

## Inspection report for children's home

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| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC355755         |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 16/04/2013       |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Malcolm Stannard |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | Full             |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>       | Children's home  |

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| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 27/02/2013 |
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## Service information

### Brief description of the service

This privately owned children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for one young person with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

### 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 at the home receive a large degree of support from the management and staff team. Arrangements are in place for all health, education, enrichment and preparation for adult life needs to be met. The up-to-date care planning and risk assessments inform staff and help them with their work.

Staff work proactively and positively with young people regardless of the barriers they put up, encouraging them to achieve their potential. However, young people are reluctant to engage with the opportunities on offer and do not obtain the full benefit of the staff team and external professionals input.

Risk assessments are in place to identify the proactive factors required to address some of the young people's risky behaviour. Good, positive arrangements with the police and health services have been agreed to support the protection of young people's welfare.

An area of development identified at this inspection is to ensure that all required information is available on young people's files. Additionally, the amount of life skills work undertaken with young people does not ensure that they are able to be fully prepared for adult life.

## 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<br>(2001) | ensure that the registered person maintains in respect of each child who is accommodated in a children's home a record in permanent form which includes the information, documents and records specified in Schedule 3 relating to that child. Specifically, a copy of the statement of special educational need. (Regulation 28(1)(a)) | 14/06/2013 |

## Recommendations

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

- ensure children are supported to develop practical skills including shopping, buying, cooking and keeping food, washing clothes, personal self care and understanding and taking responsibility for personal healthcare. Specifically, increase the quantity of preparation work young people undertake. (NMS 12.1)

## Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **adequate**.

Young people fail to engage fully with many of the areas of support available to them at the home. However, when consideration is given to their starting point, they have made some progress which for them as individuals is significant. Positively, staff continue to motivate young people to take advantage of the provision available for them, even when young people put barriers to progress in place.

Young people benefit from the focused work carried out with them. They are able to learn about issues such as health, keeping safe, family dynamics and trust and have made some progress in developing a positive self view. They are also able to increase knowledge and understanding of their background.

Young people do not demonstrate good attendance at educational placements. Some young people have not engaged with school or college for a lengthy period of time prior to coming to the home. While they have attended some of the schooling provided by the provision, this has been sporadic.

Young people benefit from the comprehensive and proactive arrangements in place to address their health. They are able to enjoy good health and understand the

importance of a healthy lifestyle. However, there is reluctance from young people to engage with psychiatric services which have been identified for them. Young people take responsibility for some areas of their own health, attending medical appointments and holding their own medication. Young people now join staff for meals in the home's dining room/kitchen and will on occasions eat the healthy food prepared for them. This is a development from a previous position when young people did not attend meals or interact with staff in what is a social occasion. Young people spoke about the meals and how they would leave some parts of foods which they did not like.

Young people attend some social and leisure activities and benefit from the increased confidence this gives them. However, they do not take full advantage of the range of opportunities offered to them or the chances to enjoy positive engagement with the wider community. There are some relationships in place with peers in the immediate neighbourhood which enhances the social experience for young people.

Young people acquire some skills which will benefit their transition to adult life. They are assisted to learn about healthy meals and safety in the home environment and are able to undertake shopping trips with staff. Their refusal to engage wholly does not enable them to benefit fully from the packages of learning put in place by staff. Preparation for adult life is essential for the young people at the home. However, the current rate of acquisition of practical life skills is not conducive to ensuring they will have the ability to be independent upon leaving the home.

Some young people at the home have failed to demonstrate a reduction in risk taking behaviours and offending. Incidents of criminal damage and assault have also occurred. These events take place almost exclusively within the home and not in the local community. Those young people who are subject to youth offending requirements fail to wholly fulfil the requirements of the external agency working with them.

Young people are supported to share their wishes and views, including their thoughts on how the home operates on a daily basis. Young people have made positive progress in developing their ability to communicate with staff. Some young people previously did not engage in any interaction, but are now able to discuss their feelings and concerns.

## **Quality of care**

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

Staff at the home work tirelessly with young people who display a particularly wide range of challenging behaviours. They are consistently looking at varied ways to work with young people which will impact on their lives positively and make a difference. They demonstrate a commitment to work imaginatively with the young people who do not always respond positively to the input provided for them.

Each young person has a comprehensive care plan which is updated on a regular

basis. The plans signpost directly to risk assessments for each area of the young person's development. Plans are detailed and enable staff to carry out work which is focused on the individual needs of the young people. Work identified and undertaken is divided into every child matters outcomes, meaning young people's health, achievement and safety is always considered. All cultural and additional needs of young people are identified and addressed as part of daily life at the home. Young people are always afforded the opportunity to contribute to plans for their future care.

Staff at the home are extremely proactive in putting in place structured plans for young people. These include periods of education, enrichment activities, social learning opportunities and any planned appointments. Young people have a copy of the plan and this helps them to be aware of what is planned for them on each week. The planners also include details of any reviews or planning meetings so that young people can be prepared and have time to provide any contribution to the meetings they might wish. Pathway plans are in place for those young people for who it is appropriate. However, young people refuse to contribute to the content of the plans when asked by their social workers.

Staff work professionally and proactively with other agencies and professionals. They consistently challenge boundaries to young people's progress in order to try and secure the best outcomes for them. Some of the work they undertake is hampered by a lack of clarity and definition of desired outcomes from placing authorities. This led some staff to believe they were not able to work with young people as fully as they would like to, spending some of their time merely containing the behaviour of young people. Young people's views about their future are also continually changing. This means that plans are regularly amended and the work required to be carried out is modified.

Young people have access to all services required to promote their physical and psychological health needs. They engage with some of these, mostly the general health provision. There is a lack of engagement from young people with emotional health professionals. Staff consistently approach external mental health agencies for support and advice, while continually motivating young people to take advantage of the services. The looked after children's nurse and an adolescent mental health professional worker undertake joint work to try and persuade young people to engage. Staff advise those young people who hold their own medication on the importance of keeping and using the medication safely.

Staff have the skills to communicate effectively with young people and there are individual strategies to promote positive behaviours. Consistent and appropriate boundaries in line with care plans are in place; these continue to be implemented even when occurrences of conflict and barriers to progress arise.

Staff continue to support and provide opportunities for young people's educational attainment. An education coordinator employed by the registered provider undertakes some in-house educational sessions on a part time basis. An internal education plan is available for each young person and reports from the group's

school with which they are enrolled are available. Connexions appointments for older young people have been made so that advice regarding vocational undertakings can be gained. Some of the information supplied by placing authorities on the intended plans for the older young people relating to college or work placements is vague.

## **Safeguarding children and young people**

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

Appropriate procedures are in place to safeguard the welfare of young people. Staff demonstrate an awareness of relevant issues including the risk of sexual exploitation and positive strategies have been devised to address this. Procedures are in place to guide staff in the notification of any child protection issue arising. There are good lines of communication in place with external child protection agencies.

Full risk assessments are undertaken on young people. These detail a range of areas which could potentially see them putting themselves at risk. Staff have reviewed the assessments following the recent display of some risky behaviours by some young people. Actions required to negate these risks and who should carry these out are clearly identified in the assessments. Staff initiate a number of protective factors, this includes in an agreement made with the social worker, accessing the support of the police and medical/psychiatric services where appropriate.

Positive and proactive relationships are in place with the local police. Staff at the home are able to contact them for advice and support when a young person is going through a difficult period. This helps to protect the safety of young people.

Young people understand how to use the home's formal complaint process. In practice they speak about any issues verbally with staff and receive immediate responses. Young people also have access to an advocate external to the home. This means that they can feel confident in raising any issues.

Expectations of appropriate behaviour are made clear to young people. Individual incentive and goals sheets are used to encourage attainment and engagement. These have met with mixed success with young people being selective with the outcomes they strive to achieve. Staff will always spend as long as is required talking to young people to divert them from any negative behaviour. Staff try and divert all situations which arise and there has been no occurrence of physical intervention since the home reopened.

Sanctions are used sparingly and are implemented only when it has not been possible to undertake a more restorative or reparative approach. Staff use positive praise and interaction to motivate young people to achieve, even when there is little engagement from young people.

The welfare, health and safety of everyone at the home is protected by the arrangements in place for the vetting of visitors and the maintenance of a safe building. Gas and electrical equipment is tested on a regular basis and fire procedure

testing is carried out along with equipment checks. All staff have undertaken online fire safety training.

## **Leadership and management**

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

A Statement of Purpose sets out the aims and objectives of the home. The practice of the manager and staff is in line with the stated aims. The manager has a clear plan for development of practice at the home. Young people receive their own guide which sets out the expectations of them and their rights and responsibilities during their time at the home.

The Registered Manager leads an experienced staff team who have been together since the home reopened. They are supported to carry out their roles and receive regular formal supervision. All of the staff team hold a formal qualification or are working towards the relevant diploma. Staff receive training which helps them to provide good quality care. Recent courses attended include: sexual health, drug awareness, first aid and physical intervention refresher training. Further training is planned, including the opportunity for a staff member to work alongside a mental health professional enabling them to increase their knowledge of the subject.

The number of staff employed is sufficient to meet the needs of young people placed at the home. There are satisfactory arrangements for cover to be provided for absence through sickness. A rota is in operation which meets the needs of young people and ensures that a mix of genders is available during each shift. This allows young people to receive care from a staff member of their choice.

Staff meetings are held which ensure that information about the home, young people and developments in practice can be shared. The manager monitors the progress of the young people and while some of the improvements are small, the impact of the staff group's intensive work can be seen.

Monitoring visits to the home to assess the quality of care are undertaken monthly on behalf of the registered provider. Reports compiled following these visits are thorough and cover all areas of the homes operation. They also include good detail of the young people in the home, their current situation and progression. Young people and staff are spoken with during these visits in order that their views on the home can be included. The manager completes an internal monitoring report which audits the completion and review undertaken of a range of administrative paperwork held. Copies of all monitoring reports are submitted to Ofsted within the required timescales.

The manager and staff maintain a constant dialogue with near neighbours. The manager explained that by doing so he hoped that any issues can be dealt with at an early stage. He reported a good relationship with an immediate neighbour and gave examples of recently ensuring that damaged fencing and a blocked drain were repaired. There has been one formal complaint received from a neighbour since the

last inspection. This related to a young person contacting a peer in the community and was resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

Comprehensive records which are stored securely are held on each young person contributing to a clear understanding of their life. Young people's files contain the information required to be held by the regulation with the exception of a statement of special educational needs. Evidence is available that staff at the home have requested this documentation on a number of occasions. Records of all significant events involving young people are notified to the relevant agencies.

The manager and staff team at the home display resilience and commitment when working with young people to meet their needs, irrespective of how individual these may be or any barriers put in their way.

## 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.