

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC372613
Inspector	David Morgan
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Bryn Melyn Care Limited
Registered person address	2 High Street Dawley Telford Shropshire TF4 2ET

Responsible individual	Melissa Johnson
Registered manager	John Derek Locke
Date of last inspection	21/02/2014

Inspection date	30/07/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	There has been no enforcement action since last time.

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	adequate
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	adequate
Keeping children and young people safe	adequate
Leadership and management	adequate

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	adequate
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This full inspection finds that the service is operating at an adequate level overall. The last inspection was an interim inspection in February 2014. It found that the service was making good progress and made no requirements or recommendations. This inspection finds that young people are being cared for well and have good outcomes. The small scale of the service and its focus on a therapeutic model is highly beneficial. Young people enjoy living in the home, feel safe, and form good relationships with staff. Effective processes are in place to prepare young people for independence and they are protected well.

Five requirements and six recommendations are made this time. These shortfalls include leadership issues that have potentially negative effects on young people. Insufficient attention has also been paid in the past to assessing the hazards on the site in which the home is located. In addition, certain standards within the home are not applied sufficiently rigorously. There are also administration issues that require attention.

The manager and team show a high level of commitment to young people and want to achieve the best standards. When added to a good degree of consistency of staffing and reasonable staffing levels, there is clear capacity within the service to

improve.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This is a privately owned children's home that provides care for up to two young people. The home provides care for young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/02/2014	Interim	good progress
21/06/2013	Full	good
04/12/2012	Interim	good progress
06/06/2012	Full	outstanding

What does the children's home need to do to improve further?

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
20 (2001)	provide each child with such individual support as he may require as a result of any particular health needs he may have (Regulation 20(1)(c))	08/09/2014
23 (2001)	ensure that any activities in which children participate are so far as reasonably practicable free from avoidable risks. This is with regard to issues in the garden and close by the home (Regulation 23 (b))	08/09/2014
29 (2001)	keep a record of any deficiency in either the fire procedure or the equipment concerned, together with details of the steps taken to remedy that deficiency. This is with regard to recording what	08/09/2014

	has been done to address fire safety shortfalls (Regulation 29 (1), Schedule 4 (6))	
29 (2001)	keep a copy of the staff duty roster of persons working at the children's home, and a record of the actual rosters worked. This is with regard to the manager recording the hours he is on site (Regulation 29 (1), Schedule 4 (11))	08/09/2014
31 (2001)	ensure all parts of the children's home used by children are kept clean. This is also with regard to such items as mattresses (Regulation 31(2)(e))	08/09/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure there are suitable arrangements to manage and dispose of medication. This is with regard to ensuring that out of date stock does not remain in use; that repeated refusal to take prescribed medication is reviewed by the doctor (Volume 5, statutory guidance, paragraph 2.51)
- ensure that risk reduction does not lead to an institutional feel. This is with regard to the use of padlocks indoors (NMS 10.3)
- ensure that risk assessments of the whole children's home environment are carried out to identify any potential sources of harm to the children, are recorded in writing and regularly reviewed (NMS 10.8)
- ensure the registered person has a written development plan, reviewed annually for the future of the home, either identifying any planned changes in the operation or resources of the service, or confirming the continuation of the home's current operation and resources. This is with regard to addressing the stated objectives in a systematic way and any new issues from within the profession, and incorporating lessons learnt from practice (NMS 15.2)
- ensure all specialist professionals (e.g. legal, educationalists, psychologists, therapists) are, where applicable, registered by the appropriate professional body (NMS 18.4)
- implement effective procedures for controlling the activities of the home. This is with regard to the manager implementing an effective way of organising the office (including archiving at appropriate intervals) and being familiar with it (NMS 21.1)
- implement the written policy that clarifies the purpose, format and content of information to be kept on the registered person's files and information to be kept on the child's files. This is with particular regard to the storage and transfer of confidential data electronically both on and off site. (NMS 22.1)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people enjoy good outcomes. Both young people are coming to the end of their stays and have enjoyed substantial stability over several years at the home. This has been a tremendous benefit particularly in terms of their emotional development and practical skills. The effective combination of care, education and therapy means that young people have many opportunities to reflect on their circumstances and gain valuable insights. As a result, young people recognise their own emotional progress. One said, 'My keyworker has taught me about banter and now I can accept it.' Individual needs arising from the cultural background of young people are addressed in personalised ways. The location of the home means that young people from Wales may live there and their heritage and linguistic differences are promoted.

The development of practical skills is given a high priority. Young people are able to clearly demonstrate new skills in budgeting and in organising healthy meals. They become confident in these areas, which prepare them well for their next placements. One young person said, 'Staff have helped me look after myself – I didn't used to clean my teeth or have a shower but now I do.' Young people make full use of the local public transport network and therefore have the skills to access social, recreational and other amenities in their community. In addition, they are currently visiting their proposed placements and learning how to transfer their skills. This is a vital step that contributes well to their successful transitions. A young person summarised it by saying, 'The home has been a good place to live. I have been helped by staff and I will miss the place and the staff.'

The organisation has its own schools, which are usually used by the young people in placement. Young people make substantial progress from their starting points. This applies in particular to their full engagement in formal education, often after not attending at all. Most obtain academic qualifications and also practical qualifications, such as first aid and food safety. This gives them the confidence to continue their academic careers. In addition, they develop their interests in subjects that may provide employment opportunities in the future.

Quality of care **adequate**

Although there is much successful work undertaken with young people, the overall quality of care is assessed as being adequate. This is primarily because there are certain shortfalls in the expectations of staff about particular care matters and shortfalls in their management of specific practical issues. A small number of health-related issues have received professional input from a range of appropriate external

professionals but remain somewhat unresolved. This leaves young people with a higher level of social and emotional challenges in these particular areas than necessary. On the other hand, young people's general health is good, it is monitored well, and specialist services, such as therapists, are routinely used. Evidence is not available as required that the therapists have up-to-date accreditation with their professional bodies. Young people learn to promote their own good health and do not undertake unusually risky activities.

The property itself is well presented in most regards and provides each young person with a healthy, spacious environment. Maintenance is good and recent improvements have been made to furnishings and fittings. However, there is insufficient systematic attention paid to non-routine cleaning tasks and checks. This has resulted in some areas not being sufficiently clean and items, including young people's mattresses, not being checked sufficiently. Externally, a large number of padlocks and hasps are evident and are appropriately used to secure outbuildings. However, their use in the games room is not satisfactory as it gives an institutional impression.

Young people's medication is stored safely and administration is recorded appropriately. All staff are trained. However, the system of stock control is not sufficiently robust to ensure that refusal to take medication leads to prompt reviews with the prescribing doctor, or that use-by dates are respected. In practice, these shortfalls have minimal impact on young people because they are not currently using the items. However, it is a misunderstanding that creates a potential risk.

A wide range of activities are offered to young people and they are now at a stage when they have settled into individual routines. Staff continue to promote new pastimes and currently the summer holidays are being planned. There is appropriate control of electronic games. There is a relaxed and inclusive atmosphere in the home that is also recognised by visitors. Social workers feel that the staff maintain good communication, which contributes to effective implementation of placement plans. Young people are consulted on an ongoing basis both informally and in writing and express very few concerns.

Keeping children and young people safe adequate

The safeguarding of young people is effective, which means there have been very few significant incidents (such as physical interventions, allegations or instances of young people being absent) or notifiable events. The lines of communication between the staff and external agencies are maintained but are rarely needed for child protection purposes. Recruitment processes are thorough and documents are checked by the manager. Improvements are underway to ensure that the complete social care work history of candidates is checked in detail, as required, not just their most recent jobs. Safety measures too, are effective. Routine checks and equipment servicing ensure that the property remains safe for young people in most regards. One young person commented, 'I feel safe here, I'm well looked after by the staff.'

The recommendations of a recent fire risk assessment have mostly been addressed but there is no written evidence of this. This means that in the absence of key personnel it would not be clear that adequate measures are in place.

The home has an adjacent, undefined boundary with private buildings that were previously part of a farm. There is shared access with the home. These buildings are used daily by tenants of the owner for storage; some of them are open or otherwise insecure. Accessible items include an unused car; unlocked building; damaged double-glazing units, and a skip. There is also immediate access to low roofs, including one attached to the house, some of which appear to be made of asbestos. An external light switch adjacent to the staff car park has exposed wires. These issues create a risk of accidents, damage to health and risk of fire. A potential fire risk was identified by an independent specialist in December 2013. Similarly, in the garden there is a large trampoline with damaged safety netting, which is unsafe. No incidents appear to have occurred as a result of these hazards, which is a positive reflection on admissions, matching and the supervision of young people. However, a written risk assessment is not in place to address the hazards or the individuals, and there is insufficient evidence of staff regularly checking the vicinity of the home for hazards. There is a recent health and safety assessment but it does not address these issues and is incorrect in several areas.

Leadership and management

adequate

This inspection finds that there are areas of leadership that require improvement. There is insufficient guidance provided to staff about the required standard of cleanliness, for example, and about the checks that are necessary both inside and outside the property. Also, it is not sufficiently clearly recorded when the manager has been on site. An effective filing system is not in place, which increases the risk of documents going missing. The manager frequently found it difficult to find the required records during the inspection and in some cases resorted to his own electronic copies, many of which had been emailed by staff. This raises additional concerns about the security of this method of storing and transferring young people's confidential data. Archiving records off site every three months means that certain records are not available for inspection, which compromises the ability of the regulator to assess the performance of the service.

The monitoring systems that are in place ensure that standards are maintained in most regards. They are supplemented by a development plan. However, this sets highly aspirational and unrealistically numerous targets, which are not being implemented in a systematic or timely way. The views of stakeholders, patterns and trends arising from monitoring, and evidence from complaints are not evaluated or integrated. This means that there has been some success without as much improvement as possible. Also, the targets for improvement do not clearly address critical requirements like recent changes in regulations, for example, or the national evaluation schedule for children's homes.

On the other hand, the manager has relevant qualifications and experience, which he has applied with positive effect since before his registration in February this year. He has sustained a good degree of staff support, training and continuity, which have direct benefits for young people. All the team are qualified and there is a clear focus on the therapeutic model used by the organisation. The team have sufficient capacity and ambition to move the service forward.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
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.

Information 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 framework of inspection for children's homes.