

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC372613
Inspection date	21/06/2013
Inspector	Trevor Hall
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	04/12/2012
--------------------------------	------------

© 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

This is a privately owned children's home that provides care for up to two young people, of either gender. The home provides care for young people with 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**.

The children's home is making a very positive difference to young people's lives and provides them with the opportunities to achieve outstanding outcomes. Young people are thriving, living in an exceptionally caring and supportive home environment that enables them to make excellent progress. Young people enjoy extremely strong and trusting relationships with staff. They have a strong sense of safety and are protected from significant harm.

Young people's needs and views are central to the running of the home. Staff actively encourage young people to express opinions, and to make choices and to enjoy a full range of social opportunities and experiences. All aspects of care planning and practice are highly personalised. It is tailored to comprehensively meet the individual needs of each young person. There is a need, however, to not only take into consideration children's ethnic and cultural backgrounds, but to ensure where possible that any such need is met. Staff actively work in a coordinated way with young people, their family, social workers, health professionals, schools and the other professionals. This ensures that young people get the right help, guidance and advice.

Young people live in a generally safe environment, where their safety is paramount in staff's considerations. All fire and environmental risk assessments are up to date and all safety and security equipment are checked and serviced regularly. There is a need however, to ensure that potential risks once identified, like the uneven drive way and surface mounted electrics and plumbing in the new games room are rectified in a timely manner.

Staff are highly committed and demonstrate a high level of skill and understanding which enables them to meet the young people's complex needs on a daily basis. Staff have high aspirations for all young people and work strenuously to promote young people's personal growth, and social and emotional development.

The manager provides strong leadership and works hard to improve the quality of care and support. The home's management team fully understands the strengths and weaknesses of the service and effectively uses the quality assurance systems to, take remedial action when deficiencies are identified and to develop the service further. There is a strong emphasis on providing a very high standard of professionalism and childcare practice. This enables young people to make steady and sustained progress.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the home provides a comfortable and homely environment and is well maintained and decorated and avoidable hazards are removed as is consistent with a domestic setting (this refers to levelling the home's driveway to remove driving and tripping hazards) (NMS 10.3)
- ensure that the home provides a comfortable and homely environment and is well maintained and decorated and avoidable hazards are removed as is consistent with a domestic setting (this refers to the surface mounted electrical cabling in the games room) (NMS.10.3)
- ensure that staffing arrangements also take into consideration children's ethnic and cultural backgrounds and any disabilities that they may have (this refers to provision of Welsh speaking staff in the staff team) (NMS 17.10)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **outstanding**.

Young people make exceptional progress whilst resident in this home. Behaviours are extremely good as young people enjoy living in a nurturing and safe environment that has well-defined boundaries, but remains both homely and supportive. Outstandingly good relationships have been developed between staff and young people, which enable the young people to express themselves freely, feel wanted and grow in confidence. Young people have their emotional resilience strengthened through these relationships and damaged and deflated self-images are positively redefined. Young people enjoy each other's company and value their interaction with the staff team.

Whilst staff ensure that all young people's medical needs are appropriately met, young people are actively assisted to take responsibility for managing their own health care, in order to better prepare them for independence and adulthood. Young people understand the need to attend medical, dental treatments and opticians appointments and demonstrate a very good awareness of the importance of eating healthily and having a healthy lifestyle.

Young people make outstanding progress in their education. School attendance for all residents is extremely high, with the only absences being caused by illness or the need to attend other legitimate appointments. Young people state that they enjoy school and it is clear from their attainment levels that they make very good progress, particularly when compared with their starting point.

Young people make exceptional progress in the development of independent living and self-care skills. Young people regularly take the opportunity to cook meals both for themselves and meals to be shared by the whole household. They take appropriate responsibility for keeping their own and communal living areas clean and tidy and have learned to wash their own clothes and to shop responsibly with a limited budget. This has a significant impact on their development of life skills, their self-view and their self-confidence.

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy good relationships with their carers. A placing social worker commented that staff are consistent and caring, and they provide young people with structure and realistic boundaries. Young people report that staff are caring and approachable and are interested in them as individuals.

Young people are successfully encouraged to express their feelings and emotions in a positive way. The home is extremely successful in promoting a positive ethos that fully embraces diversity and difference; as a result, young people learn to appreciate the significance of differing values and cultures and to have respect for other people. This ethos also promotes positive behaviours and assists young people to understand the consequences of their actions, as a consequence behaviours are extremely good and sanctions and staff interventions are rare. . Staff expectations of what young people can achieve are high. and the boundaries they placed on their young people's behaviour are thorough and individualised and designed to promote safety rather than to stifle opportunity or self-expression. .

Staff are knowledgeable about the individualised needs of each young person and they staff know what the agreed aims are for each individual's progress. Young people's needs and development are regularly reviewed as a means of acknowledging the progress they have made. Staff, young people and, where appropriate, their families are assisted to contribute effectively to case reviews. This promotes positive relationships and understanding, which nurtures young people's sense of self-worth. As a result, young people receive very extremely consistent care and a very clear message that they are valued as individuals and that everyone is

working together for their good.

Staff support and encourage young people to access external health professionals in line with their individual needs. Care files contain all required health information and details of the young person's doctor, dentist and optician. Staff are all trained in first aid and follow clear health plans and risk assessments for each young person. Robust arrangements are in place for the safe storage and administration of medication. This ensures accurate and up-to-date records, which evidences safe practice.

Risk assessment and care planning are excellent, which ensures that staff have good up-to-date information about the young people in their care. The staff group provides a good balance between nurturing and enabling young people to develop appropriate self-reliance. Young people have their individual cultural, religious, and racial needs identified and these are generally addressed effectively. Whilst the current lack of a Welsh speaking staff member has meant that some cultural aspects have not been fully met, the home has made considerable efforts to mitigate against this shortfall in provision, whilst attempts are made to recruit at least one appropriately bi-lingual staff member. The Welsh language is positively promoted within the home by the use of English/Welsh labels attached to all major appliances, furnishings and wall displays. Staff and other young people are encouraged to use both languages and both were observed doing so on the inspection. The lack of a Welsh-speaking staff member, however, has meant that some cultural needs have not been fully met for all of the home's residents. Young people have regular meetings with their key worker to discuss progress and any issues of concern. Young people state that all staff are very approachable and acknowledge their rights and truly value their contributions.

The home works extremely effectively with schools and other agencies to help ensure that young people get the education provision they need to progress and flourish. Young people receive excellent are supported and are encouraged to attend regularly and to achieve to the best of their ability. Staff have very high expectations of young people and this encourages young people to have high, but realistic aspirations. Staff provide extremely good structured support with young people's education, including helping with homework., This helps support the outstanding educational successes being achieved by the young people at the home. Young people speak very positively of their education and the high degree of support and encouragement they receive. They are actively encouraged to pursue their own particular interests, or and to try new activities;, this increases their experiences and helps them to develop confidence in their social skills and abilities.

Young people live in a bright, well-maintained home that provides sufficient space to meet their needs. All parts of the home are decorated to a high standard and young people have good quality furniture in their bedrooms and ample storage for personal clothes and belongings. The home enjoys good links to local facilities and is within easy reach of good transport links. The home has a vehicle that means that young people have convenient transport for activities, shopping and contact visits with family.

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 very safe at the home and they are happy that the staff promote their safety. The home has a very comprehensive set of individualised assessments of risk for the young people in residence. These cover aspects of their potential behaviour, the home environment and the activities that are undertaken. Risk assessments are proactive, identifying potential risks and providing effective strategies to help to minimise these.

Young people say that they can talk freely with staff if they have problems. They say that the use of sanctions is fair and consistent. Staff work hard, guided by other relevant professionals, to enable young people to moderate and improve their behaviour. There is an emphasis on recognising and rewarding good behaviours, rather than concentrating on punishing poor behaviours. This enables young people to develop more socially acceptable behaviour which better prepares them to interact more positively with the wider community. Young people understand that the boundaries in place are there to ensure their safety. They are invited to sign all records relating to the use of sanctions, which helps them develop understanding and responsibility.

Young people confirm that the use of physical interventions are infrequent and that staff use physical interventions only as a last resort and only when necessary to ensure their safety. Most incidents are dealt with by the application of skilful staff support and the sensitive application of conflict resolution techniques. The home's manager monitors any interventions that do take place ensuring that they are necessary, applied correctly and comprehensively recorded. The manager also ensures that young people are aware of their right to complain, have been offered access to medical services if required or requested and that social workers and, where appropriate, parents are fully informed.

There are very few incidents of young people damaging property or displaying aggression towards themselves or others. When incidents do occur, staff respond helpfully and enable young people to move forward positively, to make reparation without unnecessary loss of personal dignity. Staff have a very good understanding of each young person's background and their individual behaviour plans.

Staff receive regular and wide- ranging training in safeguarding. As a result, they demonstrate a very good understanding of the action they should take if they have any concerns about a young person's safety or well-being. Effective working with external partners, such as the Local Authority Designated Officer, means that staff knowledge and understanding of local child protection protocols are constantly kept up to date. The episodes when young people are missing from care are minimal, to the point where none have happened since the home's last inspection. Clear boundaries are set and included in each young person's behaviour management plans. Staff are aware of these plans and follow them consistently.

The home has a good range of detailed policies and procedures covering the prevention of bullying, how to deal with complaints, safeguarding and behaviour management. These policies are well known to staff and are effectively implemented. Staff receive comprehensive training with regular updates in all these areas, which enables them to protect young people from harm and abuse. The regular and effective monitoring of the home's records and staff practice contributes to ensuring that young people receive safe care in line with their individual needs.

Young people live in an environment which is generally physically safe and appropriately secure. The recently opened computer/games area is much appreciated by the young people. However, some of the wiring and plumbing in this games area is surfaced mounted and has not been boxed in. Whilst acknowledging that the home's current residents have no history of malicious or reckless damage to property, a potential for harm remains and should be addressed. Locks and alarms are used appropriately and as is consistent with a domestic setting. Young people live close to good public transport links, but staff also ensure, by making the home's car available, that they are enabled to easily access community activities, enjoy important contacts and are able to welcome friends and family to their home. The driveway, although comparatively short, is very rutted and full of potholes;; these constitute both a driving and tripping hazard.

The home has a vigorous health and safety regime, which ensures that all fire precautions, drills and equipment servicing are conducted routinely, consistently and within timescales set by the relevant regulations. Good staffing levels further help to keep young people safe and reduce any risk of harm. The organisation's effective recruitment procedures ensure the careful selection recruitment and retention of staff. This ensures young people are safe and have a staff team who know them well. New staff are comprehensively vetted prior to their deployment in the home and before having unsupervised access to any young person. This ensures young people are safe and have a staff team who know them well.

Young people say that they feel very safe at the home and they are happy that the staff promote their safety. The home has a very comprehensive set of individualised assessments of risk for the young people in residence. These cover aspects of their potential behaviour, the home environment and the activities that are undertaken. Risk assessments are proactive, identifying potential risks and providing effective strategies to help to minimise these.

Young people say that they can talk freely with staff if they have problems. They say that the use of sanctions is fair and consistent. Staff work hard, guided by other relevant professionals, to enable young people to moderate and improve their behaviour. There is an emphasis on recognising and rewarding good behaviours, rather than concentrating on punishing poor behaviours. This enables young people to develop more socially acceptable behaviour which better prepares them to interact more positively with the wider community. Young people understand that the boundaries in place are there to ensure their safety. They are invited to sign all records relating to the use of sanctions, which helps them develop understanding

and responsibility.

Young people confirm that the use of physical interventions are infrequent and that staff use physical interventions only as a last resort and only when necessary to ensure their safety. Most incidents are dealt with by the application of skilful staff support and the sensitive application of conflict resolution techniques. The home's manager monitors any interventions that do take place, ensuring that they are necessary, applied correctly and comprehensively recorded. The manager also ensures that young people are aware of their right to complain, have been offered access to medical services if required or requested and that social workers and, where appropriate, parents are fully informed.

There are very few incidents of young people damaging property or displaying aggression towards themselves or others. When incidents do occur, staff respond helpfully and enable young people to move forward positively, to make reparation without unnecessary loss of personal dignity. Staff have a good understanding of each young person's background and their individual behaviour plans.

Staff receive regular and wide-ranging training in safeguarding. As a result, they demonstrate a very good understanding of the action they should take if they have any concerns about a young person's safety or well-being. Effective working with external partners, such as the Local Authority Designated Officer, means that staff knowledge and understanding of local child protection protocols are constantly kept up to date. The episodes when young people are missing from care are minimal, to the point where none have happened since the home's last inspection. Clear boundaries are set and included in each young person's behaviour management plans. Staff are aware of these plans and follow them consistently.

The home has a good range of detailed policies and procedures covering the prevention of bullying, how to deal with complaints, safeguarding and behaviour management. These policies are well known to staff and are effectively implemented. Staff receive comprehensive training with regular updates in all these areas, which enables them to protect young people from harm and abuse. The regular and effective monitoring of the home's records and staff practice contributes to ensuring that young people receive safe care in line with their individual needs.

Young people live in an environment which is generally physically safe and appropriately secure. The recently opened computer/games area is much appreciated by the young people. However, some of the electric wiring and plumbing is surface mounted; this does pose a potential risk. Locks and alarms are used appropriately and as is consistent with a domestic setting. Young people live close to good public transport links, but staff also ensure that they are enabled to easily access community activities, enjoy important contacts and are able to welcome friends and family to their home. The driveway, although comparatively short, is very rutted and full of potholes; these constitute both a driving and tripping hazard.

The home has a vigorous health and safety regime, which ensures that all fire precautions, drills and equipment servicing are conducted routinely, consistently and

within timescales set by the relevant regulations. Good staffing levels further help to keep young people safe and reduce any risk of harm. The organisation's effective recruitment procedures ensure the careful selection recruitment and retention of staff. New staff are comprehensively vetted prior to their deployment in the home and before having unsupervised access to any young person. This ensures young people are safe and have a staff team who know them well.

Leadership and management

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

Staff receive good support and guidance through a clear management structure. This structure is successful at meeting the service's aim to foster social awareness and mutual respect within the home and wider community. This is achieved by encouraging a happy and caring atmosphere in an extremely professional and motivating environment. Consistent and regular supervision, coupled with regular team meetings, provide staff with good opportunities to discuss their role, their professional development and the impact of working with children with complex needs.

The home has a clear, accessible and comprehensive Statement of Purpose and young person's guide, giving young people, their families and placing authorities good quality information about the services offered by the home. The home is well resourced, indicating the financial viability of the provider. The staff treat young people with the utmost respect and dignity and support them in overcoming significant and complex issues.

The staff work proactively to help young people overcome barriers and to succeed. Good communication between staff ensures that young people's individual needs are consistently met. Young people take an active part in the running of the home and they are encouraged to make their views known through discussions with staff and by attending house meetings. Staff ensure that a safe, secure and nurturing environment is maintained which assists young people to make real progress and to fulfil their individual potential.

Staff are provided with induction and comprehensive on going further training and therefore understand the developmental needs of young people. This training covers all mandatory areas such as safeguarding, behaviour management and first aid. The staff have a strong focus on promoting positive outcomes and to enhancing the well-being of young people.

The home's current manager, whilst is relatively new in post is experienced and suitably qualified and he has previously been registered with Ofsted as a children's home's manager. He has, however, yet to apply for registration in this post and has yet to demonstrate his suitability through this process, as such, the current management arrangement for the home can only be judged to be adequate. and has yet to complete the registration process. However, he is very experienced, suitably qualified and has a very good track record in managing services which have

been judged by Ofsted to surpass minimum standards . All staff members comment positively about the home's new manager's commitment, child-centred approach, staff support and clear leadership. The transition between managers has been handled extremely well and appears to have had a minimal effect upon the young people living in the home.

Clear lines of accountability in the home ensure a stable and structured environment for young people. Sufficient staff are deployed at all time's to ensure that young people's needs are effectively met. Staff duty rotas and staff deployment confirm that the home keeps sufficient staff on the duty rota at all times . The home has a very good complaints system,; young people confirm that they know how to complain and are confident that any such complaint would be dealt with effectively. One complaint has been recorded since the last inspection, which was appropriately dealt with. The young person confirmed their satisfaction with the outcome of the complaint. The complaint record, however, lacks sufficient detail to allow external verification of the process.

The home's new manager invests considerable time in reviewing and checking the quality of reports and recording systems in the home. It is evident that all reporting systems are regularly checked and comments made if any record fails to meet either the home's policies and procedures, regulations or national minimum standards . Rigorous internal quality assurance monitoring systems help the home to develop its practice and ensure that young people are receiving the care and support they need. External monitoring Regular regulation 33 visits take place each month, conducted by a designated person on behalf of the provider, these to provide an additional quality assurance mechanism. This external monitoring involves consultation with these involve consulting- young people wherever possible , which ensures that their views and experiences are valued and accommodated when reviewing the home's performance. These reports are routinely shared with the regulator as required by regulation.

One recommendation was raised following the home's last interim inspection, conducted in December 2012. This was to improve the level of pre-employment checks conducted on staff prior to their appointment. This recommendation has now been fully met, which ensures that young people's safety is not compromised by exposing them to unchecked adults..

The home has comprehensive development plans for continuing improvement based upon its record of accomplishment, continual staff training and ensuring that the physical environment is maintained to a high standard. Records are clear, up to date and stored securely, and would contribute significantly to the young people's understanding of their life in care, if they chose to access these documents. The home notifies all required agencies when significant events relating to child protection occur and appropriate action is taken following such incidents to ensure the safety of young people.

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.