

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC066393
Inspection date	26/09/2013
Inspector	Jo Stephenson
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	15/01/2013
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2013

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 care and accommodation for up to three young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. This provision is operated by a private organisation as part of a contract 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 **good**.

The home provides an extremely supportive and caring environment for young people that take account of their individual needs. Staff are suitably experienced and qualified and able to identify the needs of young people. Staff prepare personalised internal placement plans to promote positive outcomes for young people around their health and educational needs. However, case files for young people do not include all the information, documents or records as required by the regulations. For example, staff have not challenged the local authority to complete pathway plans in a timely manner and this means that young people are not kept up to date regarding their future accommodation options.

Young people say they feel safe in the home and enjoy 'great' relationships with staff. Staff undertake regular one to one placement plan sessions with young people to discuss their care plans, behaviour plans and risk assessments. However, the comments and feelings of young people are not systematically assimilated into internal care plans. This means that young people's plans do not consistently reflect their most up to date views on their placement. Young people have weekly activity plans in place to support their hobbies and interests. Nevertheless, staff do not respond quickly to alternative activity suggestions made by young people. As a result, young people are not encouraged to expand their leisure activities.

The Registered Manager regularly monitors the events in the home. However, completed documents do not effectively evaluate the quality of care provided by the home because they do not record known patterns or trends. For example, the

actions taken as part of complaints investigations are not clearly recorded and this means that reoccurring themes are not logged.

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
18 (2001)	ensure that children accommodated in the home are encouraged to develop and pursue appropriate leisure activities (Regulation 18(2)(a))	12/01/2014
24 (2001)	ensure that a written record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of the investigation (Regulation 24(5))	12/01/2014
28 (2001)	maintain in respect of each child who is accommodated in a children's home a record in permanent form which includes the information, documentation and records specified in Schedule 3 relating to that child. (Regulation 28(1)(a))	12/01/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure children's views, wishes and feelings are acted upon, in the daily running of the home (NMS 1.1)
- ensure the home contributes to the development of each child's care plan, including the pathway plan for eligible care leavers and works collaboratively with the young person's social worker in implementing the plan (NMS 12.2)
- ensure the manager regularly monitors, in line with regulations, all records kept by the home, to identify any specific incidents and to identify patterns and trends (NMS 21.2)
- ensure all entries in records are legible. (NMS 22.4)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people make good progress in all aspects of their lives. Staff promote the

achievements of young people and as a result, they develop an improved self-view and emotional resilience. One young person said, 'The staff are always telling me how good I'm doing. It makes me feel happy and proud of myself.'

Staff encourage young people to regularly attend their education placements and provide practical assistance to support this. Attendance for all young people has improved significantly since coming to the home. Staff actively seek to resolve identified barriers to education by engaging with providers to find solutions to address any concerns. This means that young people benefit from bespoke strategies to support their learning.

Young people access all primary healthcare services, such as regular doctor, dentist and optician appointments and their general health needs are met. Staff consult with mental health professionals and specialist health services who work alongside young people. This feedback is incorporated into internal support plans and risk assessments. As a result, young people receive the bespoke health care they require to develop and benefit from working with staff that are able to meet their physical, emotional and psychological needs.

Staff encourage young people to socialise with their friends and subsequently, they are not isolated from their peer group. Young people are supported to sustain and further progress relationship with their families; staff advocate for young people to have increased contact if this is suitable. However, agreed contact arrangements, including the frequency of contact, are not immediately updated in case files following changes.

Young people participate in regular group meetings that discuss food menu choices and plan activities. However, young people do not always receive prompt feedback on the suggestions they make in these meetings and because of this their views and wishes do not reliably influence the running of the home. For example, the request by a young person to join a local sports facility has yet to be actioned and staff have not provided the young person with the rationale for the delay in this decision.

The service operates an independent living programme to prepare young people for their transition into adulthood. Staff assess and evaluate the independence skills and abilities of young people and encourage them to make decisions regarding their potential future accommodation options. Nevertheless, staff do not liaise effectively with the placing authority to ensure they have access to up to date pathway plans for eligible young people. This means that young people do not benefit from a cohesive approach to managing their transition to adulthood.

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy good relationships with each other. Relationships between young people and staff are extremely positive and focus on consistent and acceptable boundaries. This means that young people feel safe in the home. One

young person said, 'Staff care about me, they look after me and want the best for me'.

Staff devise internal placement plans and risk assessments. Internal placement plans incorporate behaviour management and intervention strategies to promote socially acceptable behaviours. Young people participate in one to one sessions with staff that challenge unacceptable behaviours and identify areas and targets for improvement. However, some records of one to one sessions are illegible. Furthermore, case files do not include all necessary information required under schedule 3 and this means that internal plans do not consistently reflect all known care and welfare needs of young people.

Young people benefit from tailored school placements that take account of any special educational needs they have. Staff work closely with education providers to ensure that progress young people make in education is assimilated into internal and statutory placement plans. As a result, the progress young people make in education is recorded and celebrated. One young person said, 'Staff make a big deal about me going to school and how important it is, so I don't want to let them down'.

The home has a complaints procedure in place. Young people confirm they understand how to raise a concern and the various avenues they can use to do this, such as contacting an independent advocate. Young people say they are confident that these will be addressed. Nevertheless, records of complaints do not include the actions taken by managers or staff, or detail how concerns have been investigated. Consequently, records of complaints are incomplete.

Young people participate in individual and group activities. However, weekly plans are vague and do not include the changing hobbies young people have stated they are interested in. Suggestions made by young people are not pursued or actioned in a timely manner and this means that young people's wishes are not effectively considered in planning activities.

The home is suitably located and benefits from close proximity to community facilities and shopping centres. The internal environment is reasonably maintained and decorated and young people say that the home is comfortable.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are safe and say they feel safe. Issues of bullying are rare and appropriately addressed and recorded by staff. Young people say they regularly talk about bullying during weekly meetings and discuss the effects of bullying during one to one sessions with staff.

Policies and procedures promote safe work practices. Staff have a good understanding of safeguarding procedures and receive regular training to support their knowledge. Allegations and suspicions of harm are addressed within suitable

timescales and young people are provided with regular feedback on investigations. This means young people are effectively supported in these circumstances.

Incidents of young people missing from the home have significantly reduced and these events are now minimal. Staff ensure detailed missing from home risk assessments are in place. These are regularly reviewed and updated and repeatedly discussed with the placing authority and allocated social workers. Risk assessments are supported by constructive working relationships between the home and local police. Young people engage with staff in one to one sessions to discuss triggers to these events, and this means that patterns are identified and addressed.

Staff receive training in physical intervention and de-escalation techniques and the use of physical restraint is rare. Records of restraints are detailed and appropriate. Young people are encouraged to comment on the reason for this intervention being used and how they feel about being restrained, during debrief sessions. Furthermore, staff use one to one sessions to counsel young people to consider the impact of their anti-social behaviours. This means that young people develop an understanding of the possible consequences of their actions and the effects these may have on others.

Young people take part in regular fire drills; checks and tests of fire safety equipment are also carried out. Staff complete general health and safety risk assessments. Weekly and daily checks monitor the safety of the environment. Identified hazards are immediately actioned and this means young people are safe from the risk of harm.

Safety checks are carried out in full on all new starters. The home adheres to organisational recruitment procedures in place to safeguard young people. As a result, staff working with young people are suitably vetted and selected.

Leadership and management

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

The home has a permanent manager who is registered with Ofsted. Staff are suitably qualified and experienced and able to understand and meet the individual needs of young people. The Registered Manager ensures that staff complete regular training courses around all key aspects of care including child sexual exploitation and missing from home events. Subsequently, young people's individual needs are met by a competent staff team. Furthermore, staff receive regular supervision. This means their performance is continually monitored to ensure their practice meets the changing needs of young people.

The Statement of Purpose details the aims and objectives of the home. Young people and the placing authority understand the purpose of the home and the outcomes it aspires to achieve. Young people are provided with a copy of the children's guide to the home on admission and this is available in a range of formats to meet their needs. The guide is detailed and 'child friendly' and provides young people with clear overview of boundaries, expectations and the support staff provide.

Requirements and recommendations for previous inspections have been addressed. The Registered Manager utilises Regulation 33 reports to monitor outcomes for young people. Nevertheless, managers do not effectively evaluate the quality of care for young people as documents do not record known patterns and trends to demonstrate the capacity of the service to continually improve. Internal monitoring tools do not capture all areas for improvement. For example, case files do not include all mandatory records, such as previous education reports, pertaining to young people. This has not been noted in monitoring systems. However, this shortfall does not have a negative impact on outcomes for young people.

Significant events are managed in line with legislation, and notifications to the appropriate authorities are complete. Staff and managers work with the placing authority to ensure that statutory requirements pertaining to reviews and visits are met. Social workers compliment the 'high standard' of the service provided by the home, and the dedication of staff. One social worker said, 'The staff have an excellent knowledge of the young people and keep me up to date with the progress they are making'.

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.