

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC066912
Inspection date	24/10/2013
Inspector	Jo Stephenson
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	31/01/2013
--------------------------------	------------

© 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

This privately owned home provides accommodation for up to two young people. The home caters for young people who may display emotional or behavioural difficulties.

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 extremely personalised care for young people. The environment is nurturing and takes into account the individual needs of young people which allows them to thrive in all aspects of their development. Young people are central to the day-to-day running of the home and staff have high aspirations for young people.

Staff provide continuous verbal praise and encouragement and this means that young people are able to articulate their views on all aspects of their care. However, staff do not consistently record the actions they take to address issues raised in young people's meetings. As a result, records of these meetings do not demonstrate that suggestions made by young people are acted on in a timely manner. Nevertheless, young people say they do receive positive responses to the suggestions they make.

Young people enjoy excellent relationships with staff and each other and benefit from the family atmosphere at the home. Staff encourage young people to identify their ambitions and young people have access to a varied range of community activities and educational resources to support these. This means that young people experience improved self-confidence and self-esteem.

The Registered Manager ensures that monitoring systems are in place to continually review outcomes for young people and the quality of care. Quality assurance documentation, in relation to Regulation 34, is under review to better reflect and evaluate patterns and trends identified in the home; although this improved system is not operational at present.

Staff work in partnership with placing authorities. Case files are well maintained and internal placement plans reflect the needs of young people and the interventions and support they receive. Nevertheless, risk assessments regarding the continued use of bedroom door alarms to safeguard young people are not regularly reviewed. Subsequently they do not reflect the positive progress young people make. Furthermore, minutes from statutory review meetings are not available for all young people and this means that the actions required of all professionals are not clearly recorded.

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
34 (2001)	maintain a system for monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 at appropriate intervals; and improving the quality of care provided in the children's home. (Regulation 24(1)(a)(b))	16/12/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure children views, wishes and feelings are acted upon in the day to day running of the home. This specifically relates to maintaining a record of actions taken (NMS 1.1)
- ensure physical restrictions on normal movement within the home are not used unless this is necessary to safeguard children and promote their welfare and development. Such restrictions for one child do not impose similar restrictions on other children (NMS 10.4)
- ensure the results of all statutory reviews and reviews of Placement Plans are recorded on the child's file. (NMS 25.8)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people make significant progress in all aspects of their lives and say that they

enjoy living at the home. Relationships between young people and staff are extremely positive and young people say they feel supported by staff. As a result, young people experience improved self-confidence and emotional resilience. One young person said, 'I get along really well with all the staff and they really care about me. This is the best place I have ever lived'. This means that young people respond well to staff and are able to sustain appropriate relationships with them.

The emotional and general health of young people is well supported. They benefit from bespoke therapy programmes that encourage them to consider antecedents to their behaviour and evaluate their past experiences. As a result, young people are able to make positive progress with their lives and move towards independence and a successful transition to adulthood.

Young people attend their education placements and for some, their attendance has improved significantly since coming to the home. Barriers to education are successfully challenged and this means that young people are encouraged to embrace further learning and training opportunities. In particular, young people learn the skills and knowledge they need to realise their ambitions and achieve their personal goals.

Leisure activities are various, and reflect the individual hobbies and interests of young people. Young people socialise in the local community and enjoy using the available facilities. As a result, young people are able to expand their social circle and form appropriate, positive and sustainable friendships. Subsequently, young people are able to recognise the impact risk-taking and anti-social behaviour has on their development and welfare, and address this behaviour.

Staff work closely with families in line with statutory placement plans, likewise, any restrictions on contact are clearly recorded. Young people speak highly of the support they receive from staff to ensure that family contact is regular and positive. One young person said, 'staff understand how important my family are to me and always make sure I see them as often as I can'.

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy strong and positive relationships with staff. The atmosphere at the home is supportive and relaxed, and young people thrive in this nurturing environment. Staff have a good understanding of the individual needs of young people and are able to identify antecedents to changes in mood. As a result, young people are central to the running of the home and staff are skilled at adapting their care practices to meet these needs. Young people describe the staff and the home as 'like being part of a family'.

Staff consult with young people on all aspects of their care. Key work sessions address a range of topics relevant to individual young people and emphasise the progress they have made. Young people say they feel listened to; and that their

opinions and suggestions influence to running of the home. Young people are confident and assertive in expressing their views. Nevertheless, records of young people's meeting do not clearly demonstrate that suggestions have been acted upon in a timely manner.

Young people confirm they are aware of how to make a complaint, and can directly access complaints forms. Complaints from young people are rare, but taken seriously and investigated fully in appropriate time scales. Young people received written and verbal feedback on any concerns they raise and are able to comment on the outcome of these. Furthermore, professional links with advocacy services mean that young people received independent support if or when they make a complaint.

Internal placement plans for young people are personalised and extremely detailed. These are supported by risk assessments and behaviour intervention plans that incorporate the bespoke therapy sessions that young people participate in. Comprehensive strategies are in place to support young people to manage their behaviour and take responsibility for their actions. As a result, young people receive integrated care that meets their needs. Young people are encouraged to review the progress of their plans with allocated keyworkers. This means that young people have a sound understanding of the aims and objectives of their placement.

Progress in education is central to the daily running of the home. Young people, who were disengaged from education prior to their admission, now attend on a regular basis. Staff aim to equip young people with as many skills and qualifications as possible. They work closely with education establishments to encourage young people to continue with their education. One young person said, 'I don't really like school but the staff are right, I need to go to make a life for myself.' Educational achievements are celebrated and consistently rewarded with verbal praise.

Young people enjoy a healthy and tasty diet that reflects their personal preferences and cultural backgrounds. Meals are sociable occasions and young people are encouraged to discuss their achievements during the day. This means that young people learn valuable social skills and celebrate their successes.

There is an exceptionally positive approach to promoting the emotional, physical and psychological health of young people. Staff assist young people to identify their own specific health needs and access specialist services to address these. As a result, young people are supported to make positive choices regarding their health and life style.

Personalised activity plans are devised by young people and reflect their individual hobbies. Staff consistently encourage young people to pursue their interests. For example, disused storage areas have been converted into workshops to allow young people to maintain and repair their bicycles. These opportunities help young people to develop new skills, experience success and benefit from improved self-confidence.

The home is appropriately located, in easy reach on local facilities. Young people are consulted on the internal decoration of the home and have been greatly involved in

the recent refurbishment of the building. The home is comfortable and creates a homely environment. Young people take responsibility for their bedrooms, with the support of staff, and are encouraged to take pride in their surroundings.

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 in the home. Young people do not identify bullying as an issue and there have been no recorded episodes of bullying. Staff are alert to the signs of bullying or intimidation, both inside and outside of the home, and receive regular training in this area.

Staff have an excellent understanding of safeguarding procedures and receive regular training to support their knowledge. The home operates a multi-agency approach to investigations. Allegations and suspicions of harm are effectively recorded, managed and referred to the appropriate agencies. As a result, the management of allegations provide effective protection and support for young people.

Incidents of young people missing from the home have significantly reduced. Detailed missing from home risk assessments are incorporated into intervention plans and identify triggers to missing from home episodes. Staff complete key work sessions with young people, informing them of the risks associated with this behaviour. Therefore, young people benefit from an integrated approach to reducing their vulnerabilities.

Young people receive rewards and incentives for positive behaviour and this means they are able to identify their individual goals and targets. Staff implement therapeutic strategies, devised in partnership with psychological support services, to encourage young people to display socially acceptable behaviours. This means young people benefit from a holistic approach to developing their social and interpersonal skills, and take responsibility for their actions.

Staff are trained in physical intervention and de-escalation techniques. This use of physical intervention is rare and only as a last resort. Records of restraint are detailed and appropriate. Young people comment on the reason for intervention being used and how they feel about being restrained. Young people are therefore able to reflect on their behaviour and consider alternative ways of managing their frustrations.

General environmental and activity specific risk assessments are in place which promote the safety of young people. However, the use of bedroom door alarms to safeguard young people is not regularly reviewed to ensure that the continued need for this measure is evaluated to reflect the changing needs of young people. 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 staff, including agency staff when applicable. 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 **good**.

The home is run by an experienced and permanent manager who is registered by Ofsted. The service meets the aims and objectives of its Statement of Purpose and young people, staff and placing authorities are clear about the tailored support the home provides. Managers and staff have a strong commitment to improving outcomes for young people and this is confirmed by the significant progress young people are making.

Staff have an extensive range of skills that reflect young people's individual needs. As a result, young people benefit from working with a knowledgeable and committed staff team. Nevertheless, minutes of statutory review meetings are not available on all case files and staff have not pursued these with allocated social workers.

The Registered Manager has a clear oversight of young people's progress, staff development and identified areas for improvement. Staff and young people benefit from effective leadership that emphasises high expectations and sustainable progress. The manager ensures that the home is structured to endorse stability and consistency for young people.

Staff are well supported in their role through effective supervision and regular team meetings. Training plans and records reflect the specific needs of young people and provide staff with the opportunity to develop their expertise and knowledge. This means that young people work with a competent and skilled staff team. Complaints recorded since the last inspection have been effectively addressed and resolved.

The Registered Manager monitors the quality of care and outcomes for young people. Nevertheless, the current system does not effectively evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the service. This shortfall has been identified by the manager; although planned changes to monitoring records have yet to be implemented.

Young people develop in an environment where boundaries and expectations are clear and staff practice is consistent. As a result, the home has a positive impact on young people and improves their life chances through commitment and support.

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.