

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC067810
Inspection date	23/09/2013
Inspector	Karen Malcolm
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	27/09/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This service is a registered children's home for up to seven young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. It is privately owned.

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 overall effectiveness of the home is judged to be adequate, with outcomes for children and young people and quality of care judged as good. Safeguarding and leadership and management are judged as adequate.

This inspection was an aligned inspection with education due to children's home having a educational provision on site. However, the educational provision is a satellite service of the school and is only used by the main school when necessary and has not been used for some time. Therefore, the education inspection only focused on the main school.

The Registered Manager has clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. Young people are settled in the home. They are making good progress in relation to their starting points across all aspects of their welfare and development, notably in building their self-esteem and their relationships with staff. This has been underpinned by sound, quality support from staff. A particular strength of the home is its consultation with young people and communication with other professionals. All young people are engaged in education and live healthy lifestyles. The staff group is stable giving young people a good sense of belonging and having a safe and comfortable home to live in.

The shortfalls identified following this inspection are that the Registered Person has not effectively monitored staff induction, training and individual's personal development needs. Young people's behavioural management including sanctions and outcomes, records of searches following a young person missing from care and

the Regulation 33 reports. Additional to this there is no clear guidance in place for young people on semi-independence living with regards to food hygiene.

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
17B (2001)	prepare and implement a written policy (in this regulation referred to as the "behaviour management policy") which sets out the means whereby appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the home (Regulation 17B(1)(b))	30/11/2013
27 (2001)	ensure that all persons employed by him receive appropriate training, supervision and appraisal (Regulation 27(4)(a))	31/01/2014
33 (2001)	ensure that when carrying out a Regulation 33 visit interview, with their consent and in private, such of the children accommodated there, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as appears necessary in order to form an opinion of the standard of care provided in the home. (Regulation 33(4)(a))	31/10/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure that sanctions and rewards for behaviour are clear, reasonable and fair and are understood by all staff and children (NMS 3.8)
- ensure that staff actively search for children who are missing, including working with police where appropriate (NMS 5.5)
- ensure that risk assessments of the whole children's home environment are carried out, to identify any potential sources of harm to the children are recorded in writing and regularly reviewed (this is in relation to food storage for those young people in semi-independence living)(NMS 10.8)
- ensure that new staff undertake the Children's Workforce Development Council's induction standards, commencing within 7 working days of starting their employment and being completed within 6 months (NMS 18.3)
- ensure that all existing care staff have attained a minimum level 3 qualification. All new staff engaged from the commencement of the NMS (in April 2011) are to hold the level 3 Children & Young Peoples Workforce Diploma which must include

mandatory social care units; or be working towards the Diploma within 6 months of confirmation of employment (NMS 18.5)

- ensure that the manager regularly monitors, in line with regulations, all records kept by the home to ensure compliance with the home's policies, to identify any concerns about specific incidents and to identify patterns and trends. Immediate action is taken to address any issues raised by this monitoring. (NMS 21.2)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people are making good progress in their education, with some making excellent progress. Some achieve vocational qualifications, others are taking GCSE courses. Some have identified further courses and have gained further qualifications to go to university education. Young people are encouraged to seek part-time work to develop their opportunities and work experience. Staff help them practically with this, for example, with interview techniques. Outcomes for young people with regards to their achievement from their original starting point in education is good.

Young people attend school locally and at the organisation's own school. All young people living in this home experience considerably improved attendance at their educational placement, with some achieving from 75% to 100% attendance. Some have also improved their time-keeping skills and now attend school on time, making the most of each school day to optimise their learning. Young people's achievements are recognised through rewards and certificates are given in recognition. One young person said they had received a bike as part of an achievement in education last year.

Health outcomes for young people are good. Young people eat a healthy diet, take regular exercise and attend to their personal hygiene. Their access to general health services is good. Staff encourage young people to attend appointments and stress the importance of this. Young people have a good understanding of key health risks and the consequence of risk taking behaviours such as smoking, drug, alcohol use and sexual health risks. Young people are given advice on how to keep safe. Young people understand the importance of healthy lifestyles and take responsibility for their own health and care needs. Some young people are able to manage their own medication such as hay-fever tablets and are aware of all the safety practices around this.

Young people are given opportunities to explore their own social lifestyles and to participate in various group activities. Young people like the planned group holidays as this incorporates bonding and family togetherness. Young people are supported well with contact arrangements, where required travel and supervision for contact with family and friends is provided. One parent spoken to stated that the communication between them and the home is good. They have no complaints or concerns about the placement.

Young people are very well prepared for their transition to independence and adult life. Young people are confident, and those spoken to understand and are ready for the transition. Young people gain practical life skills at the home such as budgeting, managing their finance and gaining skills as part of their independence and learning. Young people have good preparation and cooking skills with clear strategies for saving money and time in the kitchen through preparing more dishes and planning ahead. However, some of the food storage for young people in semi-independence living is not appropriate and does not take into account all safe food hygiene practices.

Quality of care

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

Young people have strong relationships with staff which are well established and provide good attachment and help young people feel secure. Young people feel that staff are consistently concerned with their welfare and provide clear boundaries about their general behaviour. Support within the home is good.

Young people are encouraged to express their wishes and feelings. There are regular house meetings to ensure that all issues are discussed openly. Staff listen to young people's points of view and are clear about why they cannot always fulfil their wishes. There is a good procedure for making complaints. Since the last inspection no complaints have been made. Young people said that any concern they may have is addressed straightaway by the Registered Manager, therefore, they feel no need to make official complaints. They are happy with the results of any decisions made.

The home's ethos is to provide a therapeutic approach to care. Health appointments and medication arrangements are facilitated and organised well by staff. Care plans detail all health needs and show clearly how these continue to be addressed. This ensures that young people's individual health needs are all addressed.

Young people and staff maintain and understand safe boundaries for individuals. Staff use individualised positive behaviour strategies to support young people to develop skills in managing conflict and to develop positive relationships. Risk assessments identify any high risky behaviours, supported by the detailed risk assessments plans provided by placing authorities. However, the management of an behaviour is not always effectively updated, reviewed or managed to support and minimise the risk. Therefore, young people can not be confident that any change to their behaviour will be appropriately supported.

Each young person's background is detailed in care plans and is understood by staff. The educational achievement of young people is promoted well. Staff work ensure that any barriers to attendance are reduced. Staff have built effective working relationships with the different educational provisions and representative are invited to child- focused meetings held at the home. This approach ensures that all adults working with young people share agreed goals. This has resulted in young people attending school regularly.

Young people's needs relating to their cultural background and personal identity are identified and positively addressed in daily living and care planning. Young people are able to express who they are with no fear of repercussion. Staff pay good attention to issues of equality and diversity. Care plans outline young people's specific identity needs which staff sensitively explore and address. This is particularly the case in relation to young people's ethnic origin.

Young people live in a home that is well-maintained. The home is run well. All bathing facilities within the home have been recently refurbished to a high standard. The home is comfortable and modern and has a good family feel. The general atmosphere within the home is one of trust, bedrooms are personalised and all young people have their own keys to their rooms.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

There are sound arrangements to safeguard young people, and their general welfare is promoted by the care provided by the home. Young people spoken to stated they are safe and feel safe. Staff were able to give a wide ranging knowledge of reporting procedures in the event of a child protection incident or disclosure. All staff stated that safeguarding training is undertaken regular. However, the Registered Manager was unable to evidence training records for staff on child protection and safeguarding.

Staff provide young people with positive role models and show mutual respect. Staff use effective approaches to actively encourage and promote positive behaviour. Young people learn to take responsibility for their actions, and the reward system succeeds in helping young people develop and maintain socially acceptable behaviour. Sanctions are generally fair and restorative, and there is clear evidence of positive behaviour being promoted within the home. This helps young people to interact positively and behave appropriately. However, when behaviour results in young people having to repay damages, this has not been effectively managed, to ensure that at each stage of process the young person is involved and agrees with the action taken. Behaviour management plans and risk assessments are not always up-dated to reflect the current risk, therefore, it is unclear if all sanctions imposed are managed fairly.

The home follows the local authority's policy on young people missing from care and implements this in accordance with a young person's care plan. Young people say that staff discuss the risks with them, encourage them to make contact and make sure that they are alright on their return. This means that incidents of young people who go missing from care have reduced over time. However, the records of searches carried out by staff when a young person is missing from care are inconsistently recorded or monitored, Staff do not consistently follow the young person's overall safety care plan, in relation to curfews. Although, the number of incidents relating to young people missing or frequently absent without authority has decreased, there is

no clear evidence of this provided through the quality assurance monitoring.

The home promotes a positive behaviour environment. There have been no physical interventions within the home since the last inspection. Young people say that this is because staff are approachable and listen to them. Staff say that having a relaxed atmosphere and a culture of openness has helped with young people's behaviour. Training in de-escalation skills has reduced the need for physical intervention. Staff actively discourage bullying and are clear about the potential harmful impact such behaviour has on young people. Information on bullying is available to young people.

There are safe recruitment practices and new staff are suitably vetted and checks are completed to safeguard young people, before they start working at the home. The home's health and safety control measures provide a safe environment for young people, staff and visitors. The premises are physically safe and appropriately secure.

Leadership and management

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

The home is adequately managed. There is a competent, experienced and suitable Registered Manager who understands the strengths and needs of the young people. The home has demonstrated some capacity for continuing improvement following on from the last inspection where no requirements or recommendations were made. Social workers spoken to were positive about the home and support young people receive.

Staff are positive about the home and the achievement of young people. Young people are encouraged to not only fulfil their potential, but to aspire by developing self-esteem and positive self-image. The cultural and emotional needs of the young people are met by the staff supporting them. Staff work together for the needs of the young people and therefore, are able to demonstrate how they meet this through their dedication, roles and responsibilities. Staff feel supported through team meetings and supervision. This impact on young people's continuity of care.

External monitoring is provided by the organisation that run the home and generates reports covering most requirements. Young people and staff are consulted with during these visits, however, this is not consistent and some reports are brief. Reports presented lack depth and detail and as a consequence do not actively improve outcomes for young people. The Registered Manager has raised these concerns prior to this inspection with the Organisation, and they are reviewing the quality of the format of Regulation 33 reports.

There is a system to monitor the activities of the home which is undertaken by the Registered Manager. This includes any serious incidents, complaints or allegations. However, not all records kept by the home to ensure compliance with policies, and to identify any patterns and trends have been consistently monitored. In particular records such as; the behaviour management of young people, staff training, induction and development needs of staff, missing from care information and

Regulation 33 reports. Therefore, the overall quality assurance monitoring has not effectively addressed all the areas where there are shortfalls and where outcomes for young people have improved.

The numbers of staff are sufficient and new staff have been recently recruited. All new member of staff have begun a programme of learning. However, this has not been consistently managed, monitored or reviewed with the individuals members of staff. The induction programme also does not clearly reflect when new staff undertake the Children's Workforce Development Council's induction.

There is a commitment to support staff professionally, and to develop their knowledge and skills. However, a number of the mandatory refresher training required such as first aid, child protection, food hygiene have not been reviewed, as a number of staff have training that is out of date. The overall monitoring of staff development throughout the home is insufficient. Some member of staff are yet to complete a qualification in the Diploma level 3 or above in Children and Young Peoples Workforce Diploma, although, they have worked in the home or the organisation for a number of years.

Records are stored securely and confidentially. Placement plans compiled by the service are of a good standard and provide concise information. However, these are not updated regularly when there is a change to an individual young person care.

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.