

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Susan Mullin
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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 home is a local authority children's home that provides emergency short-term residential accommodation for five children, who have emotional or behavioural difficulties.

Overall effectiveness

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

The home makes positive developments to meet the diverse and complex needs of the young people in placement. Staff have good knowledge of the young people they are working with and try hard to meet their identified needs. The home values the rights of individuals to respect and dignity.

Young people said that they are able to make their views known and have a say in what happens in the home. They are involved in decisions about what food they eat, what they do in their spare time, how the house is decorated and the plans for their future. Young people said that they like the home and can talk to an adult if they need to.

The home has a friendly atmosphere where everyone usually gets along. Young people enjoy positive relationships with staff. Staff are helpful and enjoy spending time with young people. They have clear boundaries with young people consistent with good childcare. The management understand their current strengths and weaknesses and show an appropriate and sound capacity to improve the outcomes for young people.

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
30 (2001)	ensure a system is in place to notify within 24 hours all authorities listed in Schedule 5 of significant events (Regulation 30 (1))	21/10/2011
4 (2001)	produce a Statement of Purpose in line with Schedule 1 (Regulation 4 & Schedule 1))	21/12/2011
27 (2001)	ensure that all staff receive appropriate training to equip them to meet the needs of the children and young people in their	21/11/2011

	care. This is with particular regard to Equality and Diversity awareness (Regulation 27 (4)(a))	
28 (2001)	maintain in respect of each child who is accommodated there a record in a permanent form, which includes the information, documents and records specified in Schedule 3, which is kept up to date and is signed and dated by the author of each written entry (Regulation 28 (1) (a - c))	21/10/2011
18 (2001)	ensure that the promotion of the educational achievement of children accommodated in the children's home and the routine of the home is organised so as to further children's participation in education, including regular attendance at school and participation in school activities of children of compulsory school age (Regulation 18(1)(b))	21/11/2011
18 (2001)	assist young people, who are no longer required to receive compulsory fulltime education, to arrange for their education, training and employment. (Regulation 18 (3))	21/11/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the home has an up-to-date written development plan that is reviewed annually for the future of the home (NMS 15.2)
- ensure that the children's home has a designated person, who is a senior manager, responsible for managing child protection allegations (NMS 20.5)
- ensure that all staff's work is consistent with the new national minimum standards and the home's policies and procedures reflect these changes (NMS 21.3)
- ensure that young people's full names are recorded in fire drills undertaken in the home (NMS 10.9)
- ensure that when a child's whereabouts are unknown that the home's procedures are compatible with and have regards for the local Runaway and Missing from Home and Care (RMFHC) protocols maintained and managed by the police or by the local authority for the area where the home is located (NMS 5.6)
- ensure the manager regularly monitors all records kept by the home. In particular that accident forms are indexed correctly (NMS 21.2)
- ensure that sanctions and rewards for behaviour are clear, reasonable and fair and are understood by all staff and children (NMS 3.8)
- ensure that each child's placement plan is monitored by a key worker within the home who ensures that the requirements of the plan are implemented in the day-to-day care of the child (NMS 25.2)

- ensure action is taken in response to any issues raised on Regulation 34 monitoring visits. (NMS 21.1)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people benefit from individualised support which helps them develop a positive self view. Young people develop an understanding of their own identities through supportive staff and access to personal interests in the community, such as fishing or other sports. Young people's wishes about their placement and their futures are listened to. Staff support them in understanding why it may not be possible to act on their wishes in all cases. Young people acquire adequate practical life skills to prepare them for adult life.

Young people are helped to understand the importance of healthy lifestyles through key working sessions and individual support is provided to young people on issues, such as relationships and sexual health. This information is shared sensitively and in line with each young person's development and understanding. This means young people gain appropriate knowledge to help them make informed choices. Young people enjoy a balanced diet and active lifestyles that keeps them healthy. Young people access suitable medical and mental health services. This means they receive personalised and age-appropriate physical, emotional and psychological healthcare.

Young people have opportunities to plan for the group's activities and are involved with aspects of the running of the home. Young people are able to have their own choice of activity and personalising their bedrooms. Young people are encouraged to maintain constructive contact with families, friends and other people who play a significant role in their lives. Staff support young people to maintain contact with their family and significant others in line with their placement plan.

Not all young people of compulsory school age have an active education plan in place. This does not provide them with the opportunity to learn new skills and to develop and achieve. Although young people are actively encouraged to attend educational provision, attendance at present is generally poor. Not all young people, who are no longer required to receive compulsory fulltime education, have satisfactory arrangements in place for their training and employment.

Quality of care

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

Young people say that the best thing about the home 'is the staff' and that they 'get on' with other young people 'some of the time'. There have been some incidents of bullying in the home and the staff team are proactive in identifying any behaviour that may lead up to bullying incidents. Young people are aware of the complaints procedures and the home responds positively to ensure that concerns are resolved.

Young people express their wishes and feelings through residents meetings, key worker sessions and informal discussions. As a result, action is taken to incorporate their views into the day-to-day running of the home. This is reflected in menu choices, activities, décor and restorative approaches to relationships.

Placement plans are satisfactory and give details of historical assessments and current presenting needs. Needs pertaining to young people's cultural identity, religion, language and gender are identified at or prior to admission. Staff promote and support individual needs through various mediums, including the use of interpreters, access to religious artefacts and observance of cultural and religious dietary requirements. Individual tailored programmes identify other health care agencies to meet the young people's psychological, physical and emotional needs. Some young people are aware of the content of their care plans and pathway plans. However, some records within placement plans and care plan files were not all robustly monitored or signed accordingly.

Not all young people are engaging successfully with education. There were no clear sanctions or rewards in place to support a culture of expectation of educational attendance within the home.

The home is very well furnished and has a homely environment. Young people are encouraged to personalise their rooms. All of the bedrooms are spacious, nicely furnished and have a large en suite shower room, providing young people with a pleasant, private space. There is an additional small kitchen for young people to use which supports their independence skills development. Repairs are made to any damage caused as a matter of urgency ensuring that young people live in a comfortable and well-maintained home.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people have not always got on well and this has caused some difficulties with behaviour and bullying issues previously. However, staff report that this situation has improved with the implementation of individualised behaviour management assessments for the young people involved. Information about bullying is included in written information given to young people on admission to the home. Young people say that they feel protected and generally safe. Young people said that they were able to talk to staff if they were worried about anything.

The safety and rights of young people and staff are protected. Potential issues of a safeguarding nature are referred to appropriate external agencies for investigation. The home has its own safeguarding procedures which staff are familiar with, however, the home is yet to appoint a designated person to deal with any safeguarding concerns. This may cause delays from external safeguarding agencies being able to contact the appropriate person and ultimately impact on the safety of

young people.

The home has systems in place to deal with young people who go missing from care. Incidents are recorded appropriately and evidence that young people have been offered access to their social worker or an independent visitor. Records show that incidents of young people going missing from care has reduced and young people are generally maintaining contact with the staff via mobile phone. The home has a protocol in place involving the police but this is outdated and does not follow agreed local protocols regarding young people missing from care. This does not fully safeguard young children when they go missing from the home.

Sanctions and rewards are used in the home but did not include attendance at school or any achievements made. This does not fully promote positive behaviour or self confidence in young people or determine what helps the young person engage in education and learn new skills. Incidents of physical intervention are few, with any such incident being recorded in line with legislation. Accident records were seen and captured the required information, however there were inconsistencies with the cross referencing in the index system.

The recruitment, selection and vetting procedure ensures that suitable staff are employed to work with young people. There is also, a robust system to ensure all visitors are required to produce documents to confirm their identity and are chaperoned while in the building.

Health and safety procedures are effectively used in the home to protect staff and young people. All equipment is routinely serviced and fire alarms checked weekly. There is an up-to-date fire risk assessment in place and associated risk assessments for within and around the building, which promotes the safety of young people and staff when in the home. Staff and young people undertake adequate fire drills, however the names of the young people have not been recorded. This may cause confusion if two young people share the same initials.

Leadership and management

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

The Registered Manager of the home has just returned to resume leadership of the setting, following a period of time on study leave. During his absence the home was managed by three senior members of staff. The organisational arrangements for the management of the home in the manager's absence have disrupted the efficient running of the home. The Statement of Purpose is clear and accessible to parents and local authorities. However, this document needs to be reviewed and up dated so that it reflects the recent changes in legislation. The young person's guide was informative and produced in a child-friendly format, which has been given to all young people.

Staff are sufficient in number and qualifications to meet the needs of the young people. Young people enjoy the stability of a consistent staff team. One member of

staff when asked what was the best thing about the home stated 'If I can make a young person smile for an hour then I have come to do what I wanted to do. The team and the young people that we meet are great. Although we have some challenging times, we still have a laugh we make each other smile and the achievements they make by coping and engaging with others, it makes it all worth while. We all support each other not just professionally but socially as well'.

Staff receive regular training and this is planned to meet both the needs of the young people resident at the home and the staff development needs. However, training in equality and diversity is required for all staff, to fully understand the needs of young people in this regard.

Senior staff have not kept fully up to date with the new legislation and practice developments, for example, the new National Minimum Standards 2011 and amended regulations. Policies and procedures do not make reference to these and staff have not been informed of these practice issues, which may impact on the care provided to young people in the home.

There are various systems to monitor quality of care which includes monthly visits by a designated person. Regulation 33 monitoring is regularly carried out and young people are consulted during monitoring visits. Regulation 34 reports are also undertaken regularly but when issues were raised no actions are identified. The home did not have an up-to-date written development plan that reflected the changes in legislation. Although the home has been sending regular notifications of events listed in Schedule 5, the home has failed to inform Ofsted when a young person was involved in a serious accident.

At the previous inspection two actions were made. To ensure that when young people were placed out of county there is appropriate safeguarding information accessible to staff and to provide staff with training on how to respond to any safeguarding concerns. Both actions have been met, which promotes the safety of young people while resident at the home.

Equality and diversity practice is **satisfactory**.