

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Alicea Churchward
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Date of last inspection	01/02/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This is a privately owned children's home that provides care and accommodation for up to four young people of either gender aged from 8 to 16 years. There is a focus on meeting the needs of young people with behavioural and emotional difficulties through holistic care planning and individual support.

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**.

Young people are making good progress in relation to their starting points across all aspects of their physical, social, emotional and behavioural development. This is underpinned by effective, high quality support from staff.

Care planning and practice are highly personalised to meet the individual needs of each young person. Staff in the home demonstrate a good understanding of safe working practice.

Young people confirm that the home is a safe place to live; that they get on with each other and the rules are fair. This is because staff ensure that boundaries and expectations about group living are consistently followed.

Leadership and management arrangements are strong, and leaders and managers are effective at tackling weaknesses and securing improvement.

Three young people responded very positively to the surveys although they declined to be directly involved in the inspection on this occasion. However, they have met with the inspector previously and gave assurances that nothing had changed. Their care and support remains good.

Three requirements and two recommendations are raised at this inspection, to improve practice and ensure all professionals have the required information relating to young people and incidents.

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
28 (2001)	ensure that there is a record of all sanctions placed in young people's files (Regulation 26 and Schedule 3 (13))	31/08/2012
30 (2001)	ensure, if any of the events listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 5 takes place, the persons indicated in respect of the event in column 2 of the table are notified without delay; in particular ensure Ofsted is kept informed of those events (Regulation 30 (1) and Schedule 5) (Regulation 30 (1))	31/08/2012
34 (2001)	ensure that the development plan provides for consultation with children accommodated in the home, their parents and placing authorities. (Regulation 34 (3))	31/12/2012

Recommendations

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

- revise the children's guide to include contact details for the Children's Rights Director (NMS 1.5)
- continue to pursue copies of all of the young people's pathway plans. (NMS 12.2)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people receive personalised care that promotes all aspects of their individual identity and are each treated as an individual rather than a member of a group. The staff and clinical psychologist work well with individual young people to ensure that they develop a positive self-view; build upon emotional resilience, and have a good understanding of their background. This work is well recorded in key worker sessions. Both staff and young people have regular contact with the clinical psychologist to discuss such issues and get the right support.

The ability to form and sustain attachments depends very much on individual young people and their backgrounds; many of the young people have been in placement

over a long period of time and have developed positive attachments to the staff and manager of the home. In some cases, young people remain in contact with the home after leaving this also demonstrates that positive attachments have been made.

Young people are encouraged to lead a healthy lifestyle. Young people in the home are not known to use substances or alcohol and smoking is discouraged; smoking cessation to assist with this is in place. All young people have access to a range of health services to promote and meet their physical, emotional, and psychological health. All health appointments are up to date and attended.

All young people are encouraged and do attend at school, further education or other educational provision. The home has structure and routine to ensure that this is the norm. The home has worked hard to ensure that this becomes a regular and expected part of living there. They have provided staff from the home to support those young people who require it and this has led to good attendance and attainment. Older young people placed have attended college and vocational courses and have done very well.

Young people are encouraged and enabled to make and sustain friendships with young people outside the home, which may involve friends visiting the home and reciprocal arrangements to visit friends' homes. They also benefit from pursuing individual interests and hobbies. This includes taking part in a range of activities, including leisure activities and trips.

Young people are benefiting from appropriate contact with family, friends and other people who are important to them. The home facilitates and monitors contact closely to ensure that it is as positive experience as it can be. Young people's wishes and feelings about contact are taken into account and form the basis of their placement plans.

The home has undertaken a lot of work with individual young people to ensure that they are effectively prepared for a successful transition to independence and to help them build confidence in their skills. Young people have personal advisors to assist in the development of pathway plans; one young person's pathway plan was not available at the time of this visit. Young people wish to remain in the local area and staff are working hard to support them with this.

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy positive and constructive relationships with staff and with each other, and they behave appropriately. Warm respectful relationships between staff and young people were observed throughout the inspection. Young people report that their care and support is very good.

Through regular consultation in respect of day-to-day matters and regular consultation in the young people's meeting young people's views, wishes and

feelings are actively sought and are listened to, demonstrating that they influence the running of the home. The manager has developed action plans to matters raised in the young people's meetings to provide a response to requests. Young people are consulted through their statutory review meetings and an Independent Reviewing Officer offered some favourable feedback about how the home enables young people to do this.

Young people understand how to make a complaint if they are unhappy with any aspect of their care; they have used the home's procedures to do this about an issue at school. They receive prompt feedback on any concerns or complaints raised and are kept informed of progress. The home maintains good records of any complaints and their outcomes. There is a variety of information in relation to independent advice, support and independent advocacy; this is good because this further allows young people to raise issues outside of the home if they wish.

Placement plans are good and young people and those people who are significant to them, contribute to the plans. They are clear documents that give a good account of individual young people's day-to-day needs. Equality and diversity issues are clearly identified in care planning and positively addressed in daily living.

The plans are of a high quality and have been further developed to include outcomes achieved and targets for the next revision to ensure that the continuing work with young people does not drift; this also keeps the key workers focused upon areas of work to be completed. Young people report, in their surveys, that they are aware of their placement plans and help to write them.

There are a range of purposeful and enjoyable activities available to young people; young people have the opportunity to go on group activities that they choose. In addition, young people pursue individual interests and hobbies. This includes taking part in a range of activities, including leisure activities and trips. This is good because it helps them build upon their confidence and self-esteem.

The home is situated in a location that supports its aims and objectives. Young people are able to access external services, recreational activities and to maintain and develop relationships with family and friends. The home provides a comfortable and homely environment and is well maintained and decorated. Young people are encouraged to maintain their own bedroom and do this with varying success; this is supported by incentive plans and staff support.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

All young people report being safe in the home and confirm that there is no bullying; relationships with older young people and younger residents are appropriate. Staff undertake work with young people about keeping safe and the clinical psychologist has also undertaken work with young people regarding identifying positive relationships.

Instances of young people being missing have been problematic for some individual young people. This has been addressed with the placing authorities in that older residents wanted to have overnight stays. The home has very strong links with the local police missing from home co-ordinator. Any issues coming to light in relation to protecting the welfare of young people whilst out of the home have been appropriately addressed through a multi-agency strategy to protect individual young people; this has ensured that the frequency of any absence has reduced significantly. The home maintains good risk assessments for individual young people to inform staff of action that they must take in individual circumstances.

Positive behaviour is promoted through incentives which are in place for individual young people and this works very well. Staff have received training in positive behaviour management and restraint; no restraints have taken place since the home has been registered and the use of sanctions is very low. The home does not currently ensure that records of sanctions are placed in young people's files; this is important in case young people want to see this information in the future. Young people know what the rules are and report that they are fair; these are regularly reinforced by staff and young people do not live in a punitive environment. Their individual strengths are regularly reinforced.

There have been no new staff recruited to the home since the last full inspection. Staff files have been inspected during previous inspections and demonstrate that staff working with children living in the home are carefully selected and vetted. Staff ensure that the identification of visitors is verified before entering the home; this also helps prevent unsuitable people from having the opportunity to harm children or place them at risk.

Investigations into allegations or suspicion of harm are handled fairly, quickly, and consistently, and in a way that provides effective protection and support for the young person and the person who is the subject of the allegation. The manager maintains clear records of any allegations and has good links with the local area safeguarding team. Staff are clear about safe working practice and their responsibilities under the home's whistleblowing policies; further ensuring the safety of young people.

The home is physically safe and appropriately secure. There are a variety of risk assessments in place in relation to the home and activities that include the risk reduction measures taken. This also includes a fire risk assessment, fire evacuations and regular checks of equipment. All maintenance checks are in place to ensure that young people live in a safe environment.

Leadership and management

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

The home is effectively and efficiently managed. The Registered Manager has been in post since the home was registered by Ofsted; providing continuity to the young

people and staff in the home. The manager is supported by a committed and enthusiastic staff team who speak positively about the young people in their care. They also speak positively about the support that they receive including 'support is second to none I couldn't ask for a better manager or company'.

The home can demonstrate capacity for continuing improvement, based on its track record, performance since its previous inspection, and evidence of the impact of improvements. At the last inspection, one requirement was issued to ensure that the home displays the revised registration certificate; this has been addressed. Recommendations from the previous inspection have been partially addressed. The overall judgement remains good.

At the time of the last inspection there were three recommendations in relation to ensuring pathway plans are obtained; this has been partially addressed as one young person's pathway plan has not been sent by the placing authority; despite repeated attempts to obtain this document. This is having little impact upon the young person concerned as they know what their plan is and they have been well equipped by the home for independent living; as well as having contact with their personal advisor. In addition, that the home has a clear development plan; this too has been partially addressed as the home has not included consultation with young people and other stakeholders; this is important because it will demonstrate how their views are taken into account.

The provider meets the aims and objectives in the Statement of Purpose. Young people, staff and the placing authority are clear about the aims and objectives of the home and what services and facilities it provides. The young people's guide has recently been revised by one of the young people and is an attractive and informative document. There is now a space to include the Independent Reviewing Officer's details; which was a recommendation from the last inspection; but a minor oversight means that contact details for the Children's Rights Director are not included.

The registered person actively and regularly monitors the quality of care provided, including consultation with young people about their welfare. The reports are informative and give a good overview of how the home is operating. The home has sound systems to review the quality of care each month. The Registered Manager consistently monitors the running of the home and identifies areas for improvement. Action is taken to ensure the home meets young people's needs.

The home employs a sufficient number of staff, who are appropriately trained and effectively supervised and supported. Staff receive regular supervision of a good quality. Staff's individual training needs are identified and met and a recent recommendation in respect of the independent Regulation 33 monitoring has been acted upon. This is important because this ensures that staff are kept up to date with legal and professional developments.

Many significant events relating to the protection of children accommodated in the home are notified by the registered person to the appropriate authorities, and

appropriate action is taken following the incident. One incident has not been reported to Ofsted.

All records are clear, up to date and stored securely, and contribute to an understanding of the young person's life, experiences and plans for the future. Many of the entries are read and signed by young people including behaviour management records, key worker sessions, risk assessments and placement plans; this gives young people an understanding of their individual care experience.

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.