

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	15/10/2013
Inspector	Chris Scully
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	27/02/2013
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for two young people. It may also provide transitional care for young people entering into adulthood for a specified period of time. The home is owned by a private organisation.

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's needs are well met through personalised care planning, which meets their personal preferences and individual needs. Consequently, young people are able to make excellent progress across all aspects of their welfare and development. This is effectively supported by staff's understanding of each young person's diverse needs. As a result, young people continue to receive the help, guidance and support they need on a daily basis.

Young people's opinions, wishes and feelings are valued highly and are central to the planning and organisation of the home. They benefit from very positive relationships with staff, which are built upon honesty and trust. Young people are safe and feel safe. This is because of the effective safeguarding and missing from care procedures as well as the health and safety checks implemented within the home.

The home is well managed by a highly committed Registered Manager and staff team. Most records and documentation are generally well maintained although there are some shortfalls with regards to the complaint records, notifications and the clarity of some documents. There are sound systems in place for monitoring the quality and standard of care provided, although shortfalls not always reflected in the written reports. The statement of purpose is current although an updated copy of this has not been sent to 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
5 (2001)	ensure the registered person notifies HMCI of any revisions to the Statement of Purpose within 28 days (Regulation 5 (b))	28/11/2013
24 (2001)	ensure a written record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of the investigation (Regulation 24 (5))	28/11/2013
30 (2001)	ensure is any of the event in column 1 of the table in schedule 5 takes place, the registered person shall without delay notify the appropriate persons. (Regulation 30 (1))	28/11/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure there are clear and effective procedures in place for the monitoring of the home, in particular reports by the Registered Manager and independent person are evaluative and record any identified shortfalls (NMS 21.1)
- ensure the care and support provided to children to minimise the risk that they will go missing and reduces the risk of harm should they go missing, in particular missing from care risk assessments are sufficiently detailed (NMS 5.1)
- ensure there are systems in place for monitor the quality and adequacy of record keeping and take action where needed in particular records are records clearly reflect current practice with regards to health care plans, individual risk assessments and internal care plan. (NMS 22.1)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **outstanding**.

Young people make excellent progress and are achieving very positive outcomes in all aspects of their lives. They have a much more positive self-image and take pride in their appearance and achievements. They are continually increasing in maturity, emotional resilience, and have good social and communication skills. Consequently, they are more able to communicate their feelings appropriately. This is because they take on board other people's wishes and feelings, talk through problems with staff and readily accept advice and guidance. They have a number of friends and have an enjoyable social life. Young people say they are thrilled that they have more free time to spend with their friends.

Young people continue to receive highly personal support which helps them to grow in confidence and acknowledge their own strengths and talents. Young people have strong, trusting relationships with staff, because staff value their opinions and treat them as individuals. Young people are extremely pleased to look after their own hamster 'booboo', and the homes' rabbit and goldfish; they take great pride in ensuring they have everything they need. This helps young people to consider the needs of others and how their actions may impact upon them. Young people say the staff help them to deal with difficult situations and to look at things in a different way. Consequently, young people are more able to consider their own situations in a more positive light.

Young people enjoy a wide range of healthy meals and snacks. They say they enjoy the opportunities to cook with staff with some meals being particular favourites, for example, spicy spaghetti bolognaise. They enjoy the opportunities to plan meals and to complete the food shop with staff. This enables young people to develop skills for life such as budgeting skills, food preparation and storage. Young people are effectively prepared to become more independent and make a successful transition into adult life, appropriate to their abilities, age and level of understanding. They establish positive and appropriate social relationships and are able to succeed in education and develop a range of practical skills.

Young people are generally healthy and enjoy healthy lifestyles. They take much more responsibility for their own personal care. They have excellent access to a full range of health services. They confidently access a range of health care services to support their own health care needs, such as their sexual health and smoking cessation. As a result they are very aware of their own health care needs and make informed choices as to how they can improve this.

Young people's attendance at school is very good. They are actively engaged with their various educational placements and are making excellent progress. A young person's school report said, they are engaging fully with their education, are 'always ready and prepared for learning.' As a result of their progress and commitment the young person was awarded a £50 voucher as a reward for their 'positive approach to learning and their attitude to learning.' Other young people achieved good grades on the examination and are planning to build upon these this year. Young people smile broadly as they discuss their educational achievements and are rightly proud of their success.

Young people benefit from appropriate and well-managed contact with their family and other important people in their lives. This enables them to maintain and develop positive relationships. Some young people have felt confident to build links with family members with whom they have not had contact with. They show visitors the letters they have written to them and talk about how pleased they were to have received correspondence from them.

Quality of care

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

Young people are continuing to thrive because they live in a warm, caring environment. Staff provide them with excellent standards of care, structure and routine. Young people are always seen in a positive and realistic light. The staff have

high aspirations for them and are extremely proud of their achievements. They are fully committed to helping young people to overcome the difficulties they may face to lead happy and fulfilling lives. For example, the staff work really hard to ensure that young people find seeing their families to be a safe, positive and enjoyable experience. They are very aware that young people sometimes may find seeing their family stressful, and make sure they are suitably and sensitively supported.

Young people feel valued and respected as individuals. This is because the staff listen to their wishes, concerns and complaints. These are always taken seriously and staff make sure they are dealt with promptly. Young people say they can talk to any member of staff and know that they will be listened to. They are very aware that some requests may not be possible and say staff always explain things to them.

Young people are fully involved in the decisions affecting their lives and planning for their future. Young people attend meetings about their future and have their views taken into account. Young people are extremely aware of the plans in place around them as they actively contribute to them and sign to say if they agree with them.

This provides young people with a sense of ownership and control about the things that are happening around them.

Young people's health and care plans are highly personalised and reflect the uniqueness of each young person. The staff always place the young people at the centre of their practice. They have an excellent understanding of their needs and ensure they receive highly effective individual support and guidance. The staff are committed to valuing, supporting and respecting the diverse individual needs of each young person.

The staff work extremely well in partnerships with families, placing authorities, schools and health care professionals to promote young people's welfare. Young people live in a healthy environment that actively promotes their physical health and emotional well-being. Young people's health care needs are identified and are very well supported. Young people are closely monitored to ensure they remain fit and well. The staff take effective action to ensure that young people receive the right help at the right time.

Staff have consistently high aspirations for each young person and effectively support and encourage their engagement with their educational placement. They are committed to helping young people overcome any barriers they may have to learning. Consequently, young people's attendance is excellent and they are making very good progress in relation to their starting points.

Young people are able to access a wide range of self-chosen activities. They talk fondly of their recent holiday with staff and say they would like to go back to the caravan. Young people say they enjoy spending time with staff but at the moment prefer to go out with their friends. Young people's friends are often included in activities. This means young people enjoy the same opportunities as any other young people of their age would.

Young people live in a comfortable family house. The home is warm, welcoming and truly reflects the personalities and style of the young people living there. It is clean, decorated, and furnished and maintained to a good standard.

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 and have a sense of safety. They say that they feel safe at the home. This is because the staff have a secure understanding of the home's safeguarding procedures. Consequently, they are able to take swift action should they have any concerns in relation to a young person's welfare or well-being.

The staff take a proportionate approach to risk management and young people are encouraged to take safe risks, such as being allowed more free time. This helps young people to increase their confidence in their own abilities and supports their independence. 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.

Young people rarely go missing and if they do usually they return quickly. This is confirmed by police missing from care officers who report the incidents of young people missing are very low. Recently there has been an increase in the incidents of missing from care for one young person. However, police missing from care officers are complimentary about the home and their commitment to helping young people return home quickly and safely. Staff and managers often go above and beyond what is expected of them. They actively search for young people and keep all agencies fully informed if they have been in contact with the young person.

The staff are very aware of their vulnerabilities and risks young people face when out in the community. This information is not sufficiently detailed within their missing from care risk assessments. This is a recording issue and impacts upon the consistency and accuracy of the information. The home works well with placing authorities, police and family to try and locate young people who are missing. Young people know what standards of behaviour are expected and the possible consequences of poor behaviour. The 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 the reducing of inappropriate behaviour. This has also resulted in no physical interventions or negative sanctions being imposed for some considerable time.

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**.

Young people live in an effectively managed children's home. The Registered Manager is very experienced and suitably qualified. He provides effective leadership, and sets consistently high expectations for staff to provide high standards of care

and safety, with a strong commitment for young people to have every opportunity to succeed. This is evident from the excellent progress young people are making across all areas of their development.

The statement of purpose provides a clear picture of the care and support provided to young people. This was updated earlier in the year, but a revised copy has not been sent to Ofsted. This is an oversight by the home and does not impact upon the quality of care offered to young people. Placing authorities, parents and young people are clear about the care and support offered to young people. Monitoring of the home by the Registered Manager and a representative of the organisation is generally sound. However, reports of their findings are not evaluative and lack detail. This means any shortfalls, although discussed, are not always identified within the reports.

The home has a good track record in improving outcomes for young people. They have improved the safety and well-being of young people. This is because they have ensured that the front door can be closed securely. This effectively prevents unauthorised persons gaining access to the property.

The homes' written records are held securely in the office. They generally provide a comprehensive picture of the young people's experiences, needs, development and progress. On a small number of occasions the information held is not always clear, for example, staff have hand written on some plans which can lead to confusion as to the current care practice. The impact of this is minimised as staff have a good understanding of young people's individual needs. The system for recording any complaints about the service is not robust as the written record does not provide a clear audit trail of the events.

There are appropriate systems in place for notifying the appropriate persons of any significant events. However, recently Ofsted was not notified of an incident within the prescribed timescales. This did not impact upon the care and support provided to the young person.

Young people are looked after by skilled and compassionate people. They provide young people with a high level of consistent good quality care. They are caring and work well together to promote young people's welfare. The skills within the staff team match young people's needs well. The numbers of staff on duty are sufficient to meet the needs of young people in the best possible way.

The staff are suitably qualified and receive good quality training to develop their individual skills and knowledge relevant to the young people they are caring for. They have completed refresher training on first aid and safeguarding and have undertaken therapeutic crisis intervention training. Other staff are completing level 5 management qualifications to further enhance their knowledge and skills. Staff feel very well supported by the manager, and their practice is monitored and developed through frequent professional supervision.

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.