

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Denise Perry
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Provision subtype	Children's home

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Service information

Brief description of the service

This privately operated children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to two young people with 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 **adequate**.

The quality of care provided to young people in this home is good. Young people are making and sustaining positive relationships with the staff team. A young person identified key staff he related to particularly well and who he could talk to. Staff deliver consistently high levels of individualised care to young people. This has contributed to young people making progress during their time in placement.

Outcomes for children, safeguarding and leadership and management are adequate. Some young people have recently had serious setbacks in their lives which have negatively impacted on their emotional well-being and physical safety. They display risk taking behaviours such as going missing from care and drug use, which means that staff are not always able to keep them safe.

There are identified shortfalls in two cases where safeguarding concerns and key events were not promptly reported to Ofsted and placing authorities. This compromises young people's welfare. Other identified areas of improvement include evidencing young people's involvement in the home's complaint records and obtaining placing authority care plans. This will secure and improve quality of care provided to young people.

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
16 (2001)	ensure the prompt referral to the local authority in whose area the children's home is situated, of any allegation of abuse or neglect affecting any child accommodated in the children's home (Regulation 16 (2) (b))	19/11/2012
30 (2001)	ensure, if any of the events in column 1 of the table in Schedule 5 takes place, the registered person shall without delay notify the persons indicated in respect of the event in column 2 of the table. (Regulation 30 (1))	19/11/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure the home's procedures for monitoring children's complaints about the provision regularly involve children's contributions and views. This specifically relates to the home's complaints records (NMS 21.1)
- ensure the registered person works with the responsible authority to ensure effective sharing of information held in the home's record about the child and information held in the responsible authorities records. This specifically relates to obtaining children's care plans. (NMS 22.7)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for children and young people are **adequate**.

Some young people are making good progress across many aspects of their lives, given their starting points at the time of placement. They regularly attend school and are actively involved in their individualised educational programmes. This helps young people to become accustomed to daily structured routines and achieve set learning objectives. As a result, young people develop in confidence and improve their social skills.

Not all young people's outcomes are good due to their risk taking behaviours, which include going missing from care and substance misuse. This impacts negatively on their well-being and significantly reduces their opportunities to make progress in their lives. Having said this, when young people do experience setbacks in their lives staff remain totally committed to them and non-judgemental in their practice. They

provide young people with access to specialist services such as mental health, drug misuse, and more recently bereavement professionals. This shows young people that they are cared for and as a result young people form positive attachments with staff and make progress in developing emotional resilience. An independent reviewing officer commented on how quickly staff accessed specialist services for young people in their care.

Young people are confident talking to staff about matters that are important to them, such as family relationships. Staff accept young people for who they are and have a good understanding of their pre-placement experiences and backgrounds. This acceptance and knowledge promotes an understanding of individual heritage, language, culture and identity.

Some young people attend routine health appointments to maintain their general health and they understand the importance of healthy lifestyles. Young people have in the past refused support from specialist services, such as smoking cessation. However, staff remain focused on and continue to discuss important health matters with young people to secure improved outcomes for them.

Young people take pride in their appearance and they maintain high levels of personal hygiene. As a result, they develop self-esteem and self-worth. They enjoy taking part in a variety of activities in the local community, such as badminton, football and cross country mountain bike riding. This increases their levels of physical fitness and broadens their horizons and experiences. Young people take part in regular household chores, food shopping and cooking in the home. As a result, they are becoming more competent at taking care of themselves in preparation for adult life.

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy and share good relationships with staff. They interact positively with one another and have built positive and trusting relationships. Young people know how to make a complaint and are confident in using this process. However, the home's complaint records do not consistently include young people's views and signatures to evidence their full involvement in the overall process. There is evidence within young people's key working records to show that staff acknowledge young people's complaints, and that they are fully explored and resolved. This shortfall currently has no negative impact on outcomes for young people.

Staff complete detailed and informative monthly review reports which outline young people's progress or setbacks. These reports help staff to identify children's specific needs and deliver personalised care. Staff monitor and review young people's individual risk assessments and act swiftly when young people exhibit risk taking behaviours, such as substance misuse. As a result, young people gain instant access to medical intervention and treatment from health professionals. A substance misuse worker commented that staff were fantastic at supporting and motivating young

people to work with her service, and that for the first time in their lives young people were willingly engaging and making progress.

The unique and diverse needs of young people are clearly identified and fully addressed in daily living. Staff address areas of equality and diversity in a positive manner through their purposeful and well planned working practice. Where necessary, staff appropriately challenge young people's discriminatory outlooks. They create an open and safe environment where young people are able to discuss and examine their views. This contributes to young people's understanding and acceptance of individual differences.

Individual placement and behaviour management plans are in place, which guide staff effectively in the management of young people's behaviours. Young people's progress is well charted and outlined in reports and reviews. As a result, these plans ensure care and support is individually tailored for young people depending on their need. However, placing authority care plans for some young people have not been forwarded to the home. The manager has contacted placing social workers to request this information, to ensure this shortfall is addressed and quality of care is not compromised.

Staff are proactive and consistent in supporting the educational attendance and achievement of young people. They provide encouragement and direct support to young people in their educational provisions. As a result, young people respond positively, become motivated and make good progress. Staff recognise and celebrate young people's individual talents and interests. They ensure young people have ample opportunities to take part in a wide range of purposeful and enjoyable activities which they benefit from.

Young people live in a well-decorated and well-maintained home, which promotes a homely environment. They are able to personalise and have a say in the décor of their bedrooms. This makes them feel valued and cared for.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Safeguarding at this home is adequate. There have been two occasions when safeguarding matters have not been referred to the local authority within an appropriate timescale. As a result, notifications to Ofsted and placing authorities have also been delayed. This places young people at potential risk. While effective inter-agency work took place shortly afterwards to safeguard young people, the lack of prompt referral compromised their welfare.

There is minimal use of physical restraint, as young people are encouraged to behave positively and are rewarded for doing so. Young people identify staff members they can talk to if they feel unsafe or have any concerns. This promotes children's safety and sense of security.

Staff are aware of the factors that may trigger young people to go missing and take action to minimise this. For example, some young people have to spend their pocket money under the direct supervision of staff, in line with their risk assessments. However, regardless of staff intervention, some young people continue to go missing and place themselves in unsafe situations. When this happens, staff take all necessary steps to search for the young person and actively encourage their quick return. Managers and staff also work closely with the police and follow local procedures to minimise risks to young people. This includes participation in multi-agency strategy meetings to share and review information on young people and how best to meet their needs. As a result, some placement changes have been essential to keep young people safe.

The home is physically safe and appropriately secure and takes into account the needs and characteristics of the young people cared for. Staff pay excellent attention to health and safety management. They use comprehensive risk assessments around the home and in the local community. The company continues to have robust staff recruitment and supervision of visitors. This promotes and contributes to young people's safety.

Leadership and management

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

No requirements or recommendations were made at the last inspection. Currently, the Registered Manager has been absent for a period of 28 days and an experienced manager is providing suitable cover for this home. The senior company manager is aware of the regulations with regard to notifying Ofsted about this absence and confirmed that written notice of this was sent to Ofsted within the required timescale.

Since the last inspection, there have been a number of shortfalls relating to safeguarding procedures. The current manager acknowledges this and is carefully monitoring and reviewing associated records and incidents to improve these procedures. She is clear about the key areas to focus on and develop. Namely, the referral of safeguarding matters, and notification of such events to Ofsted and placing authorities. This will contribute to young people's safety and welfare.

The existing staff team have the required qualifications and new staff are completing their induction training. This directly benefits young people because it supports and equips staff to provide them with high-quality care. Staff are competent and understand the home's systems, policies and procedures. Young people's records are confidentially maintained and securely stored, and contribute to an understanding of the young person's life. However, while young people know how to make a complaint, the home's complaint records do not consistently evidence their involvement in this process.

A suitable Statement of Purpose outlines the aims and objectives of the service. The home operates in line with the statement and its principles are understood by

interested parties, including young people. The home has a development plan in place which identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the home. However, there is no evidence recorded within this plan to demonstrate that identified improvements have been made. The home has therefore missed an opportunity to demonstrate how they actively drive the service forward. The manager acknowledges and is already addressing this as an area for improvement.

The manager uses internal and external monitoring systems to oversee the home and the quality of its care provision. The manager and the staff team collectively track young people's progress, starting at pre-admission and continuing throughout their time in placement. They also review young people's progress and setbacks through individual assessments involving health and educational professionals. As a result, identified services are accessed to ensure young people's needs are met.

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* (March 2011) and the evaluation schedule for children's homes.