

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Louisa Bayley
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Date of last inspection	22/08/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This children's home is owned by a large private organisation and provides long-term placements on behalf of local authorities. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three young people who may have emotional and 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 in this home benefit from high quality, nurturing care from a dedicated staff team. The highly individualised and well-planned care focuses on the needs, wishes and preferences of each young person. As a result, young people gain stability, a sense that staff care for them and value and respect them. They hold the staff in high regard and value their relationships with them.

Young people face a wide range of challenges in their daily lives that have the potential to compromise their safety. Staff work closely with individuals, their parents and external professionals to reduce risks and promote young people's understanding of keeping themselves safe. Young people say they feel safe and agree that staff manage unsafe situations well.

Managers strive for continuous improvements in the development of the home. They use a range of monitoring, consultation and assessment to identify strengths and weaknesses. Consequently, comprehensive development plans underpin and drive improvement, which focuses on securing positive outcomes for young people.

The last inspection identified maintenance and decoration as a shortfall. This continues to be a shortfall as the organisation has failed to address aspects of maintenance throughout the home. The maintenance issues do not compromise young people's safety; however, this does not support young people to value and take pride in their home.

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 all parts of the children's home used by children are of sound construction and kept in good structural repair externally and internally and are kept reasonably decorated and maintained. (Regulation 31 (2)(d)(e))	19/07/2013

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people develop emotional resilience because staff support them to understand their history, background and reasons for being in care. They develop confidence in forming relationships and build their trust in the staff that care for them. Young people are able to express themselves through their image, dress, cultural background, interests and opinions. Consequently, they develop a positive self-view and become confident in asserting their wishes and preferences.

Young people have good attendance in education. In some cases, where there is a history of non-attendance, this is a very positive step forward. There is a good level of engagement in education and young people aspire to achieve to reach their full potential.

Individuals have an understanding of the risks to their health. They engage in key work sessions and with external professionals to develop their knowledge in areas that affect them. This has led to young people making decisions that promote their health and well-being.

Young people enjoy a range of leisure opportunities appropriate to their age, skills, interests and levels of development. They are able to choose the activities they would like to do and have a choice in whether they undertake activities with or without peers in the home. This means that each young person is able to have quality time pursuing their individual interests in a way that meets their needs and wishes. Young people engage in community-based activities, giving them access to mixing with peers and adults socially, outside of the home. Activities include, football, motorcycle club, trampolining, gym membership, going to the library, swimming, cinema, camping and ice-skating. Young people also value good quality interaction with the staff, going for walks and playing in the garden.

Within the home, young people contribute to daily routines through cooking meals for the staff and other young people, helping to prepare and tidy away after meals and taking responsibility for tasks around the house. As a result, they develop their independence skills and learn to think about how they can make a positive impact in the home.

Young people have good levels of contact with their families and those who are important to them. Staff support and facilitate contact and young people say their families are made welcome in the home. This means that young people are able to maintain and improve their familial relationships and enjoy positive contact.

Quality of care

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

Young people say they have positive relationships with staff. They say staff genuinely care about them and they feel listened to by staff. A parent said: 'The staff treat my child very well and look after him brilliantly.' External professionals say that the staff team are nurturing and caring and make young people feel welcomed and central to the home.

Staff seek young people's views on a daily basis, in regard to their activity choices, meal preferences and the level of support they need. Regular meetings give young people a formal opportunity to raise issues and make suggestions regarding the daily routines in the home. Additionally, they complete questionnaires, which ask for their views on all aspects of their care. Regular key work sessions give individuals the opportunity to discuss issues and challenges with their key worker. These sessions provide dedicated individual time to young people and relate to their individual needs and their care plans. As a result, young people feel that staff consider and act upon their views and wishes.

Young people receive a good induction into the home. Staff spend time with them individually and introduce them to all aspects of daily living. They ensure young people know how to respond if there is a fire, how to make a complaint and who they can talk to about any aspect of their care. Staff ensure they communicate the expectations of the home and are also careful to let young people know what they can expect from the staff. Consequently, young people know their rights and understand the processes in place to promote their safety.

Care plans and daily living plans are highly focused on the needs, wishes and preferences of the individual young person. They take into account their culture, background, religion and ethnicity therefore addressing individual needs. Young people are encouraged to contribute to their care plans and put forward their views in reviews and meetings. Where young people do not feel able to do so, staff seek their views and advocate on their behalf. Parents say staff ask for their views and that they feel included in the care planning and review process.

Staff work hard to ensure that young people access the general and specialist health services they need. They arrange and facilitate appointments and also arrange for specific services to visit young people in the home. Staff use key work sessions to focus on health issues and agree plans to promote health and well-being with individuals. As a result, young people are able to develop their understanding of the health issues they face, and how to manage them.

Staff work closely with external professionals to ensure that young people access educational provision that meets their individual needs. Young people are involved in the meetings and decisions about their education. Staff support young people in school on a daily basis; helping them to manage their behaviour and anxieties in order that they can engage and achieve to their potential. Staff attend parents' evenings and have regular contact with educators. They are proactive in obtaining work for young people who are waiting for education placements to commence. The manager has a system in place to ensure that staff record and review young people's attendance. This helps staff to maintain a good awareness of young people's progress and identify any issues.

The manager regularly monitors maintenance issues and requests action by the organisation to address the issues. However, a high number of maintenance requests have not been addressed, some being repeated for months. Despite the staff decorating and personalising the home, parts of the home look unkempt and unsightly. This does not help to promote a sense of value or pride in young people about the home's physical environment.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people say they feel safe in the home. There has been an issue with bullying, however, young people, parents and external professionals say the staff managed the incident robustly. In response to incidents of bullying, staff developed a comprehensive risk assessment and put safeguards in place to protect the individuals concerned. Additionally, staff participated in countering bullying training, to support them to recognise and deal with all aspects of bullying.

The number of incidents of young people going missing has significantly decreased during the year, with only two incidents since September 2012. There is a protocol in place with the local police, which the manager reviews on a regular basis. When incidents do occur, staff discuss the triggers and consequences with the individuals concerned and use key work sessions to help young people to focus on keeping safe.

Restraint is used as a last resort, to prevent young people harming themselves or others or to prevent them from causing significant damage to property. Incidents of restraint are clearly recorded and staff discuss the incidents with the young person involved to help them to reflect on the situation and think about how they could employ alternative strategies in future. Staff record restraint clearly, they offer young people the opportunity to access medical attention and the manager monitors and

reviews all incidents of restraint. This helps to ensure that practice is safe, any training needs are identified and that the way staff care for individuals is reviewed.

Young people have individual behaviour management plans, which identify triggers of behaviour and likely responses. The plans detail how individuals would like staff to manage them in specific situations. Risk assessments are comprehensive and regularly reviewed. Where incidents occur, they are reflected upon and changes are made to the risk assessments as a result. This helps to mitigate any future risks to an acceptable level. Key workers monitor and analyse incidents such as young people going missing and restraints on a monthly basis to enable them to identify any emerging trends. Staff develop incentive rewards with young people, to support them in improving their behaviour and achieving their goals.

Staff recruited to work in the home are subject safe recruitment procedures. The records for staff fully reflect the checks that are in place. Visitors to the home are asked for identification. Young people also ask to see identification, supporting the ethos of safe working in the home. All visitors sign in and out, preventing unauthorised persons having access to young people.

The manager responds to complaints and allegations in line with organisational and local protocols and procedures. She has a robust system in place to record complaints, including keeping a chronology of the action taken and documentary evidence of the outcomes. Where appropriate, the relevant professionals are notified and advice sought. This demonstrates that there is a commitment to addressing issues and ensuring that complainants are satisfied with the outcome.

Leadership and management

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

An effective manager oversees the management of the home. She has completed her application to be registered with Ofsted and a suitability interview is planned. She leads a well-established staff team who are committed to promoting positive outcomes for young people.

The manager has put systems in place to monitor, review and develop the home, to drive improvement that are likely to have a positive impact. Regular review and assessment of young people ensures that staff are knowledgeable about the impact living in the home has had on individuals. There is a clear and comprehensive development plan in place, which identifies objectives relating to improving the quality of care. External monitoring provides monthly opportunities for the independent visitor to gather young people's views and consult with parents. The monitoring highlights shortfalls and an action plan is produced that includes timescales within which the shortfalls need to be addressed. As a result, the manager is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the home.

One requirement was raised at the previous inspection, relating to maintenance and decoration. The organisation has failed to meet the requirement and it remains a

shortfall.

The Statement of Purpose is an accurate reflection of the care and facilities provided by the residential provision. Consequently, young people and placing authorities are clear about the aims of the service.

Staff receive the training they need to work effectively with young people. When the manager identifies further training needs, she takes appropriate action. Staff say they receive regular supervision, which they find to be supportive. Regular staff meetings focus on the needs of young people and promote communication. The staff use handovers to pass on information to ensure that young people's daily needs are met.

Young people's files contain clear and up to date records, which provide a useful picture of their lives, and progress and the care they are provided with.

The manager ensures that notifications of significant events are submitted to Ofsted without delay. This is an area that has improved, both in the timescales of submission and the quality of recording and outcomes of events. As a result, Ofsted has an up-to-date view of significant events that occur in the home.

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.