

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	29/08/2013
Inspector	Susan Southey
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Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	15/01/2013
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home provides care and accommodation for up to four young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties. The service includes an independent school in the grounds of the home. The home is privately owned alongside two other services. One of the other services provides semi-independent facilities for young people preparing to leave care.

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**.

The home has met all requirements and recommendations made at the last inspection. These concerned the supervision of staff. Staff receive regular supervision and say that they are well supported.

There are development plans in place to promote further improvements. The Registered manager has been pro-active, making positive changes outlined in the improvement plan. This demonstrates that the Registered Manager has the ability to make continued improvements to the service. All staff receive on-going training to support their competence. They have not received specific training to conduct supervised contact. However, this is managed well by competent staff.

All young people have made progress in education since their starting point. Those who are reaching the end of their statutory education are taking exams. Young people also learn a range of skills that support independence when they move onto adulthood.

Young people have their health needs met exceptionally well and learn to take responsibility for their own well-being.

Young people stay safe in the home and say that they feel safe. There are some shortfalls in regard to physical interventions and maintenance of the building.

However, staff have a good knowledge of safe working practices and the safety of young people in this home is satisfactory.

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
17 (2001)	ensure, subject to paragraph (2) that a measure of restraint may only be used on a child accommodated in a children's home for the purpose of preventing injury to any child (including the child that is being restrained) and property (Regulation 17A (1) (a) (b))	30/09/2013
23 (2001)	ensure that all parts of the home to which children access are as far as reasonably practicable free from hazards to their health and safety. With particular regard to ensuring damaged items are repaired in a timely manner. (Regulation 23 (a))	30/09/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure that staff have appropriate training if they are required to supervise and facilitate contact. (NMS 9.2)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

All young people make progress in education from their starting point. Young people who have previously not engaged in education attend school regularly. They work towards recognised qualifications; with some predicted to achieve exceptional grades. Young people have also enrolled on vocational courses at college. This supports their participation in advanced learning.

Young people have positive contact visits from family members, agreed by social workers. This promotes their sense of belonging and understanding of their background. Staff support this contact, providing supervision when required. Family contact takes place both in the home and local community. Staff have not received specific training to assist with this service provision. However, they manage contact

supervision well, and young people experience successful family visits. This enables young people to spend time with persons that are important in their lives.

Young people are active in the local community. They give their time to support local businesses. Some young people who have an interest in animals work voluntarily at local stables, caring for horses. This demonstrates young people spend their time productively, and effectively contribute to the local community. Other young people regularly attend work placements which gives them practical experience in their chosen career. Young people at this home demonstrate they are willing to support others, and show ability to successfully integrate in the community.

Young people learn to be self-reliant; making good progress in preparation for adulthood. They achieve this by successfully completing modules set out in comprehensive pathway plans. Young people learn essential skills to support independence. They gain competence in many areas that promote independence, for example budgeting, independent travel, house maintenance and knowledge of community resources. This promotes smooth transitions for young people as they move to independent living.

Quality of care

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

Young people have their views heard through young people's meetings. Staff listen to them and wherever possible meet their requests. Young people also have opportunities through key worker sessions to discuss their individual needs. This promotes their participation in running the home. One example where young people make choices, is choosing their own décor for bedrooms. This enables them to have their private space decorated to reflect their own identities.

Young people with different interests are able to select activities of their choice, funded by their leisure allowance. They are able to use positive reward systems to pursue their interests; for example earning rewards to purchase jodhpurs and riding boots. This encourages young people to spend their free time productively and encourages their participation.

Young people are cared for in line with person centred care plans that clearly identify their needs. These plans are comprehensive, and unique to each child; promoting individualised care. Staff efficiently execute the plans, which support on-going improvements in all areas of young people's development. Young people actively participate in care planning processes. They set themselves targets, and identify the support they will need to achieve their desired goals. Staff effectively use regular key worker sessions to assist young people to reach their personal targets. This is successful as young people meet their desired aims. Examples of this are losing weight and getting fit. This promotes enhanced self-esteem and advances young people's development.

Young people know how to make complaints and feel able to do so. Information is

readily available on notice boards and in the young person's guide. The Registered Manager takes young people concerns seriously. Investigations take place and young people receive responses when enquiries into their complaint are complete. Correct procedures are consistently followed, in line with the homes complaints policy. This demonstrates that the Registered Manager deals with complaints efficiently.

Young people have their health needs met well, and regularly attend routine health appointments. Staff support young people to maintain good health, encouraging them to make healthy choices. They achieve this by providing young people with information to make appropriate choices. This promotes their physical well-being. Additionally, staff encourage young people to take responsibility for their own health needs. Staff achieve this, effectively using key sessions. These forums are used to explore health issues. Examples of this positive practice include supporting young people with existing medical conditions to understand and manage their condition appropriately. The constructive advice given by committed staff educates young people to manage long term conditions effectively. Young people in this home are encouraged to be active and staff promote their engagement in a wide range of physical activities, including horse riding and ball games. This supports young people to gain enhanced fitness through participation in enjoyable activities.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

The home environment is kept reasonably safe. There are a range of environmental risk assessments in place to support risk management in the house. Generally, damaged items that may pose risks to young people are rectified in a timely manner. There are rare cases where delays take place in replacing broken items. However, maintenance of the home is generally appropriate, to ensure the safety of young people.

Young people take part in regular fire drills to support their safe evacuation in the event of a fire. Safety equipment is in place and is checked regularly by designated staff. This ensures that it is in working order if an incident takes place.

All staff have received updated child protection training and demonstrate that they have a sound knowledge of child protection procedures. This shows that they are competent and have the ability to keep young people safe.

The home has a zero tolerance on bullying and provides a book for young people to log if they have been victims of harassment. Any incidents that have taken place are discussed at young people's meetings. This promotes openness in discussing bullying incidents and prevents escalation of potential bullying should incidents take place.

Most young people generally respond well to positive incentives that promote enhanced positive behaviour. Young people are able to earn rewards for good conduct. However, for a minority of young people physical interventions have increased since the last inspection. All actions are appropriate when initial

interventions are undertaken. Nevertheless, occasionally when young people begin to calm, and are not presenting behaviour that poses immediate threat to self, others or property minimal intervention is used. Although young people are not at risk this action restricts young people's free movement. The Registered Manager has effectively monitored the use of physical intervention and has amended some behaviour management plans. This has proven effective, as there has been a significant decline in the use of physical interventions for all young people since plans were amended.

There have been no incidents of young people going missing since the last inspection. However, staff advise local police of the individual risks associated with young people should they go missing. This information sharing takes place when young people arrive at the home. Each young person has a profile with a current photograph to enable swift transfer of information should young people leave the home and their whereabouts is unknown. Protocols in place which follow the local constabulary missing from home protocols. Therefore, appropriate procedures are in place to promote the safe return of young people should they go missing.

Leadership and management

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

The manager registered with Ofsted in February this year and has demonstrated that she is working to make on-going improvements to the service. There are development plans in place to enhance the service provision. Many of the actions planned are complete, including re-decoration of the vacant bedroom. This has been painted in neutral colours appropriate for new admissions of either sex. Although young people choose their own décor, they have a pleasant room when they arrive which they can personalise when they settle in placement. There have been improvements in the education facility. During the holidays, the service has installed internet access in the school computers. These are accessible for all young people in both school time and when they finish daily education. This supports them with homework and research outside school hours. This demonstrates that the Registered Manager and senior management are working to make changes that support improved care provision for young people.

Staff say that they are well supported by the Registered Manager. They have regular team meetings and daily handover sessions provide staff with forums to discuss young people's care provision. This positive practice enables staff to gain support from the manager and their colleagues. Furthermore, regular formal supervision takes place for all staff. This meets a requirement made at the last inspection.

Staff receive on-going training to support their professional development. All staff employed in excess of six months have completed or are working towards achieving the level 3 Children & Young People's Workforce Diploma. Furthermore, staff are provided with regular on-going training to increase their knowledge to promote enhanced proficiency.

Regular monitoring of the home takes place, with monthly inspections by an independent visitor. The quality of these reports has recently improved with a new format that provides a more comprehensive written report following the monitoring visit. Furthermore, the Registered Manager undertakes regular internal monitoring of the home. Actions raised are dealt with effectively to enhance the service. The manager also seeks the views of families and professionals with quality assurance surveys. Recent responses have been positive, one social worker rated the home outstanding in all areas and a parent praised the home saying her child had made more improvement than she ever imagined. This shows that professionals and family members value the care provision given to young people in this home.

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.