

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Sonya Robinson
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Date of last inspection	05/03/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The service, run by a private organisation, is registered to care for up to four young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties and or learning disabilities.

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 cared for in a warm and nurturing environment with clear boundaries. As a result, they have obtained good outcomes and are making very good progress in relation to their starting points across all aspects of their welfare and development. For some young people, this progress is extremely good and this view is shared by external professionals.

Staff are aware of the individual needs of the young people and young people are all positive about the quality of the care that they receive. That care is enhanced by a strong commitment by staff to principles of equality and diversity.

Young people and professionals report a strong sense of safety in this home. Staff demonstrate a good working knowledge about safeguarding. They work sensitively with young people to help them to understand and encourage socially acceptable behaviour. This helps to prepare young people for adulthood.

Management arrangements are good and this creates an environment where young people are able to make positive changes. Managers effectively tackle weaknesses with a view to securing improvement. However, this inspection has identified several minor shortfalls. These relate to the documentation regarding: restraint; further staff completing a childcare qualification and having an up-to-date appraisal; Ofsted being consistently notified of any significant events; and the Statement of Purpose and young people's guide has omissions and minor inaccuracies. These shortfalls have not impacted on the good outcomes achieved by the young people in this home.

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
17B (2001)	ensure that where a measure of restraint is used on a child the record must include details of any method used to avoid the need of that measure (Regulation 17B (4)(b))	31/12/2012
5 (2001)	update and revise the Statement of Purpose and the children's guide (Regulation 5)	31/12/2012
30 (2001)	ensure a system is in place to notify without delay all authorities listed in schedule 5 of significant events. (Regulation 30 (1))	31/12/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure that all staff have their performance individually and formally appraised at least annually and this appraisal takes into account any views of children the service is providing for (NMS 19.6)
- ensure that all existing care staff have attained a minimum level 3 qualification. This was previously the National Vocational Qualification in Caring for Children and Young People and from September 2010 is the Children and Young People's Workforce Diploma. (NMS 18.5)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people are enabled to develop good self-esteem, emotional resilience and knowledge and there are opportunities to develop an understanding of their background. Young people benefit from detailed placement plans that clearly link to direct work undertaken by staff. This means young people benefit from a high standard of individualised care and support.

Young people benefit from access to a range of agencies and services to meet their assessed needs. They are supported and encouraged to attend health appointments and all medical checks are up to date. Each young person has a detailed health plan; these offer a comprehensive outline of individual needs. Staff provide good role

models to young people. In doing so, staff ensure that young people understand the importance of maintaining good health. Young people also enjoy healthy eating and lead a healthy life style. Currently, young people do not engage in risk taking behaviours such as smoking or substance misuse.

Young people's educational achievements are good, taking into account both their attainment and progress from their starting point at the time of placement. Young people attend school and staff maintain close links with the schools to ensure that they are kept fully up to date with any developments. This provides consistency to the young people and aids in their preparation for adulthood and life chances.

Young people participate in a range of activities within the community in which they live to enable them to form friendships and pursue their social interests, such as attending Christian based youth clubs and playing football. The home also provides access to a range of activities to develop young people's interests and promote their self-esteem. Young people enjoy positive contact with families where appropriate, to sustain their relationships with their immediate and extended families, they are supported by staff and professionals when required.

Young people make an active contribution to routine matters within their care plans and the overall running of the home. This means that young people are aware of their plans and can give their views. They also benefit from regular house meetings and give feedback about the quality of their care experience; as a result of this house rules have been established along with menus changes and agreed daily routines.

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy very 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 views are actively sought with regards to them and the running of the home. Young people feel valued as staff listen to them and take their views seriously, such as what relationships are important to them. This openness enables staff to be responsive to the young people's needs.

There is plenty of friendly interaction between young people and staff. Staff are positive role models who use effective communication skills to enhance young people's awareness of socially acceptable behaviours. This means young people are generally polite and respectful towards staff and others. Young people currently placed have not gone missing from care since the last inspection and the home reports a very positive relationship with the police. Social workers also comment upon the young people's improved behaviour and describe staff as 'very caring and professional in their approach.'

Key working sessions provide effective one-to-one support and time to discuss things privately with staff. Young people are aware that it may not always be possible to act

upon their wishes. Staff are honest in their discussions with them and help them understand the reasons why. Young people are aware of who they can talk to if they have any concerns or wish to make a complaint and do so as issues arise with confidence knowing that they will be addressed by staff.

Young people feel valued and respected as individuals. This is because of the well-written, personalised placement plans which clearly identify their individual and diverse needs. Young people are aware of their content, as they have a say in their creation. Young people are confident to attend their review and to put forward their wishes and feelings. Social workers and independent reviewing officers are pleased with the progress young people are making. They comment that 'the level of care is to me the highest quality' and 'observing the staff at the home, I feel that they have excellent conflict resolution skills and very rarely have to resort to restraint.'

Staff have high aspirations for young people's educational achievement and work with school to help young people achieve that best that they can. This means that young people are making good progress in terms of their starting points. The home's morning routines effectively support young people. Staff ensure young people are up, ready and have everything they need for that day. Young people are provided with a choice of activities, such as outdoor pursuits of which there are many photographs showing much fun and laughter.

Young people's emotional health needs are well supported and young people access mental health services where appropriate to promote their emotional well-being. Young people are becoming more confident and able to talk about their feelings and reflect upon past experiences. This has led to a decline in behavioural outbursts and risk taking behaviours. The systems for the administration and storage of medication are robust and health care plans provide clear insight into the young people's health needs and the systems to support their independence.

Young people live in a warm, welcoming, homely environment that meets their needs. Young people's bedrooms are personalised to reflect their interests and individual tastes. The home is decorated and maintained to a good standard. The rear garden is maintained and provides a comfortable area for relaxation, activities and space to grow fruit and vegetables.

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 effectively protected from harm, exploitation and bullying. They have a sense of safety and say that they feel safe at the home. Young people are protected as staff have a secure understanding of the home's safeguarding procedures. This means they are able to take swift action should they have any concerns in relation to a young person's welfare or well-being. Staff give young people's safety the highest priority and are trained in relation to safeguarding. Young people are provided with good advice on how to keep themselves safe. They are encouraged to talk to them if they have any worries or

concerns. Staff's secure understanding of each young person's needs enables them to act in their best interests.

Young people currently placed have not gone missing from care since the last inspection, though there are appropriate systems in place should these need to be put into place to safeguard young people. The home works well with placing authorities, police and family to safeguard young people.

Young people's behaviour is generally good. They know what standards of behaviour are expected and possible consequences of poor behaviour. Staff are positive role models who are very good at encouraging positive behaviour by offering high levels of praise and encouragement. Consequently, young people are able to consider their own behaviours resulting in a decline of inappropriate behaviour. Young people are aware that sanctions may be imposed. Physical restraints are rarely used, however the volume maintained documenting these does not give the details of methods used by staff to try and avoid this measure; this would enable reflection and changes in approach to be formalised. Young people say sanctions are fair and they understand the reason why they were given. The manager monitors these to ensure consistency and fairness and will in consultation with young people and staff and make amendments if appropriate.

Young people live in a physically safe environment. They are protected from any hazards by a comprehensive range of health and safety procedures, risk assessments and checks. 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, competent and qualified Registered Manager. A basic action plan is in place that sets out how the home is to develop. Staff are 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 very well supported on an individual basis and receive one-to-one professional supervision. However, not all staff have up-to date appraisals of their work, although there are plans in place to address this. This support enables them to reflect upon their own practice and identify their future developmental needs. Staff say they work very well as a team and that they have regular staff meetings with their team members. This means they are able to consider young people's progress and modify any plans to ensure they remain current. Consequently they are able to continue to provide good care to the young people.

The Statement of Purpose and young person's guide are shared with young people, their families and placing authorities. The Statement of Purpose is well written and informative and provides the reader with information on the care and support provided. However, both documents have some out of date information and omissions, including incorrect contact details for Ofsted, reference to therapies not currently used because of the needs of the young people and no contact details of the Children's Rights Director. Both of these documents are currently being reviewed and updated by the Registered Manager.

At the last inspection in March 2012 one requirement was raised, which was that reports of the Registered Manager's monitoring were sent to Ofsted. This has been completed and overall, the home has improved upon some recording systems and improved the approach to monitoring. The Registered Manager has a clear and realistic understanding of the strengths of the setting and the areas for further development. The home demonstrates a capacity for sustained improvement based upon its performance over the last year. This is evident from the good outcomes young people are achieving with regards to their education and emotional resilience.

The home has sound systems to review the quality of care each month. The Registered Manager consistently monitors the running of the home and identifies areas for improvement. Action is taken to ensure the home meets the young people's needs and promotes their welfare. The responsible individual, who is the owner of the home, also visits the home every month to monitor the quality of care. There are appropriate systems in place to notify of any significant issues with regards to the young people. However, Ofsted have not always received copies of these; although the appropriate action has been taken to safeguard the needs and welfare of young people. Records and documentation are maintained and provide insight into young people's time in the home, including individualised risk assessments for each person.

Young people are cared for by highly committed staff team. Staff have a wide range of skills and experience which mean the needs of the young people living at the home are met effectively. This is enhanced by their opportunities to attend a variety of training courses for example on care and control, safeguarding and attachment, as well as all mandatory training. Some staff hold recognised qualifications or are in the process of completing their level three diploma and there are plans in place for additional staff to commence this training in the New Year.

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 children's homes.