

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	28/05/2013
Inspector	Linda Bond
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	24/10/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home provides care and accommodation for up to two young people of either gender, who may have emotional 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**.

The home provides an excellent level of care. The outcomes achieved by the young people are impressive, and young people are supported by a very dedicated, compassionate and motivated staff team providing excellent continuity of care. Young people thrive in a warm, homely and nurturing environment. Young people say that they feel safe, are well looked after and 'love living at the home'.

Robust safeguarding policies and clear policies are implemented by an attentive, knowledgeable and well trained staff team. Staff have developed strong and positive relationships with young people, and as a result generating a culture of trust and openness throughout the home. Staff model positive and respectful behaviour thereby promoting good values and beliefs.

Assessments are personalised and bespoke and provide staff with an in depth understanding of young people's emotional and social needs. Staff focus young people on their educational potential and promote positive outcomes and the importance of good quality relationships.

Members of staff are provided with regular supervision, team meetings and training opportunities, these provide them with the appropriate skills to support young people to achieve their personal aspirations and to meet the objectives contained in their individual care plans. Management of the home is provided by a skilled and competent Registered Manager.

During the course of this inspection two shortfalls were noted in connection with wear and tear to the property and one notifiable incident not being reported to

Ofsted. Neither of these impact negatively on young people and the manager is aware of these shortfalls and is committed to further improve outcomes for the young people and provide a high quality service.

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
31 (2001)	ensure that the registered person shall not use the premises for the purposes of a children's home unless they are of sound construction and kept in good structural repair externally and internally; and kept clean and reasonably decorated and maintained (Regulation 31(1)(d)(e))	31/08/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the Registered Manager has a system in place to notify within 24 hours the persons and appropriate authorities of the occurrence of significant events in accordance with Regulation 30. The system includes what to do where a notifiable event arises at the weekend (NMS 24.1)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

The home achieves excellent outcomes for young people. Young people are respected and valued and given constructive support and opportunities. Young people's psychological and emotional progress is often rapid and continues over the time of their placement. The company psychologist reports 'considerable progress' being made by a young person. Young people are exceptionally positive about their placement and confidently describe how they have benefitted and developed.

The educational achievements of young people are good and young people are supported to access a variety of educational provision. For example work experience and attendance at college. The staff team support and encourage young people to consider future employment. As a result a young person has successfully achieved GCSEs and is gainfully employed and becoming financially independent. Young

people who, because of their age, have come to the end of their placement are clearly able to voice their aspirations, speak positively about their plans to move on to adult life and outline a preferred career path.

Young people enjoy good health and are supported to live healthy lifestyles. Staff maintain excellent links with local health services and good access to specialist services is available. Staff are very knowledgeable and receive good guidance and training to meet young people's needs. They are assisted by external clinicians and the company psychologist who together compile and update a range of assessment tools to monitor and track young people's physical, emotional and psychological health. This allows staff and other professionals to make informed judgements on a range of indicators such as the development of young people's self-esteem, their emotional resilience and their view of themselves.

Young people are helped to address challenging or risky behaviours by a staff team that are consistent and skilled. As a result unsafe or risk taking behaviours by young people has greatly reduced and young people develop a sense of an understanding of consequence.

Relationships and time spent with family and friends is strongly supported and every effort is made to maintain, restore and support positive time with all people who are important to them. Any restrictions are well documented and agreed by all professionals involved. This is regularly reviewed and young people's views and wishes are taken into account.

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy positive and strong relationships with staff and are encouraged to interact confidently with others. Examples of young people engaging in charitable events, business planning, and the development of projects further evidences how staff work tirelessly to ensure young people are engaging and participating. Staff have realistic and constructive expectations of the young people and foster caring and supportive relationships. The home provides a warm and nurturing environment allowing young people to reflect, relax and grow. Young people state that they feel safe and 'love' living at the home. A young person describes living at the home as 'it's been a roller coaster in a good way, ups and downs but we get through them together', 'they are my family' and 'it's my home'.

All staff are committed to ensuring that the individual needs of young people are carefully planned, monitored and evaluated. These core principles are underpinned by a very comprehensive care planning process which combines young people's holistic needs and planned interventions. The values of respecting, nurturing and understanding young people as individuals are strong and consistent. A significant strength of the staff team is the homeliness, passion and warmth that is threaded throughout their work. Evidence can be found of this from discussions and observations of staff members.

Staff encourage young people to trust, be open and to contribute to the way the home is run. Young people confirm that they have many opportunities to discuss any worries and concerns and that staff respect their views and wishes. Young people know how to complain and are fully supported to raise any concerns openly in line with the provider's policies and procedures. House meetings and key worker sessions take place and other discussions occur on an informal basis. Young people say 'having a chat when you need to is normal and makes you feel like you are living in a normal home not a care home.' Records show that all information, complaints and issues are well reported, responded to and addressed without delay.

Staff are very creative and innovative in their approach to helping young people celebrate their achievements and move on to independence. These qualities not only empower young people but help them build on their self-esteem and self-worth. Management and staff are consistent when engaging with young people or advocating on their behalf. This contributes towards an environment which enhances reassurance for young people and reinforces the key principal of building on trusting relationships.

The home has robust systems in place for the management of medicines and ensures that risk assessments are completed for young people. The home ensures that the health care needs of young people are clearly identified and comprehensive health plans are developed and regularly reviewed. The home supports young people to access health care professionals and ensures that detailed records are kept of such visits. Further to this staff encourage young people who are moving to independence to take responsibility for appointments and develop strategies to manage their own health.

Young people enjoy meals that are varied, nutritious and meet their individual dietary needs. The home promotes the involvement of the young people in the planning of the menus and they are encouraged to eat healthily and take exercise. When it is appropriate young people engage in planning and cooking meals. Young people report they have fun cooking together, bringing friends home and having meals together.

The home's design and location is suitable for its stated function. It provides young people with good facilities and is maintained to a good standard. It is very homely, well-furnished and in part in good decorative order. Young people are provided with their own bedrooms which are personalised to their own tastes. However, there are areas, mainly the back garden and bathroom that are showing signs of considerable wear and tear. A requirement to ensure these issues are addressed has been made.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

The home has policies and procedures to promote young people's safety and welfare and all staff have received safeguarding training. Staff spoken with demonstrate a

good awareness of the safeguarding policies and procedures. The staff team are vigilant in recognising particular vulnerabilities relating to the needs of young people, and take appropriate action to address them. Comprehensive placement plans clearly identify risks and protective factors and there are clear plans to address these.

The staff are committed in ensuring that young people's safety is promoted and they are extremely flexible and supportive in supporting young people when in the community. The home has agreed arrangements with the local police and placing authorities, and staff are provided with guidance if young people are absent from the home, and when young people may become missing. Discussions with staff coupled with robust documentation demonstrates the action that staff take when addressing such matters, and the action taken once young people return.

The home develops robust protocols and guidelines in relation to the management of young people's behaviours. There have been no incidents of restraint or physical intervention. The home operates an excellent system of de-escalation and positive reinforcement. Excellent individual behaviour management plans and a range of risk assessments provide staff with clear strategies for managing young people with challenging behaviour. Negative sanctions are rarely used and a young person reported that when sanctions are used they are 'fair'. Debrief sessions are held with young people in respect to any incident providing them with the opportunity to reflect on their presenting behaviour and to develop strategies to overcome risky or dangerous behaviour. For example misuse of alcohol and staying out late.

Health and safety policy and practice guidelines are well established to ensure that staff and young people are appropriately safeguarded. No specific health and safety issues were identified during this inspection. Risk assessments are carried out to identify potential sources of harm and ensure that staff and young people are safe from fire and other avoidable hazards. Young people and staff regularly practise fire evacuation procedures and the various health and fire safety records are accurate and up to date.

The current staff team is stable and there have been no new staff introduced to the home. However, systems are in place to carefully recruit and screen staff and as a result young people are safeguarded. The criteria is wide ranging and this also helps all applicants to assess their own abilities and attributes for wanting to work in an environment which can often be challenging and complex. Thorough vetting procedures are followed through before offers of employment are made. This includes disclosure and barring checks and the verification of written records.

Leadership and management

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

The Statement of Purpose describes the home's overall ethos, values and principles. A children's guide is available and outlines the level of service young people can expect to receive and how they will be cared for. These documents provide young people and their parents with a good level of information during and prior to their

admission to the home. All staff have a sound understanding of these core documents and clear processes are in place to ensure that young people are familiar with the content.

Staff say the Registered Manager is 'brilliant' and they are confident in the support they receive. This includes supervision, both formal and informal, and support with on-going professional development. The current staff team gender balance currently reflects the needs of the young people. The deployment and numbers of staff on duty at any one time is indicative of the needs of the young people. The management team ensures that staffing levels take in to account extra responsibilities. For example, staff representing young people at reviews and attending meetings.

Staff present as confident and this is modelled by management. There are a range of skills and abilities to manage challenging and sensitive issues with young people. Management and staff are genuinely enthusiastic about their work with young people. This is disseminated throughout and the dynamics of the staff team create a very safe, warm and reassuring environment. The management team is very experienced and skilled in creating a home in which young people can be themselves and staff feel they can develop their professional skills.

Young people's records are stored securely. Staff understand the nature and purpose of the records. The home's management maintains and supports systems to monitor the quality and adequacy of record keeping. In addition monitoring procedures are in place to also ensure that the conduct and the performance of the home are regularly evaluated. The manager and staff have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home and constantly drive improvement and better outcomes for young people. Well documented monthly monitoring visits on behalf of the registered provider include meeting with the young people and provides space for commentary and feedback.

Young people's social workers are kept well informed and are regularly updated of their progress. Significant events relating to the protection and welfare of young people are routinely notified to all relevant parties. However, during the course of this inspection one notifiable event failed to be reported to Ofsted. Because there is no pattern or trend emerging in this area and generally notifications are made a recommendation only will be made.

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.