

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC066187
Inspection date	11/10/2012
Inspector	Jo Stephenson
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	24/01/2012
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2012

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.

Service information

Brief description of the service

The home provides short-term care and accommodation for up to three young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is operated and managed by a private organisation in partnership with a local authority.

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 **adequate**.

The home provides a supportive environment in which young people say they are happy. Young people say they have generally good relationships with staff. Staff are suitably qualified and able to observe and recognise the individual needs of young people. However, identified needs are not reflected in statutory placement plans as these are not in place for young people. Therefore positive outcomes for young people are not continually promoted.

Young people say they feel safe in the home and that their views are taken into account. The home ensures individual support and assessment plans are developed to promote safety and reduce risks. Nevertheless, these plans do not include health or education considerations and are not supported by statutory plans such as up to date personal education plans. As a result, young people do not gain from an integrated approach to their care.

Staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and policies and processes are reliably adhered to. The home has previously identified bullying as an issue and has addressed this through robust actions and education session for young people. Consequently, young people are safe from significant harm. Staff encourage the development of positive behaviours through the application of boundaries. These are consistently deployed and as a result young people engage in these programmes.

The manager retains an overview of the progress of the home and is able to

recognise the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. However, the manager is not currently registered with Ofsted.

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
12A (2001)	ensure co-operation with the child's placing authority in agreeing and signing the plan for the child's placement prepared in accordance with the provisions in Regulation 9 of the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 (Regulation 12A(1))	12/11/2012
20 (2001)	ensure each child is provided with such individual support, aids and equipment as he may require as a result of any particular health needs or disability he may have (Regulation 20(1)(c))	12/11/2012
27 (2001)	ensure that all persons employed received appropriate training (Regulation 27(4)(a))	12/11/2012
28 (2001)	maintain in respect of each child who is accommodated in a children's home a record in a permanent form which includes the information, documents and records specified in Schedule 3 relating to that child; is kept up to date; and is signed and dated by the author of each written entr. (Regulation 28(1)(a)(b)(c))	12/11/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure risk assessments of the whole children's home are carried out, specifically the staircase, to identify any potential sources of harm to the children (NMS 10.8)
- ensure there is a system in place to monitor the quality and adequacy of record keeping and take action when necessary (NMS 22.1)
- ensure children are cared for in line with their individual Placement Plan. (NMS 25)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make progress in most aspects of their lives. Staff promote and celebrate the achievements of young people and as a result, they develop a positive self-view and improved self-confidence. There are some good examples where young people receive personalised care that meets their individual needs. Young people say they know why they are living at the home, and comprehend the assessment function of the home. As a result, young people understand their backgrounds and early lives.

Young people's general health needs are met and they access primary healthcare services through appointments with doctors, dentists and opticians. However, the home does not operate detailed health plans for young people. This means that more specific health needs are not always incorporated into assessment documents for future placement considerations. As a result, young people are not subject to proactive interventions to address their health needs.

Staff continually encourage young people to actively participate in their educational placements, and attendance is high. Staff work in partnership with schools to provide a comprehensive approach to maintaining acceptable behaviour. The home has a structure in place to support young people who are excluded from school for short periods. Nevertheless, young people do not have up-to-date statutory personal education plans in place to reinforce statements of special educational need. As a result, young people do not benefit from a tailored approach to sustaining or promoting their learning.

Young people attend regular young people's meetings and say they enjoy these events. Their views are actively sought on the practical aspects of structuring activities and menu choices. In addition, young people use these meetings to discuss a range of topics. For example, records show frequent interactive sessions with young people regarding bullying and the possible impact this can have on others. Young people say they are consulted on the daily running of the home and proposed changes. This means that young people feel involved in the home's development.

Staff are proactive in encouraging young people to sustain and further progress relationships with their families. Young people are supported to attend contact visits and staff supervise these when necessary while respecting the privacy of young people. Staff advocate for young people to have increased contact when appropriate. Young people say they appreciate the efforts made by staff in regards to this aspect of their care. Subsequently, young people are not isolated from their families.

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy generally good relationships with staff and each other. Staff promote the importance of socially acceptable behaviour through risk management plans. Strategies, risk assessments and intervention plans detail behavioural targets for young people. The home uses detailed keywork sessions to shape internal

assessment documents. The assessment incorporates aspects of care, including risk assessments, contact arrangements and behaviour issues. Young people are consulted regarding the contents of these assessments and continually informed of the progress they have made. This means that young people are involved in decisions made in relation to potential future placement options.

Staff provide placing authorities with opportune feedback on developments made by young people. However, statutory placement plans are not in place for young people. As a result, the home is unable to ascertain the starting assessment point of the placement. Subsequently, young people do not experience an integrated approach to planning their care or compatibility between internal plans and those devised by other professionals. In addition, statutory personal education plans have not been competed or updated for young people. This means that the home is unable to categorise the educational progress made by young people.

The home has a robust complaints procedure in place and all young people confirm that they understand how to raise a concern. The number of complaints received by the home has reduced considerably. Records show that complaints are addressed in line with procedures and young people receive feedback on the issues they have raised. Subsequently, young people feel confident to raise concerns and understand these are taken seriously.

Staff encourage young people to participate in a wide range of individual and group activities that reflect their personal interests and hobbies. Young people say they enjoy the activities that are provided and like the structure of weekly activity plans. They say they feel involved in these plans and staff help them to decide on activities that will 'get them to learn new things'.

The home is suitably located in close proximity to community amenities. It benefits from an extensive garden area. The internal environment is well maintained although tired in appearance. Young people say that the home is comfortable and they have been asked to decide on new colour schemes for various rooms as part of a refurbishment programme.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people present as relaxed in the home and say they feel safe. Staff ensure that detailed internal risk assessments are in place to protect young people from harm and promote their well-being and safety. Staff receive training in safeguarding and child protection. They are able to identify vulnerabilities and put measures in place to reduce known risks. Young people are encouraged to comment on these plans. Subsequently, young people understand why restrictions may be imposed on them and the reason for these.

Incidents of young people missing from the home have substantially reduced and staff ensure rigorous missing from home risk assessments are in place and

implemented. These are supported by detailed policies and procedures, and are regularly reviewed and updated. Risk assessments identify potential triggers to missing from home episodes and include individualised action plans. Staff work in partnership with other agencies to ensure, as far as possible, that young people are protected from significant harm. As a result, young people benefit from an integrated approach to maintaining their safety and well-being.

Behaviour management in the home is proactive, with an emphasis on identifying and understanding triggers and pre-empting these. Detailed plans are in place and provide staff with guidance on interventions and de-escalation techniques to reduce unacceptable behaviours. Physical restraint is rare and only ever used as a last resort and associated records are appropriately completed. This means that young people engage with staff to recognise alternative approaches to managing their behaviour.

The home completes general environmental health and safety risk assessments to protect young people from harm. However, there are some minor shortfalls where known hazards have not been included. Young people take part in regular fire drills; checks and tests of fire safety equipment are also carried out.

The home adheres to robust recruitment procedures in place to safeguard young people. Safety checks are carried out in full on all new starters. This means that young people work with suitably vetted and selected staff.

Leadership and management

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

The home has a recently recruited manager in post. However, this manager is not currently registered with Ofsted. There have been a number of delays in the application process, although these have now been resolved. The lack of stable management has meant a number of shortfalls have been identified in case files and general recording.

The new manager leads a suitably experienced and qualified staff team who that are able to understand the individual needs of young people despite the lack of information from the placing authority. Staff receive regular formal supervision that supports their development and considers any additional assistance required. Supplementary training, such as workshops in autism, is provided to meet the needs of young people. Nevertheless, there are some gaps in training requirements, specifically relating to refresher training for physical intervention.

The Statement of Purpose is well presented and details the aims and objectives of the home. It gives clear guidance on the facilities and services provided and the structure of the assessments to be completed. Young people and placing authorities understand the purpose of the home. Young people are provided with a copy of the children's guide to the home on admission.

Managers are able to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the home and these

are included in the development plan. The manager is aware of areas for improvement and practice issues are discussed during regular staff meetings. Monitoring tools are in place to scrutinise the quality of care for young people and systems are in place consider the impact the home has on young people's lives. However, the previous lack of stable management means that identified actions required to support improvements, have not been effectively completed. For example, recording in case files and documents relating to young people are unsigned and do not consistently cross reference to support plans. As a result, records do not contribute a young people's understanding of their life and experiences.

Staff and managers liaise with placing authorities try to ensure that statutory requirements pertaining to reviews, visits and placement plans are met. Nonetheless, there are some extremely significant shortfalls in this area. Case files do not include statutory placement plans or care plans and information provided by other professionals is often limited. As a result, young people do not benefit from an integrated approach to meeting their needs.

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.