

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Susan Mullin
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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

The home provides care and accommodation for up to two young people, of either gender, aged six to 17 years who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. It is owned and operated by a private company.

Overall effectiveness

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

The home is not fully effective in meeting young people's holistic needs in relation to their starting points. Although, staff confirm that the needs of the young people are at the centre of what they do, placement plans and care plans are not used effectively to plan, implement and evaluate care practice, particularly in relation to behaviour management. When significant changes are seen in young people's behaviour, these have not been addressed appropriately.

Social workers who have placed young people report inconsistencies with care provision and at times poor communication with senior staff in the home. Young people confirm that their opinions and views are sought and that they have good relationships with staff.

Although, safeguarding policies and procedures are in place, they are not consistently followed by staff. This does not fully protect young people from harm.

The Registered Manager and staff are not recording and maintaining all the necessary information required and this leads to poor accountability. Quality assurance systems are ineffective and do not reflect accurately the overall quality of care being provided. Although, there is clear guidance and expectations about these issues, the registered persons have not adequately considered the standards and legislation to improve or influence their practice.

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
11	promote and make proper provision for the welfare of children,	08/08/2011

(2001)	with particular reference to the robust recording of all accidents involving a child whilst accommodated in the home (Regulation 11 (1)(a)) and Schedule 3	
23 (2001)	ensure unnecessary risks to the health or safety of children accommodated in the home are identified and so far as possible eliminated. Specifically, up to date and comprehensive risk assessments must be in place and make clear the strategies necessary, to reduce the risk of harm in relation to all known risks (Regulation 23 (b))	08/08/2011
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any restraint, a full written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose as required (Regulation 17B (3)(a)–(i) and (4)(a)(b))	08/08/2011
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any sanction, a full written record is made as required, which includes the effectiveness of that sanction (Regulation 17B (3)(a)–(i))	08/08/2011
27 (2001)	ensure that all staff receive appropriate training, particularly with regard to record keeping (Regulation 27 (4)(a))	15/08/2011
28 (2001)	maintain in respect of each young person who is accommodated there a record in a permanent form, which includes the information, documents and records specified in Schedule 3, which is kept up to date and is signed and dated by the author of each written entry. All entries must be legible (Regulation 28 (1)(a - c))	08/08/2011
28 (2001)	maintain in respect of each young person who is accommodated there a record in a permanent form, which includes the information, documents and records specified in Schedule 3 and may not be disclosed to any unauthorised person (Regulation 28 (1) (2)(a)(b))	08/08/2011
30 (2001)	shall without delay notify Ofsted where indicated, any events listed in Schedule 5 (Regulation 30 (1))	08/08/2011
33 (2001)	ensure that the person carrying out the visit shall interview with their consent and in private, such of the children accommodated there, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home, in order to form an opinion of the standard of care provided in the home and prepare a written report on the conduct of the home (Regulation 33 (4))	08/08/2011
34 (2001)	ensure that the registered person shall establish and 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 34 (1 (a)(b))	08/08/2011

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people are helped to understand the importance of healthy lifestyles through key working sessions. Young people benefit from a personalised and healthy lifestyle that includes a balanced diet, regular activity including access to medical health services which promotes their physical, emotional and psychological healthcare.

Outcomes associated with education, training and employment are satisfactory. Staff encourage young people to attend school and improve their attendance. Where young people are no longer in education staff assist them to access further training or a work placement. Young people benefit from individualised support, which helps them develop a positive self view. Young people develop an understanding of their own identities, through supportive staff and access to personal interests in the community, such as fishing and cadets. Young people's wishes about their placement and their futures are listened to and staff support them in understanding why, it may not be possible in all cases to act on their wishes.

Although, young people acquire adequate practical life skills, to prepare them for adult life and into independence, for this to be effective, there needs to be a better understanding of individual needs.

Quality of care

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

The quality of the relationships between staff and young people is warm and caring and privacy is respected. A young person said, 'I like the staff here, they help me.' The cultural diversity of the home reflects the young people placed. Young people's individual needs in relation to their ethnicity and family backgrounds are considered and they are cared for in line with their cultural background and personal identity as specified in their individual placement plan.

Young people know how to complain and have access to an advocacy service, which enables young people to have their voices heard and actively challenge decisions which have been made about their lives. Young people views are sought and can influence the running of the home, for example, through participation in young people's meetings and in the planning of menus.

Young people enjoy healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs. They have opportunities to plan meals and can shop for and help prepare these meals. Young people have the opportunity to eat together at meal times and to share social occasions.

There are good links with the schools attended. The educational needs of young people are celebrated. Where appropriate, young people have an education plan and these are up to date. Files contain information about education activities and achievements. Staff and young people attend school events and open evenings where education achievement is recognised.

No young people are currently taking any prescribed medication and staff follow the home's policies and procedures for the administration and storage of medicines. All staff have received medication administration training.

Young people do have regular contact with family and friends in line with their individual care plans. Young people are able to pursue their particular interests and are engaged in purposeful and enjoyable activities at home and in the community. Young people use local facilities such as leisure centres, the cinema, the park and shops. A holiday is provided each year and one young person is looking forward to a week abroad.

The home is appropriately located, designed and maintained, providing a warm and homely environment for the young people.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

There are significant shortfalls in record keeping. Accidents and injuries sustained by young people, sanctions and restraints are not always documented or recorded in sufficient detail. Although, staff are provided with informative and prescriptive policies and procedures, they are not being followed, resulting in young people being inappropriately cared for and at risk. It was also impossible to cross reference accident records to incident forms or to significant entries into the main body of individual care plans. Staff spoken to confirmed that they had not received training in record keeping.

Young people are generally encouraged to develop socially acceptable behaviour with positive reinforcement of good behaviour. Staff receive training in de-escalation techniques as well as physical intervention. Physical intervention is used as a last resort and records of restraint are kept. However, some entries are illegible others lack sufficient detail about the actual restraint used, the effectiveness and consequence of the restraint and the young person's views about the incident.

The overall promotion of the safety of young people assessed at risk is insufficient. Risk assessments are not in place, for example, when young people's behaviour patterns have changed, staff do not record if and how all the issues have been risk assessed. Risk assessments also do not contain clear guidance for staff about how to respond to risks such as absconding, consequently, staff are not provided with clear guidance about whether or how to intervene. This lack of assessment does not fully safeguard the welfare of young people.

All significant events relating to the protection of young people accommodated in the home are not always reported to the relevant agencies including Ofsted. Communication with social workers is inconsistent and information about young people's progress is not always shared. Although records are securely stored, confidentiality has been breached when information was inappropriately shared with another placing authority.

The home has an anti-bullying policy and it is made clear in this policy and the young people's guide that bullying is not tolerated. Young people confirm that they have not experienced any problems with bullying since living in the home. There is a procedure to follow in the event of a young person going missing. Records show that relevant agencies are informed and records are completed as required.

No new staff have been employed since the last inspection. All visitors are expected to show identification and sign in before entering the premises. Regular health and safety checks are carried and sufficient fire drills also take place with all staff and young people involved. Equipment and installations are serviced as required.

Leadership and management

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

The leadership and management of the home are inconsistent and ineffective. The quality assurance systems are inadequate; consequently the monitoring of staff practice and the quality of care provided is poor. The quality assurance systems do not capture important information on accidents, physical intervention and the use of sanctions. Patterns or trends in behaviour are not identified or monitored. The progress young people make is not clear, areas for improvement are not highlighted and management have not identified the areas of poor practice raised during this inspection. As a consequence, staff are not supported to develop their skills, competence and knowledge in order to fulfil their role.

Five recommendations were made at the last inspection and four have been addressed; a written record of incidents of young people going missing is maintained and records of all statutory reviews of placement plans are retained on each young person's file. The home now has a satisfactory maintenance programme and staff adhere to the company policy for monitoring visitors to the home. The remaining recommendation; that risk assessments of young people's known and likely behaviours are carried out, recorded in writing and regularly reviewed has not been met and has been escalated to a statutory requirement.

There is a Statement of Purpose which informs young people, their families and placing authorities about the services provided by the home. The home also has a children's guide which is informative and produced in a child friendly format.

Staff receive regular supervision and information from these sessions informs staff of better care practices. The numbers of staff are sufficient to meet the needs of the young people and include staff from both genders and a range of backgrounds. Sufficient levels of staff have gained or are studying for the relevant National Vocational Qualification at level 3.

Equality and diversity practice is **satisfactory**.