

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC067810
Inspection date	20/09/2011
Inspector	Jackie Graves
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	16/11/2010
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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

This service is a registered children's home for up-to-seven young people aged 11 to 18 years with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Overall effectiveness

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

Young people are happy in the home, feel safe and like the staff. A young person described what is good about the home: 'Staff help me when I need help. Staff spend time with me.' An effective key work system helps young people make progress.

Social workers report that the staff communicate effectively and keep them fully informed about young people's lives. Staff are skilled at working with families, which is beneficial to young people. Most young people make a lot of progress when they are placed in the home and settle quickly. Incidents of them going absent without permission reduce.

The home is good at engaging with young people. A well-led, experienced staff team are enthusiastic about their work with young people. They support their education, promote their good health and help them try new activities and experiences. Staff recognise young people's individual needs and value diversity, although the staff team is not fully reflective of young people's backgrounds.

Young people are listened to. They have many opportunities to give their views on all aspects of life in the home. Staff value what they have to say and make changes to reflect young people's preferences, for example, with menu planning and choice of activities.

The home has not yet obtained the revised National Minimum Standards and Regulations. One incident has not been notified to Ofsted. However, these minor shortfalls have not directly impacted on 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
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30 (2001)	make sure that Ofsted is notified without delay if any relevant event listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 5 takes place. (Regulation 30 (1))	23/10/2011
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Recommendations

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

- ensure children know their rights to advocacy, how to access an advocate and how to contact the Children's Rights Director (NMS 1.5)
- ensure staffing arrangements take into consideration children's ethnic and cultural backgrounds (NMS 17.10)
- make sure all staff's work is consistent with the revised National Minimum Standards and Regulations. (NMS 21.3)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people benefit from taking part in a range of activities and experiences in the local community and on holidays to other areas of the country. This helps young people to develop new interests as well as developing their confidence and self esteem.

Young people make good progress to develop a positive self view and emotional resilience through the strong, nurturing relationships they form with staff. Young people feel that the staff really care about them, help them to focus on what they want to achieve and want them to do well.

Young people enjoy good health. They are encouraged to eat a healthy diet and take exercise. Young people are provided with guidance on how to live a healthy lifestyle. Staff make use of community health resources to support young people's health education and welfare. For example, there are useful links to substance abuse organisations and well known trusts which provide information on sexual health.

Young people benefit from maintaining contact with friends and family who are important to them. They are encouraged to bring friends to the home and are confident in doing so. Young people benefit from supportive relationships with their key workers who help them think about and reflect on all aspects of their lives, helping some to make significant progress. Staff encourage young people to be ambitious about their futures.

Key workers help young people develop a clear understanding of their backgrounds through valuable life story work. Staff help young people compile attractive life story

books which they take with them when they move on from the home.

There is encouragement for young people to develop skills which may help them in their future adult lives, for example in managing their personal laundry, budgeting and learning how to keep a house clean.

Quality of care

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

Young people make progress in this home and receive a good standard of care. A young person described what is good about the home: 'It's safe and I love it here sometimes.' The young people enjoy positive relationships with each other and have a sense of belonging, regarding the home as like a 'large family'.

Young people appreciate the home's location, finding it quiet and safe, with a wide range of facilities nearby. They are supported to participate in a range of purposeful activities in the local area and on holidays away from the home. The building is decorated and furnished to a good standard, creating a comfortable environment for young people. Bedrooms are equipped and furnished to meet young people's needs.

Young people feel their views are really listened to and that they are able to influence the running of the home, for example with menus, activities and the decoration of their rooms. They are confident about raising any concerns or complaints with staff although no complaints have been recorded.

Individual needs are identified in care planning and there is respect for different backgrounds and personal identities. Staff draw on their knowledge of young people and seek their views when writing placement plans. A very small number of plans are not fully completed. However, the home's monitoring processes have highlighted this and staff are taking steps to rectify this shortfall.

The value of education is recognised. Young people are helped to identify education or training which is suited to their individual needs and interests. Staff are persistent in their attempts to re-engage the minority of young people who do not consistently attend their education or training placements. Staff ensure young people have equal access to educational and leisure opportunities in order to realise their potential.

Arrangements for dealing with medication are safe and effective. Young people are supported to access the services they need to maintain their good health. If they miss or refuse to attend appointments, staff re-book appointments and try to help young people learn to engage positively with health services.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

This is a home where young people feel safe. They can rely on staff to challenge any

incidents of bullying, although bullying is not regarded as an issue in the home. Staff are trained to consistently manage any challenging behaviour. The use of restraint is very rare. Staff spend time helping young people understand the consequences of their behaviour, applying rewards and fair sanctions when appropriate. This helps young people feel secure, develop an understanding of the rules and expectations of the home and make progress in managing their own behaviour.

Staff follow clear procedures, agreed with local police, when young people go missing to help bring about their safe return. A minority of young people are frequently missing from the home. However, social workers acknowledge the efforts staff have made in slowly reducing the incidents over time and in maintaining contact with young people when they are away from the home.

The home is safe and secure. There are effective systems in place to carry out checks and maintain the premises in a sound condition. Young people are fully involved in fire drills so they know how to leave the building safely in an emergency.

A robust recruitment system helps to ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from having access to young people. For example, references are taken and checks made with the Criminal Records Bureau before new staff are appointed.

Leadership and management

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

This is a well-managed home. Staff are confident in the strong management support they receive. Suitable arrangements for regular meetings, good quality supervision and annual appraisal ensure that staff are fully supported to work consistently with young people. Management has kept up-to-date regarding the introduction of new standards. However, copies of the new National Minimum Standards and Regulations are not yet available in the home to ensure staff can work towards meeting these.

Training opportunities for staff are very wide ranging. Staff are supported to develop the basic and more specialist skills and knowledge they need to work with the young people successfully. Recent therapeutic training is having a positive impact on how staff help young people to make progress.

Young people find there are always enough staff on duty, day or night, to help them and ensure the smooth running of the home. They benefit from being looked after by an established, stable staff team. The warm, nurturing relationships staff establish with young people help them feel settled and secure. The staff team includes both genders and provides strong role models for young people. The team is not fully reflective of the young people's backgrounds, although there is a commitment to meeting the individual needs of all young people.

Stakeholders receive clear information about the service. Young people are provided with a children's guide and other useful information to introduce them to the home

and equip them with sources of information. However, some information in the new standards which may be useful to young people is not yet provided.

There is effective monitoring by the provider and Registered Manager. This includes consultation with young people so their views are carefully considered when reviewing the quality and development of the service. These monitoring activities help develop the service and improve outcomes for young people.

A positive response to any recommendations made at inspection demonstrates the home's capacity for continuing improvement. There is usually an effective system in place to notify the appropriate authorities of any significant events in the home. However, on one occasion, a significant event was not reported to Ofsted although this did not impact on young people's care.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.