

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC356864
Inspection date	24/05/2013
Inspector	Sarah Oldham
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	24/01/2013
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2013

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 a privately run children's home, which provides care and accommodation for up to two young people who may have 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 are making good progress during their time at the home. They receive consistent levels of care and support from a small dedicated staff team. This provides stability and reassurance and enables young people to develop their overall skills and abilities.

Education is supported and young people are showing signs of good progress from their initial starting points. Opportunities to take part in vocational skills to further support educational attainment are in place and this is providing additional encouragement to attend education.

Detailed individual placement plans identify specific needs and how these needs will be met. Health care is supported although some young people require additional support with promotion of their health through ensuring they have nutritionally balanced and varied diets. Young people are made aware of the risks of smoking and substance misuse and support with smoking cessation is made available.

Placing social workers and independent reviewing officers are positive about the progress made by young people at the home. Staff ensure that regular communication takes place to enable a clear overview of progress made to be gained.

The views of young people are actively sought to enable them to play a significant part in how the home operates. Young people value this and this further promotes the positive relationship between staff and young people.

Young people are supported to remain safe. They are provided with information about keeping safe. All staff undertake safe caring and safeguarding training. Although there have been some incidents of young people missing from care, appropriate procedures are followed to promote their safety and well-being and good links have been developed with local police.

All staff receive regular supervision, access to training and support to ensure that they promote good outcomes for young people. Most staff hold relevant qualifications in caring for children and young people. Those staff who do not are supported to undertake this training following the completion of their induction and probationary period.

Effective monitoring of the service is undertaken by the manager and clear development plans are in place to continue to improve the care and support provided by the home. As a result of this inspection one requirement and one recommendation has been made in relation to promoting a healthy diet for young people and ensuring on-going support is offered to access health care appointments.

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
13 (2001)	ensure that children accommodated in a children's home are provided with food which is properly prepared, wholesome and nutritious and is sufficiently varied. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(ii)(iv))	14/06/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure that children understand their health needs, how to maintain a healthy lifestyle and to make informed decisions about their health. (NMS 6.2)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people make good progress from their initial starting points. They benefit

from being supported by a dedicated staff team that provides them with continuity of care. Young people say that they have positive relationships with the staff. One young person said ' I get on really well with the staff and they support me well. Most of the time I have the same staff and I like this as I like people I know to work with me.'

Young people develop healthy life styles. They attend the majority of their health care appointments and this leads to improvements in their health. They have a clear understanding of the importance of good health. Young people have reduced their smoking and there has been a significant reduction in substance misuse. These measures contribute to their overall improved health.

Young people's attendance at school has increased significantly and although not 100%, the aims of the placing authority have been met and sustained. Attainment has also increased enabling the young people to progress so that they can gain qualifications for their futures.

Young people take part in a range of activities both within the home and local community. These include boxing, attending leisure centres, trips out and use of community resources. These measures enable and support them to develop a range of interests and experiences.

Contact arrangements are known and supported by staff in accordance with individual placement plans. Young people are enabled to invite friends to the home and develop good peer group friendships.

Quality of care

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

Young people are supported on a 1:1 basis and feel confident and supported well by the staff team. This enables them to make good progress to achieve positive outcomes. All young people have highly individualised placement plans that identify their needs and how these will be met. Placement plans are discussed and developed in consultation with the young people, placing social workers and other people significant to them. These plans are kept under review and any changes are clearly recorded and acted upon. Not all young people wish to sign their plans and where this is agreed a record is made of this and the discussion about the plan. These measures ensure that the young people remain central to all discussions regarding their plans.

All young people are registered with a doctor, dentist and optician. Where a young person declines to attend health care appointments, staff work with the young people to reduce anxiety and book alternative dates. Healthy eating is encouraged by staff. Menus are discussed and drawn up with young people. However, some young people decline nutritionally balanced meals. Where this is the case, staff continue to offer alternative meals which have some healthy aspects to encourage young people who have had a history of poor diet to try alternative meals.

Support and information is also provided on smoking cessation, drug and alcohol misuse. This enables young people to have a good understanding of the negative impact of this on health and to take appropriate measures to address this.

Education is effectively supported and young people who have a history of non-attendance or engagement in school attend the organisation's school.

Staff encourage and support young people to plan in readiness for independence. This includes planning menus, shopping for food and preparing meals as well as completing basic household tasks. They are also supported with budgeting and gaining work experience to provide them with choices for when they leave care. Young people say that this is very important to them and find the support very positive.

Young people know how to raise any concerns or how to make a formal complaint. One young person said 'If I was unhappy I would either talk to the manager or my social worker or contact children's rights. I feel that if I did have a complaint it would be taken seriously and something done about it.'

The home is comfortably furnished and young people are involved in decisions about the décor and furnishings. Since the last inspection further redecoration has been undertaken and the kitchen breakfast bar has been removed to provide space for a table and chairs. Both the young people and staff feel that this will be better as they can all sit together at meal times. Bedrooms are personalised to reflect the current interests of young people.

Young people are encouraged and supported to try a range of activities to enable them to develop their own interests. This includes using the local community facilities for example sport and leisure centres as well as having recreation facilities at the home. An example of this is the former garage has been converted into a gym area with boxing and training equipment. One young person said 'I enjoy boxing and it also lets me get rid of some of my anger using the boxing equipment.'

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 living at the home. They say that staff provide them with good information about staying safe and this is regularly discussed during key worker sessions. Young people are aware of the procedures that staff follow if they are missing from care and since the last inspection these incidents have decreased. However, a recent increase has been discussed and addressed with the young people. One young person said, 'I have sometimes not come back in on time because I want to spend time with my friend. Staff have spoken with me about the importance of remaining in touch because they are concerned about my safety.'

All staff have undertaken child protection and safeguarding training as well as

training on child sexual exploitation and missing from care. These measures ensure that staff are aware of the signs and symptoms to be aware of with regards potential abuse as well as the procedures to follow in the event of a young person missing from care. Full support is provided to the young person upon their return and the opportunity to speak with an independent person is made available.

Young people are encouraged and supported to develop positive behaviour through a number of strategies. Behaviour management plans are in place and staff work consistently to de-escalate any negative behaviour and to praise and reward positive behaviours. They are aware of how easy it is for young people's negative behaviours to result in them being criminalised and they work proactively with young people to avoid this wherever possible.

Although there have been some incidents when police have been called to the home, these have reduced over recent months and support to manage behaviours is increasingly effective. One young person said 'I can get very angry and upset at times but staff reassure me and my anger is not as bad as it used to be.' Physical intervention is rarely used and sanctions are viewed as fair by young people.

Recruitment and selection procedures are robust. All staff have references checked and any gaps in employment explored. Criminal record checks are completed prior to any staff member commencing duty. These measures demonstrate that the home has taken reasonable steps to ensure that people who are unsuitable to work with vulnerable children are not appointed.

Individual risk assessments are in place that further promote and support the safety of young people. In addition household risk assessments are in place and regular health and safety checks are completed. These include checks to portable appliances, the building and fire safety. These measures contribute to the safety of the young people living at the home and the staff working there.

Leadership and management

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

Young people are supported by staff who have the skills, knowledge and experience to provide consistent support. All staff undertake regular training to ensure that their knowledge and skills remain current. New staff who do not hold appropriate qualifications in caring for children and young people undertake these following completion of CWDC induction standards. This means that staff receive appropriate training to undertake their role. Care and support provided is child focussed and all staff have high aspirations for the young people living at the home.

The home has a Registered Manager who has the necessary qualifications, skills and experience to provide good leadership and support to staff. All staff receive regular supervision and annual appraisals to support them within their role. Staff say that they feel that they are very well supported and are always able to contact either the manager or a manager on call if they have any concerns. In addition, regular team meetings are held that enable staff to focus on the levels of support to, and the

progress of, the young people. Staff liaise with education and health care professionals to ensure that they are providing consistent support to enable young people to make good progress from their initial starting point.

The home has a clear Statement of Purpose in place that is kept up to date and made available to placing authorities, parents and other interested parties. A children's guide is made available to young people and this provides an overview of what it is like living at the home. The manager and staff are aware of the importance of ensuring that children placed at the home are comfortable with one another and to achieve this they follow a clear matching process. When there is a vacancy at the home, the young people who are currently living there are consulted about any new placements. Wherever possible, apart from an emergency admission, a series of introductory visits are arranged. This enables young people to meet prior to a new resident moving in.

The manager ensures that consultation with placing social workers is held on a regular basis. This enables consistent and joint working to be maximised. The views of placing social workers, independent reviewing officers and parents are gathered on a regular basis and contribute to the overall monitoring of the home.

The manager undertakes monthly checks on paperwork and the progress young people have made. These, along with the monthly Regulation 33 visits undertaken by a manager not directly responsible for the home, inform the bi-annual monitoring reports. A copy of the report is made available to Ofsted and outlines how outcomes for young people are being supported and on-going development plans to ensure that the home continues to meet its overall aims and objectives.

At the last inspection a recommendation was made in relation to ensuring that staff members left in charge had the relevant experience and training. This recommendation has been addressed.

Comprehensive individual records are maintained for each young person. These enable a clear reflection of the progress made of each young person during their placement at the home. The records are clearly recorded and stored securely. Young people are aware that if they wish to do so they can access their records and are encouraged and supported to contribute their views to these records.

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.