

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC064931
Inspection date	10/10/2011
Inspector	Bill Drumm
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	04/03/2011
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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 children's home is run by a private company which provides residential care and education for young people. It is registered to care for up to eight young people aged between 8 and 17 years old and whose main need for being looked after is because of emotional or behavioural difficulties.

Overall effectiveness

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

Young people benefit from being cared for by a very friendly and committed staff team who are well trained, have a good knowledge base and sound values. There are some very good examples of individualised care, and outcomes for young people have improved significantly since they came to live at the home. Formal education is given an extremely high priority and is fully supported, encouraged and promoted. Young people are also encouraged to become involved in a full range of community-based activities, which help them to develop their confidence, self-esteem and social skills. Young people feel listened to and young people and members of the staff team have a friendly, positive relationship which is based on mutual respect. The home fully meets the needs of the young people living there.

All young people have an individualised behaviour management plan in place but these lack detail. Some details linked to the health of young people are missing in the individual care plan. Statutory reviews are held of each young person's care needs although the written notes of all statutory reviews are not retained within the home.

The home has a Statement of Purpose in place which explains what the home wants to achieve and what services it provides. The young people's guide to the home has recently been updated to include the contact details of The Children's Rights Director. However, the guide does not include the contact details of each young person's independent reviewing officer.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure that each young person's behaviour plan is reviewed and up dated regularly to show the progress being made by individual young people in

developing socially acceptable behaviour (NMS 3.7

- ensure that full written records are retained in the home of all statutory reviews undertaken (NMS 25.5)
- ensure that each young person is fully aware of who their independent reviewing officer is and how they can be contacted (NMS 13.5)
- review each young person's health plan to ensure it provides full details of all health professionals involved in the young person's care and their health care needs. (NMS 6.5; Children's Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 5: Children's Homes)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Each young person has a key worker. The key worker system used in the home is well organised and effective and helps young people to achieve their agreed goals. All members of staff are fully aware of each young person's strengths and they provide a supportive and enthusiastic environment in which young people can develop their self confidence, independence and learn new skills. A visitor to the home said, 'the home's fantastic, it really is, really lovely and the staff make you feel at ease.' Activities which young people have enjoyed include foreign holidays, the 'C2C' bike ride and camping. Young people living at the home receive highly individualised help and support. This helps them to become fully involved in the local community, to learn new things, grow in confidence and to develop their self-esteem.

There is an excellent approach to promoting the health and well-being of young people. Staff members have developed extremely positive relationships with responsible medical practitioners. Members of staff display a committed approach to caring for young people and the rapport developed with medical practitioners fully supports and enhances this. Young people enjoy a wide variety of different foods, which includes food from other nationalities and cultures. One young person said the food was nice. Young people are actively encouraged to take regular exercise and are supported to take part in all activities offered within the home. This helps them to stay healthy, fit and well.

Young people receive a consistently high level of help and support to learn new skills and to develop their independence. All the young people at the home learn independence skills and activities for daily living. Young people are able to plan meals, budget, purchase food items and cook meals. One young person said, 'I'm encouraged to be independent, and to do as much as I can for myself, staff help me and keep me right.' Young people are also taught the importance of good personal hygiene. Members of staff support and encourage young people to be as independent in this area as possible. This helps to prepare them fully for adult life.

The education of young people living at the home is given an exceedingly high

priority. Members of staff provide consistent support to young people in their attendance. In addition, young people are encouraged and enabled to complete any homework and to undertake extra work, such as home reading. One young person said, 'staff always make sure I go to college. I enjoy going anyway I like learning new things.' Members of staff have a very close working relationship with all education providers. Regular meetings take place to ensure that all essential information is shared and that personal education plans are up to date. This helps to promote each young person's continued education and improvement and to ensure they have the best possible life chances.

Quality of care

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

The home provides an extremely warm, comfortable and supportive environment in which young people can develop both physically and emotionally. The home has good care planning systems in place with each young person's individual needs identified. Records are maintained and any changes in need are acted upon. Regular monitoring of care plans enables members of staff to evaluate the care they provide and to identify any changes which may be necessary. Young people are aware of what a placement at the home is meant to achieve and what their individual goals are. One young person said, 'I've made progress since coming here, it's great.' A visitor to the home said, 'he's come on leaps and bounds. They try to help him do more for himself. He used to isolate himself but not anymore.' This reflects that the individual needs of young people continue to be met and they are able to develop self-confidence.

Young people's health and welfare is promoted. Members of staff encourage young people to lead an active, healthy lifestyle and to take regular exercise. Young people living at the home have recently completed the 'C2C' cycle ride across the country. One young person said, 'we went to France on holiday, it's the first time I've been away in my life, it was excellent, I really enjoyed it.' A family member of another young person said, 'he's getting involved in all sorts of new things. I know it sounds silly but once over he'd never even make a phone call, but now he will.' Members of staff are aware of each young person's strengths and weaknesses and they provide a friendly supportive environment in which they can develop their independence, self confidence and learn new tasks.

Members of staff display a friendly and committed approach to caring for young people. This helps young people to feel safe and secure. A fruit bowl was freely available for young people to access if they wish. Any young people who are ill or suffer accidents are quickly attended to. Written records are maintained of all medication administered to young people. The home has a positive approach to working in partnership with all health care professionals. Each young person's health needs are recorded in their health care plan. However, not all the medical information known about young people is fully recorded in their plan. This means that not all members of staff will be fully aware of the health needs of young people. There is generally, a very good approach within the home to promoting the health

and well-being of young people, which helps to ensure their overall welfare.

The home has a thorough, detailed and clear admissions process for young people. Members of staff work hard to ensure each young person enjoys a positive, worthwhile experience whilst living at the home and is able to develop socially, physically and emotionally. One young person said, 'staff are great, they talk to us and treat us as equals.' In addition, a family member of another young person said, 'staff make you feel at ease.'

The home has a complaints process in place and young people are encouraged to voice their concerns. There have been no complaints made at the home since the last inspection. Members of staff said they listen to what young people have to say and that they try to resolve any issues they might have promptly. Young people are fully able to make their needs known and to raise formal complaints if they are unhappy about anything. This helps them to feel safe and listened to.

Young people enjoy being able to participate in a range of purposeful and enjoyable activities, which include attending local clubs, visits to local leisure centres, foreign holidays and camping trips. Each young person has their own bedroom and they are encouraged to make them as comfortable and personal as possible. There is a television in the lounge where young people can relax. One young person said, 'it's ok here. There are loads of things to do outside, I don't often get chance to sit and watch TV.' The home also has a dining area where members of staff and young people can socialise, enjoy a meal together and talk informally. This helps young people to develop their confidence and social skills.

Relationships between members of staff and young people are extremely warm and friendly. Members of staff strive to provide an environment in which young people can be safe and happy. Young people feel comfortable at the home and understand that members of staff are there to help them.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

There are systems in place within the home to safeguard young people. Risk assessments have been carried out in the home and these are regularly monitored and updated in line with changing circumstances or behaviours of young people. Young people are protected and kept safe from harm. A family member of one young person said, 'he loves it here, it's like being in a family.' There have been a very small number of occasions when young people has been missing from the home. The home has policies and procedures for dealing with missing children. Young people are responded to appropriately on their return.

There have been no safeguarding concerns at the home since the last inspection. One young person said, 'I feel safe here.' The manager and all members of staff are trained in safeguarding. This helps to keep young people safe and protected from potential abuse.

Members of staff promote a culture of positive behaviour within the home and each young person has a behaviour management plan in place. The behaviour management plans are brief and do not show how a young person's behaviour has improved over time. Members of staff may not know the most appropriate way of dealing with a young person's behaviour. In addition, they are unable to reflect, with the young person, on progress being made. Young people are supported to take responsibility for their actions. Where absolutely necessary, sanctions are used to help promote positive behaviour. The use of restraint or holding of young people within the home is seldom, if ever, used. Written records of any restraints used provide full details of the reasons why restraint was necessary. This means, the manager will be able to review the records in order to identify any patterns of behaviour or the circumstances why restraint was needed.

The home's manager ensures that all safety checks needed within the home are undertaken to ensure the safety of young people, visitors and members of staff. The manager also ensures that appropriate and regular checks of the home's fire systems, smoke detectors and emergency lighting are carried out. Young people understand the fire evacuation process and practise fire drills including those at night. Full written records are maintained by the home's manager. Risk assessments are available with regard to the general building and also in relation to the young people themselves. Risk assessments are clear and reviewed regularly. Therefore, young people live in a safe environment and their safety is protected.

Young people are protected by the home's recruitment procedures and are kept safe from potential abuse. The home's recruitment process is thorough and helps to ensure that only those who are suitable to work with young people are employed. Visitors to the home are asked to identify themselves on arrival and to sign the visitor's book.

Leadership and management

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

The home meets the aims and objectives set out in its Statement of Purpose. The Statement of Purpose clearly describes the skills, qualifications and experience members of staff have in looking after young people. Placing authorities will know the full range of expertise contained within the staff group.

The young people's guide to the home is clearly written and provides important information which young people may need. However the young people's guide does not include the contact details for each young person's independent reviewing officer. Young people know what they can expect from living at the home, but not the names of all those who they can speak to if they are worried about anything.

Young people's files are detailed and well ordered. Written information retained within the home provides a record of each young person's life at the home as well as the help and support carried out by staff members. Each young person's care is

formally reviewed at regular intervals. The notes of all statutory reviews are not available within the home. Members of staff are not fully aware of each young person's changing needs and who is responsible for ensuring they are met. House meetings involving the young people take place at regular intervals and their opinions are listened to. Young people and staff members discuss activities that the young people may wish to try as well as different meals they might like to sample. This helps young people to develop their confidence, self-esteem and to experience full range of life experiences.

Monitoring visits from someone independent of the home take place every month. The person undertaking these visits talks, where possible, to young people and members of staff. These visits help to ensure that the home is run properly and that young people are well cared for. In addition, the visiting officer speaks with the parents or relatives of young people or their social workers. The opinions of family members and the placing authorities concerning the care the young people receive is regularly borne in mind. Young people, and those important to them, contribute to improving the quality of their care.

The organisation demonstrates a commitment to training. Members of staff receive training in a number of areas which help to safeguard and protect the welfare of children. Written records indicate that, where training is not up to date, renewal dates have been identified and a plan is in place to ensure staff attendance. The home's manager carry's out formal, written supervision of staff members. Members of staff feel listened to and have a confidential process for raising any concerns or anxieties they may have. Regular staff meetings are held. This helps staff members to feel part of a team and supported in their work.

The home's manager provides effective management and has systems in place to ensure that the quality of care is regularly monitored. Any problem areas which may be identified are attended to and appropriate action taken. The home has a development plan in place. The home's owners, the manager and members of staff are fully aware of the home's strengths and weaknesses.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.