

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC067895
Inspection date	26/06/2012
Inspector	Angus Mackay
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	16/02/2012
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2012

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 is registered to accommodate and care for no more than three young people. The home provides medium- to long-term residential care to young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Emergency placements can be facilitated dependant on the stability and mix of the young people in residence at the time. Young people are encouraged to maintain education at their school or college but may attend the company school. The home provides young people access to a psychotherapist in a therapy suite. The psychotherapist also provides advice to the staff team.

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**.

This is a home which benefits from good direction from the manager. The manager makes excellent use of monitoring information and quality audits to enhance the service for young people. Staff say it is, 'homely, relaxed and friendly,' 'it all comes from the manager who sets the tone for the work in the home. She is wonderful with the staff and the young people.' Young people have a very high opinion of the home, the manager and the staff. Relationships between staff and young people are good. Young people benefit from the consistency in the staff approach and the good communication with social workers and families. Young people say the staff look after them really well and describe the manager as fantastic. The manager's planned changes to staff appraisal and training will address shortfalls in meeting minimum standards. The manager has good relationships with the local community; however there are some weaknesses in how timely some responses to neighbourhood issues have been dealt with by the company.

The home is excellent at addressing health care and young people develop a clear understanding of how to improve their health through exercise and healthy eating. The home is well looked after, hygienic but homely. Young people enjoy living there and say they feel involved in the running of the home. Staff and young people maintain a safe environment with a strong focus on awareness of hazards. Induction

of staff does not always included practise of fire drills. The young people enjoy shopping for food with staff and assist in preparing the healthy appetising meals. The use of a dietician to ensure balanced healthy meals further enhances this good working practice. Young people enjoy the excellent range of community based activities staff assist them in attending.

Young people feel safe in the home and staff apply their training appropriately to keep them safe. Staff maintain excellent files with well linked health, placement and therapeutic plans clearly identifying personal and cultural needs. Young people benefit from the clear objectives and goals in these plans and clear directions to staff engagements. Bullying is rigorously addressed and young people are confident in the staff to keep them safe. One social worker stated, 'the staff are very good with the young people. They are caring but with clear boundaries.' There are few instances of young people going missing and staff interventions lead young people to say they will never do it again. Most young people are not involved in restraints. Young people involved in restraints show gradual tracked reduction over the period since the last inspection. The recording of restraints and sanctions were adjusted during the inspection to meet national standards.

Staff provide good support to young people to assist them in preparing for education. Young people benefit from additional support with reading, spelling and numeracy during evenings in the home. The school has been operating for six months and is still establishing working practices.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure that there are clear and effective procedures for controlling the activities of the home in relation to serious complaints about the provision and the quality of the provision, particularly in relation to neighbourhood relationships (NMS 21.1)
- ensure that where there has been a physical restraint children are always given the opportunity to be examined by a registered nurse or medical practitioner (NMS 3.16)
- ensure that the manager regularly monitors, in line with regulations, all records kept in the home to ensure compliance with the homes policies, to identify any concerns about specific incidents and to identify patterns and trends, in particular with regard to sanctions (NMS 21.2)
- ensure all staff hold the level 3 Children and Young People's Workforce Diploma or be working towards it within 6 months of confirmation of employment (NMS 18.5)
- ensure that staff annual appraisal takes into account any views of children the

service is providing for (NMS 19.6)

- ensure all staff have practiced the emergency escape plan so they know what to do in an emergency. (NMS 10.9)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make excellent progress with their identified health needs. They develop a clear understanding of healthy eating and the benefits of exercise. The home provides appropriate quantities of food, to a menu constructed in consultation with the young people and approved by a dietician. Young people enjoy assisting with the preparation of meals. Staff have all appropriate health and hygiene qualifications to aid them in maintaining high standards for the young people. Social workers comment positively about the significant improvements young people have made in achieving health targets without any stigmatising or use of special diets. One social worker said 'The manager has taken an excellent approach to the problem ensuring the young person does not see themselves as different or needing special diets but by engaging in a programme where they are always active and enjoying themselves.'

Young people enjoy good support from staff and therapists to enable them to develop a positive self-view. Placement plans are interlinked with risk assessments and therapeutic treatment programmes to give a clear pathway for young people to achieve targets which enhance their emotional resilience and strengthen their understanding of their personal background. Young people receive excellent structured guidance from staff to aid them in developing an understanding of the impact their behaviours have on others. Family contacts benefit from the on-going support young people receive from staff and the debriefing sessions after contacts. Social workers say that the home go, 'above and beyond to facilitate family contacts and to make them work to the benefit of the young people.'

Young people develop an awareness of others and a sense of social responsibility through their engagement in community events. All young people take part in a range of fund raising events either through clubs they belong to or with their keyworkers. They enjoy good relationships with the local community including health care, police and community support officers which aids their developing understanding of community supports. Staff assist young people in maintaining friendships and provide advice and counselling to aid them in staying safe in developing relationships.

All young people attend the company school and have excellent attendance there. The school is relatively new and is still establishing its systems and ways to work successfully with the young people. Social workers have mixed views about the school but praise the company's openness in discussing initial problems of structure and control. Young people say that they have not made as much progress as they would like in the school. Staff do additional work in the home with young people to

improve reading, writing and basic numeracy for the young people. Personal education plans identify progress young people have made in educational attainment. Some young people have made significant progress in their engagement in education.

Quality of care

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

Young people are well looked after by staff who have a comprehensive understanding of their needs and how to meet them. Young people show warmth and affection to staff who respond appropriately. Social workers comment positively on the excellent relationships between staff and young people. One social work saying that despite the young person's extremely difficult behaviour, 'he remains secure and confident that he is loved and will be properly cared for even when he is difficult.'

Young people explain the complaints procedure and say they know how to use it. Complaints are rare as children say they talk directly to staff or the manager if they have a difficulty. Complaints are fully investigated and young people are written to at the conclusion of the investigation. Young people discuss the complaints procedure in detail during their meeting and take it in turns to describe it to each other to encourage clear understanding of all supports available to them.

Young people make progress in line with clearly identified objectives and goals in their interlinked care and health plans. They confirm that they attend all planning meetings and that staff aid them in preparing for these. Staff ensure that young people improve their understanding of placement, education and health plans through their engagement in regular structured key working sessions. Plans including the therapeutic treatment plan clearly outline personal, cultural and religious needs of the young people and outline how the young people wish to meet these.

Staff ensure that all young people receive health care in line with their health care plans. Young people receive assistance to ensure they attend all appointments and follow courses of treatment. Staff work closely with external professionals such as children and adolescent mental health services to monitor and adjust treatment programmes in consultation with young people. Young people confirm that they can influence treatment programmes and believe they have improved their behaviour as a result.

Young people say they are involved in the running of the home and that they can influence things either directly with the manager or through their weekly meetings. They say that if they wish to they can alter the décor of the home although they like it as it is. Young people say that they can comment on all aspects of the home. The manager, in consultation with young people, has devised a feedback form to incorporate the views of young people into staff appraisals. The jointly constructed appraisal feedback process is awaiting approval from senior managers. Comments from parents, young people and social workers, about the service in general are

canvassed through feedback forms. Young people understand that they will not always get what they ask for but are confident that activities and hobby requests will generally be accommodate to help their social development.

Staff assist young people to prepare for school each day. Young people have excellent attendance at school and see it as alright but not great. Staff ensure that young people leave the home in their school uniform and that this is always clean and tidy. Staff assist young people in preparing a healthy packed lunch which always contains fruit and yoghurt. Staff assist young people with additional reading, spelling and simple numeracy exercises during the evening, to support their learning. Staff attend school events, education planning meetings and support young people in attending extra curricula events. One local authority looked after children education advisor said that staff accompanied a young person to a play in London two hours from the home.

Young people say that they do lots of activities from the home. All young people are involved in clubs, youth clubs or personal interest activities on a regular basis. Young people make considerable progress in developing appropriate social skills through these activities. Staff say that some of the activities also provide assistance to young people in engaging in religious services and broadening their understanding of religious festivities.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people say that they feel safe in the home and there is no bullying there. There is evidence in the records of instances of bullying which staff addressed instantly and resolved positively with the young people. Young people say that these were not really bullying more one off arguments but they would prefer them not to happen. They say that staff are excellent at protecting them and that if there was any bullying they would just talk to staff. Staff employ a well co-ordinated approach to any instance of bullying and ensure they address it to the satisfaction of the victim. Staff work closely with other professionals ensuring they are actively involved in analysis and response to these incidents.

Young people rarely go missing from the home with only three incidents involving two young people since the last inspection. Staff followed appropriate procedures to keep the young people safe in these situations. The young people involved say that this is not something they would do again.

The home provides staff with training in safeguarding and staff apply this in their work with young people to enhance their safe care. The home has recently revised child protection procedures and has forwarded them to the Local Authority Designated Officer for Child Protection for consideration and comment. Staff are aware of the particular needs of the young people and provide key working and counselling to enhance their safe care. The manager has arranged additional training for staff with the local community health service to enhance their ability to address

sensitive matters to do with sexual health and developing relationships, to enhance their safeguarding of young people.

Young people support the safe recruitment of staff by their involvement in the interview process. The home completes all appropriate checks prior to the commencement of employment of new staff. The manager has recruited a staff group well balanced in age and gender, having a range of appropriate role models for the young people. All staff are of an age suitable for their role and in excess of four years older than the oldest young person.

Young people have a highly detailed placement plan, therapeutic treatment plan, and positive handling/risk assessment to advise staff interventions. Young people's contribution to the plans ensure they reflect their diversity and accurately outline their specific personal and cultural needs. Young people and staff construct these plans, detailing very structured interventions to de-escalate situations. Young people work with staff to assume responsibility for their actions and to positively resolve situations. Staff construct the plans to guide interventions in situations of ever increasing or decreasing difficulty always ending with discussion and debriefing with the young person to aid learning. Some situations result in restraints and these are well recorded and analysed to seek better outcomes in future. Most of the young people have very few instances of restraint and all show reduction in restraints over time. Following any restraint young people are offered an opportunity to comment on the incident and undergo a debriefing with someone not involved in the incident. Staff do not routinely offer young people the choice of being seen by a qualified nurse or medical practitioner. During the inspection the manager adjusted the guidance to staff to include the routine offer of medical assistance to young people. Staff praise the support they receive from the manager and from the home in their work with challenging behaviour. Staff say that if they are assaulted at work, or involved in a restraint, the manager provides excellent support to them. The manager monitors accidents and injuries at work and conducts return to work interviews following any absence. There are no recent absences due to assaults at work and staff put this down to their consistent approach to the young people.

Staff generally use positive encouragement with young people to develop good outcomes in conflict resolution. On occasions staff use sanctions and these are generally appropriate and clearly linked to the behaviour. The manager monitors all sanctions adjusting those which are judged to be inappropriate or ineffective. Staff do not always record sanctions clearly making it difficult to understand the timescale or to evaluate their effectiveness.

Leadership and management

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

The manager assumed responsibility for the home following the last inspection and is currently completing registration with Ofsted. Staff, young people and visiting professionals say the manager is excellent, providing good support and guidance to the home. One social worker saying, 'staff are well supervised and directed in their

work and the manager is exceptionally open and frank with me.' Staff say that they receive regular supervision of a high standard which aids them in their work with the young people. The manager has identified the training needs of all staff to meet national standards and to provide good care to the young people. Not all staff have commenced identified training to gain an appropriate qualification at level 3.

The manager is very good at seeking the views of young people, parents and social workers about the service. The manager incorporates feedback into reviews of the home seeking to improve the care she provides to young people. The manager further seeks to ensure young people benefit from a continuously improving service by excellent use of internal and external monitoring reports. The manager uses analysis of this information in staff meetings and in meetings with senior managers of the company. The manager uses these meetings to ensure they are all responding to identified patterns or deficits in the service in a well-coordinated way. Young people benefit from this co-ordinated approach which ensures appropriate and considered responses to their actions and behaviour. A social worker commented on a strength of the home being, 'they display a lot of thinking and reflection about the young person's presenting problem and come to me with positive suggestions.' The manager has recently revised the Statement of Purpose which the responsible individual has approved, ensuring that young people and their families have more detailed information about the service.

Young people have benefitted from the manager successfully addressing previous recommendations. Staff recording of medication is improved and the manager, the regulation 33 visitor and quality assurance officer closely monitor this on a monthly basis. The manager sends monitoring reports to the HMCI at the recommended frequency to enhance the safe care of the young people.

Young people like the home saying, 'it is great here, it is properly looked after and is always clean.' The manager ensures the home remains clean and hygienic through the implementation of a comprehensive structured weekly cleaning schedule which involves young people as appropriate. Staff ensure young people have a home which is clean inside and outside. Visitors for education reviews comment, 'first impressions were good they have given thought to displays in the home and do not have unnecessary instructions or poorly worded notices. The place is homely and has cosiness about it, like a proper home.' Staff assist the younger residents to clean and tidy their rooms. The manager provides all staff with appropriate training to aid them in providing a safe and hygienic environment for the young people. The manager rigorously monitors all health and safety matters ensuring a safe environment for staff and young people. Young people discuss health and safety matters in their weekly meeting including fire drills. Most staff and all young people have a detailed knowledge of the emergency evacuation procedures which they explain to visitors on admission. However not all staff have practiced the evacuation procedure to ensure they know what to do in an emergency.

The home generally has good relationships with neighbours but has not fully addressed the small number of concerned neighbours, in a timely manner. The external managers of the home explained the approach they are taking to address

concerns but have not yet fully taken action to implement this this strategy. The manager of the home enjoys good relationships with other agencies, ensuring young people receive appropriate support. Local community support police officers enjoy friendly relationships with the young people and call into the home, informally, to have tea with the young people. Young people benefit by being able to approach these officers in the community seeing them as positive and helpful.

The manager ensures that all shifts have sufficient staff to meet the needs of the young people. The staff team is suitably mixed in age and gender ensuring the team can meet the diverse needs of the young people. Young people receive a well-planned service, coordinated through shift handover meetings and reference to excellently maintained personal programmes. Staff ensure young people contribute to their care plans which the manager stores securely in the office. The manager organises a monthly audit of all recording to ensure it is clear accurate and contributes to an understanding of the young person's life which they can comment on.

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.