen as insulting to one another and with staffs' guidance and support are successfully modifying this.

Young people's views are actively sought and are valued highly by staff. As a result young people are extremely involved in the running of the home and organisation of activities. Young people are confident to speak at their reviews and are fully aware that if they choose not to, staff will speak on their behalf. Young people know consideration is given to their requests, such as their desire to remain at this home and have excellent support from advocates to support them in this. Staff are proactive in providing clear explanations as to why a young person's request may not be acted upon, such as the implications upon their safety. Young people rarely use the complaints system as they know they can talk to the staff about any issues that are concerning them. On the rare occasion when a complaint is made, young people are confident that staff will resolve this for them.

The home's individualised, comprehensive planning means young people's needs are exceptionally well met. Young people benefit from clearly defined objectives which outline what young people and staff are working towards, such as preparing for adulthood. Staff's consistently high aspirations for young people means they are making excellent progress in all aspects of their lives. Staff are highly committed to helping young people overcome any difficulties they may have, as a result young people are able to lead happy and fulfilling lives.

Young people live in a healthy environment where their physical and emotional well-being is exceptionally well supported. Young people's health is of paramount importance to staff. Staff ensure young people's health needs are identified on admission and is effectively supported by staff. Excellent relationships with other professionals such as the children and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) means young people receive the care and support that they need.

Young people are making very good progress in relation to their educational starting points. Staff are extremely proud of young people's achievements and have consistently high aspirations for them. Young people enjoy the opportunities to ask questions and solve problems in a creative environment. Young people are engaged in a wide range of activities of their choice and know that staff support them in sourcing new activities such as vocal coaching lessons. Young people enjoy the opportunities to attend multicultural festivals in the community and experiencing the

music and food from around the world. Young people are looking forward to their forthcoming holiday and the activities they have planned. Others who have chosen not to go on holiday are eagerly planning other activities with staff.

Young people live in a comfortable family house in a rural location which is close to local transport links. The home is clean and generally well maintained. Young people's art work adorns the walls around the house and they are very pleased with the décor of their rooms, which they have chosen for themselves. Young people have a very big say in how the home is decorated and say 'it's our home and we want it to look good'. Young people are able to relax in the extensive grounds and look forward to having barbeques with the staff.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people live in a safe environment where they are protected from harm. This is because staff have a secure understanding of the home's safeguarding procedures and are able to effectively implement these if required. Young people's safety is a priority for staff. Young people are provided with good advice regarding their own personal safety both in the home and when in the community. Staff liaise well with placing authorities to ensure they are aware of any incidents which may affect young people's safety.

Young people are safe due to staffs' in-depth knowledge of their individual needs and circumstances. Young people say 'since I have been in the home I feel safer than in any of the others'. Comprehensive risk assessments are carefully balanced with the need to protect young people and for them to be independent and develop an understanding of taking safe risks. This means young people are able to meet with their friends and travel unaccompanied on public transport.

Young people occasionally go missing. When they do they usually return quickly and are welcomed home by staff. Staff and young people are very aware of the dangers young people may place themselves under should they go missing, such as sexual exploitation. Staff clearly understand the reasons behind these episodes and are able to identify some triggers which may pre-empt a young person going missing. As a result these events are on a steady decline.

Young people's behaviour is generally very good. Young people say, 'I know what the house rules are, I just don't stick to them'. There is minimal use of restraint in the home and all incidents are recorded. However, the record does not contain all the required information such as type and duration of the restraint. The recently introduced changes in behaviour management are having a positive effect upon young people. This is evident from the reduction in the amount of sanctions imposed. This combined with the effective rewards system is having a positive effect upon young people's behaviour. Young people know that staff are there to help them and are willing to listen to them and help them resolve their issues.

Young people live in a warm, homely environment that is physically safe. The home has established structures and procedures in place to maintain safe practices and fulfil their safety obligations. Fire drills are generally carried out on a regular basis. However, staff have not conducted a fire drill since the last young person was accommodated. This may impact upon their ability to evacuate safely in an emergency. The home is generally well maintained, although the issues within the bathroom detract from the homely environment staff are creating. These issues are in the process of being addressed.

Clear recruitment and vetting procedures mean young people are cared for by suitably qualified, experienced and vetted staff. All visitors to the home are required to produce a form of identification and to sign in the visitor's book. As a result young people are protected from potential harm.

Leadership and management

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

Young people live in a home that is effectively managed in their best interests. The home meets the aims and objectives of its Statement of Purpose and young people, their families and social workers are clear about the services and support provided. Young people enjoy many positive outcomes due to the commitment of the Registered Manager and staff. The Registered Manager and staff demonstrate a strong commitment to delivering exceptional care to young people, which is tailored to their specific needs.

Monitoring of the home is appropriate. Recommendations and actions from the previous inspection have been appropriately addressed and have enhanced the safety and well-being of young people. One recommendation in relation to the Registered Manager's supervision has not been fully met and has been re-issued. Clear reporting procedures for regulation 34 reports provide an audit trail and the action taken to address any identified shortfalls, such as young people not signing the sanctions and pocket money records.

Regulation 33 reports identify shortfalls and the action to take to resolve these, such as missing documentation from the placing authority. Staff have taken action to source this documentation on several occasions but have yet to receive it. This may impact upon their ability to fully meet this young persons needs. The home has a development plan which provides objectives for the home for the next year. The home's other written records are generally well maintained and contribute to the understanding of the lives of young people residing in the home.

There is an appropriate training matrix in place for the forthcoming year. However, staff training records are not up to date, therefore it is unclear as to ascertain if all of their mandatory training is current. Staff say they have good access to training courses and are supported well by senior managers. Regular opportunities for one-to-one supervision mean staff are aware of current good practice and are able to reflect upon their own practice. However, the systems for the Registered Manager's

supervision are not as effective. Regular team meetings effectively enable staff to meet and discuss the young people's progress and ways of working. This provides a consistent approach when working with young people.

There are sufficient staff on duty of each gender to effectively support the young people. This means young people are able to engage in their chosen activities with appropriate support from staff.

Equality and diversity practice is outstanding.

Equality and diversity practice is **outstanding**.