

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Michelle Spruce
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Provision subtype	Children's home

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Service information

Brief description of the service

This home offers medium to long-term care for a maximum of three young people, who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is operated by a large national provider of children's residential care.

Specific direct work and individual therapy programmes are provided to young people by a qualified and experienced psychotherapist, employed by the provider organisation, who makes weekly visits to the home.

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**.

This adequate service provides good outcomes and good quality care for young people in a safe caring environment. Relationships are strong and built on trust. Young people express their views freely without prejudice in a home where they feel safe and protected from harm.

Young people are happy with the care they receive. Their views about the service are reflected through regular consultation that enhances the running of the home and promotes the quality of care. Key strengths lie within the management and staff team, who know and understand the individual needs of young people. The staff provide personalised and well-planned care.

The management continues to strive to improve, develop and drive forward the focus on improving outcomes for young people. The manager monitors the quality of care and development plans outline the home's strengths and weaknesses that secure improvement. There are some shortfalls within the service in relation to mechanical surveillance and records.

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
22 (2001)	ensure that electronic or mechanical monitoring devices for the surveillance of children are not used in a children's home except for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned and where all elements of this regulation are met ((Regulation 22(1)(a-d))	31/07/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure information about children is recorded clearly and in a way which will be helpful to the child when they access their files now and in the future. (NMS 22.5)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people know and understand the reason they are in care because they are involved in key-working sessions that explore their life history. This helps them identify who they are and gives them a sense of belonging. Young people make significant progress in attending education despite the difficulties they face. Young people benefit from alternative education placements and timetables that help them achieve better results. A young person said, 'I am doing well at school and would like to work with animals.' This highlights the fact that they have goals and aspirations.

Young people enjoy healthy lifestyles and benefit from well-structured health plans that are regularly reviewed. Young people sometimes take part in cooking and baking and say, 'the food is good'. Young people attend routine health appointments and take regular exercise in their day-to-day activities. This keeps young people fit and well.

Young people make good informed decisions about who they wish to have contact with. They choose to stay in touch by telephone contact or visits to the home. Placement plans outline clear arrangements for contact. This ensures young people remain in touch with friends and family who are significant to them, which in time strengthens important bonds. They develop life skills to assist them in to independence. A staff member said, 'He can now get on the bus alone.' As a result,

confidence improves.

Quality of care

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

Staff have strong relationships with young people that are maintained through mutual trust and respect. Young people know and understand the boundaries in place because staff are consistent in their approach and recognise the individual needs of young people. As a result, behaviour is appropriate and managed well with effective praise and reward.

Young people now have a telephone that they can use privately to speak to advocacy services. This ensures the rights of young people are promoted and assists them to raise any concerns about the home or the care they receive. Staff provide a forum for young people to raise their views and opinions regularly through a variety of meetings and discussions. This enables young people to put forward their thoughts on improving the home. As a result, young people shape the home they live in.

The manager and staff work hard to establish strong links with external professionals to promote the welfare and education of young people. Staff communicate well and one professional said, 'Communication is very good and I am always kept up to date.' Young people are provided with a range of activities that are age appropriate and meet their individual needs. Staff discuss the need for some activities to be carried out in separate communal rooms when it is not appropriate for younger residents to be involved. For example, console games that are fit for 15 years and over, are not played in front of peers below this age range. This protects young people and keeps them safe from inappropriate access to unsuitable games.

The manager has now decorated most rooms in the home to improve the presentation. There is now a new front door and carpets are made safe with new beading to keep them in place. The bathroom has now been refurbished and is free from presenting hazards to health. The home is now more inviting, safe and relaxing.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people feel safe because they trust the staff and know they have their best interest at heart. This makes young people feel protected from harm.

Young people have bedroom door alarms that are used at night. Staff and young people confirmed that these alert night staff to the movement of young people after bedtime. However, the placement plans do not identify the use and there is no risk assessment that confirms the need for such a measure. Although there is written consent from the placing authority, a review of the need for alarms has not taken place. This affects the privacy of some young people who no longer require the use of the bedroom alarm. The records demonstrate that some young people became

aware of the reasons for alarms only when they brought it to staff's attention. This means young people are not routinely provided with information about protecting their safety, privacy and dignity in line with regulation.

Young people benefit from behaviour management plans that reinforce positive behaviour. Staff set clear boundaries and expectations on how to behave in the home and towards others. As a result, incidents of physical intervention have reduced. The manager monitors and evaluates the records following the use of physical intervention and takes action where there are inconsistencies with practice. Young people do not go missing from home because they feel safe in their environment. However, the home has a joint protocol with the police should any young person go missing.

The health and safety requirements of the home are maintained by all staff. Routine fire drills, monitoring checks and servicing take place to keep the home well maintained. The manager has improved the safety of the home and there is now a new fence panel and window that protect against intruders. All fire doors now close properly and meet the required standard. This keeps young people, staff and visitors safe. There is a robust vetting system in place that ensures the safety of young people against the risk of unsuitable candidates having access to them.

Leadership and management

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

Young people benefit from a passionate Registered Manager and a dedicated staff team that provide consistent quality care. The home is monitored by the manager on a monthly basis, and strengths and weaknesses are identified through the audit. Additional monitoring is also undertaken by a person not in day-to-day charge of the home. There is a development plan to improve the service over the coming year. This secures improvement and confirms continued development.

The records of young people are monitored by the manager. However, they do not provide a clear picture of the individual need for bedroom door alarms. This has the potential to impact on young people who may not otherwise know why they are being used.

The manager has recruited new staff to the home. Staff employed at the home are trained in creating a therapeutic environment to support the work of the qualified psychotherapist. Staff confirm they are supported well and attend regular supervision and training as part of their probation and induction to provide good quality care to children. The manager has made improvements since the last inspection and has met the requirements and recommendations made. This has increased the safety and well-being of young people, staff and visitors. The home is well resourced and provides young people with a nurturing and caring environment.

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.