

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Maureen Hamer
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Date of last inspection	28/01/2013
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This home is owned by a private organisation which owns a number of children's homes. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for one young person at any one time who may have emotional and behaviour 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**.

There are significant strengths evident in this service. The culture of the home is caring and reflective. This is providing long-term placement stability for young people with attachment issues.

Overall young people have made adequate progress since living in this home particularly in relation to engagement in education and reducing physically violent behaviour. However despite consistent support being provided by staff some aspects of young people's progress has reduced and there is an increase in risk-taking behaviours.

Placement plans are of a good quality. However young people now show some disengagement with the values of the home and feel that some sanctions are too restrictive. Staff work as an effective team to provide consistent boundaries. However, the impact of sanctions and young people's views about sanctions are not always recorded. Independent advocacy is used to ensure that young people's rights are upheld.

A particular strength of the home is effective partnership working. This promotes young people's safety. The manager has effective quality assurance in place. However not all records are signed and dated hindering clear lines of accountability.

There is a culture of continuous improvement and a capacity to improve.

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)	maintain in respect of each child who is accommodated in a children's home a record in permanent form which is signed and dated by the author of each written copy. (Regulation (28) (1)(c))	26/07/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure that sanctions and rewards for behaviour are clear, reasonable and fair and are understood by all staff and children. (NMS 3.8)
- record, where a sanction or discipline are used, young people's views in the records kept by the home (NMS 3.18)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **adequate**.

Young people with complex psychological issues and associated challenging behaviour are making adequate progress.

Young people have developed an understanding of their past and how that experience impacts on their behaviour. Young people have responded positively to successful psychological intervention that has resulted in improved self-management and a reduction in physically violent behaviours. As a result young people are now able to have unsupervised contact with significant family members. This has helped to rebuild attachments with important family members.

A recent breakdown in young people's meaningful friendships outside of the home is testing their emotional resilience and has contributed to their increased anxiety. As a result young people are testing attachments with staff in the home.

Attendance at college is good but lateness is an issue. Progress in some subjects such as maths is satisfactory. Application and progress in other vocational subjects is good. Young people want to stay on at college and interview opportunities are in place to enable access to further education opportunities. This demonstrates young

people's positive attitude to education and improves employment opportunities in the future.

Young people have access to universal health services such as the local General Practitioner to ensure aspects of physical and emotional well-being are addressed. The looked after children's nurse is in regular contact with young people to ensure all aspects of health care are assessed and met to promote young people's well-being. Young people are fully aware of the negative impact of cigarette smoking but this unhealthy behaviour continues outside of the home.

Young people make some contribution to the home by doing some cooking and laundry tasks as well as keeping their bedrooms tidy. Young people have developed other independence skills such as confidently and safely using public transport and shopping for personal purchases. This contributes to the development of independent skills.

Quality of care

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

Staff provide a nurturing and homely environment. This is enabling young people with attachment issues to attain long term and stable placements.

Staffs' positive role modelling has helped young people to improve their communication and social skills and has contributed to raising their self-esteem. As a result young people have developed friendships outside of the home.

Staff have successfully supported educational colleagues to provide a consistent approach. Daily communication between settings promotes continuity of care and good monitoring of progress. This enables young people to improve their engagement and behaviour in college. Staff attend parent evenings and give practical support to young people to encourage their educational progress. Episodes of conflict in the college setting have greatly reduced and this has contributed to positive reports from the college.

Young people have good individualised care plans and daily routines. Effective partnership working with for example psychologist and social workers ensure that young people get the right support to address a diverse range of need. Keyworker sessions are in place and actions are evaluated to assess their effectiveness. Placing authorities report that staff give good consistent care and provide them with regular and relevant information about incidents and progress.

Young people feel that some of the home's rules including some of the incentives and sanctions that are in place are not fair. They also state that they do not feel that their views are listened to. This is having a negative impact on maintaining a daily routine such as occasional non-attendance at college and lateness. Agreed positive behaviour plans are in place. Staff adhere to the plans and are successful at deescalating situations.

Staff do listen to young people and respond positively to help them to understand when their wishes cannot be met. Sanctions and incentives are decided on as a team and are recorded in the home's daily communication log. However staff do not always record the impact of sanctions or young people's views. This impedes having a comprehensive record of events in the home. Independent advocacy is available and is working with the young person to ensure that the young person's rights are not being infringed. Young people are fully aware of how to complain.

Due to an increase in young people's challenging behaviours multi-disciplinary strategy meetings are in place to provide regular scrutiny of young people's behaviour and progress. Additional psychological input is being sought to ensure that all appropriate measures are being taken to provide good care and to promote emotional well-being.

Young people are encouraged to engage in a range of activities such as horse riding to broaden and develop their skills and confidence. Young people's bedrooms are personalised and private.

Staff provide individualised support to parents to help to redevelop positive relationships with their children. This individualised mediation has led to very successful visits. Staff provide support to parents to help them to engage in successful activities such as food preparation and cooking that is also of cultural significance to young people. This normalises visits by family members and shows respect of young people's cultural background.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are safe in this nurturing home environment. Staff act to promote young people's welfare.

Staff act decisively when they have concerns about young people's behaviours. Staff report concerns and any serious incidents appropriately to promote young people's well-being and safety.

Staff work with young people to provide support to help to develop self-reflection and self-management of behaviour. As a result there is a reduction in young people's risk taking behaviour such as physically aggressive behaviour. The use of physical restraint is rare and only used when young people are at risk of harm. Young people have an opportunity to engage in de-briefing following an incident. Staff are good at ensuring all such incidents are well recorded to enable a thorough evaluation of such incidents taking place.

Young people have recently been involved in an increased number of episodes of going missing, drinking in the community and involvement in anti-social behaviour. Staff work successfully with relevant partners including the police to put in place

effective boundaries. As a result, young people are no longer going missing and their alcohol consumption has stopped. This has greatly improved young people's safety.

The home has a 'missing person' protocol in place. Effective action is in place to find young people when they go missing and to provide them with support when they are safely returned home. Young people's risk assessments identify individualised antecedents and protective factors that are well understood and addressed by staff.

Staff provide young people with appropriate supervision to ensure their safety. Episodes of bullying outside of the home are taken seriously by the home to provide support for the young person and to stop such incidents occurring. Staff address any disrespectfulness in a positive manner to promote the reduction of such behaviours.

All staff are selected and vetted robustly to ensure that young people are cared for by suitably qualified adults.

Health and safety in the home is monitored and appropriate and prompt action is taken when there are any shortfalls. This ensures that young people are safe in the home.

Leadership and management

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

Management of this home is effective and efficient. A comprehensive Statement of Purpose is in place with clear aims and objectives that the home works to. The manager promotes a culture of reflection and learning to improve outcomes for young people.

Staff are encouraged to appreciate and respect young people as individuals. Staff receive regular supervision that is focused on the quality of care that is provided to young people. There are monthly staff meetings that focus on the needs of young people. In addition the organisation's psychologist meets with the staff team to facilitate robust discussions about young people's behaviour. One-to-one sessions are available to staff in the event that they need further support. The psychologist acts to promote deeper reflection and understanding of young people's challenging behaviour. Staff state that the sessions help to improve their understanding of young people's motivation and enables them to work as a team to provide a consistent approach to young people. Staff feel well supported.

An extensive range of training is available to staff. Staff report that they are able to access the organisation's training options and they feel skilled and competent to care for the needs of young people.

There is good monitoring of quality of care and this includes input from young people and placing authorities. The manager uses this management information to inform the home's priorities. There is a good development plan in place and its progress is well monitored. No requirements or recommendations were made at the last

inspection. The manager is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the service. Weaknesses such as the need to ensure new staff to the home are well supported, are addressed by ensuring that they work with experienced staff.

All personal records are clear and stored securely, and contribute to an understanding of the young people's lives. The home plans to develop 'life story work' in the near future. Statutory reviews are undertaken on a regular basis. However not all records are signed by staff or young people and dates are not in place on some documentation. This does not impact negatively on young people but it hinders knowing who is accountable for some areas of report writing.

All significant events relating to young people are well recorded and reported to relevant partners. A social worker stated that staff always report incidents to them. The promptness of communication ensures that events are assessed to ensure that effective action is in place to manage young people's safely.

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.