

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Karen Malcolm
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This home is operated by a private provider and is registered to care for six children of either sex from the ages of 11 to 17 years with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home aims to provide a person-centred approach, using a solution focused therapeutic method of intervention to help young people.

The home offers a range of facilities and is close to local amenities.

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 home provides all young people receiving care a good service. Young people make good progress in relation to their starting points across all aspects of their care and development. The staff are motivated and say that this is underpinned by the manager, they feel supported and able to care for the young people effectively. Care planning is personalised to meet the needs of each young person. Staff in the home demonstrate a good understanding of safe working practice. Young people confirm that they are safe and behaviours are well managed by staff with clear boundaries and expectations about group living are consistently followed. The current management arrangements are good and effective.

Young people benefit from improved outcomes in health and their overall development. They benefit from positive relationships with staff and each other. They are protected from harm by clear procedures.

The shortfalls relate to the Registered Manager reviewing the Regulation 34 report. Especially in relation to the recording of medication and recruitment procedures, and where young people are part of the decision making process before a sanction is imposed.

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
34 (2001)	establish and maintain a system for monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 at appropriate intervals; and improving the quality of care provided in the children's home (Regulation 34(1)(a))	31/10/2012
34 (2001)	ensure that medicines, medical treatment and first aid administered to any child accommodated in the home is monitored appropriately for the safety of the child. (Regulation 34(1) Schedule 6 (14))	31/10/2012

Recommendations

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

- clearly record the process where children are encouraged to take responsibility for their behaviour, in a way that is appropriate to their age and abilities (NMS 3.6).
- include in the recruitment procedures an effective system for reaching decisions as to who is to be appointed and the circumstances in which an application should be refused in the light of any criminal convictions or other concerns about suitability that are declared or discovered through the recruitment process (NMS 16.5)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make good progress in relation to their starting points and thrive in a supportive environment which offers consistent boundaries. Staff work with young people and the focus is on relationships and taking responsibility for their actions. This positive and encouraging approach demonstrates an improvement in young people's sense of self-confidence. Staff motivate and nurture young people by showing respect, promoting their interests and introducing new activities to develop a sense of responsibility, opportunities to develop a range of skills and to provide new experiences for them.

The setting meets young people's health needs. Risk assessments are carried out and reviewed to ensure that young people are safe whilst also enabling them to gain

skills and experience and to enhance their self-confidence. The health plans identify individual needs and consent forms are completed in the event that emergency aid is required. Eating nutritiously and taking exercise strategies are in place. Young people routinely create the home's menu which provides variety and is focused on healthy eating. This is done with assistance from staff.

Young people participate in a diverse range of activities and opportunities which help them to enjoy life. For example, following the daily chats, activities are planned for after homework time is completed. The most popular activity is swimming at the local pool. Over the summer all young people went to Blackpool for a week's break. They all enjoyed the holiday so much that they are planning another trip fairly soon. Young people have a good routine which includes their morning routines, daily school, homework, activities and participation in the life of the home. They all take part in menu planning, some cooking and keeping their room clean.

Young people's school attendance has improved. The home works closely with school staff on developing positive behaviour and this has enabled the school and the home to focus on educational attainment. The staff help young people with homework, thereby increasing their skills and self-confidence. Staff attend school events. Good relationships and contact arrangements are fully promoted. Family members are also invited to visit where appropriate; this helps with family bonding and contributes towards improving social skills.

At present none of the young people are at the stage in their life where they acquire practical and life-skills to prepare them for adult life.

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy appropriate and positive relationships with staff. This has contributed to improved outcomes. Staff listen to the young people's views and respond in a constructive manner. Young people are provided with time to express themselves through one-to-one meetings and daily chats after school. Staff are alert to early signs of anxiety to indicate when there might be an issue that needs to be explored. However, the numbers of sanctions since the last inspection has increased mainly due to young people using inappropriate language. There are clear strategies such as a reward system to help young people improve in their behaviour and to refrain from using inappropriate language. If sanctions are imposed staff and young people clearly state that they are involved in the decision making process prior to a sanctions being imposed. However, the sanctions records do not reflect the process used by the home.

The staff are all training in the technique of therapeutic management which encourages young people to reflect on their actions and look at the best possible result to move on. Young people are registered and engage with local NHS services, this contributes to young people's lives and provides access to a wide range of services to meet their needs. All staff have undertaken medication training, and

records of medication is maintained. However, when a young person refuses or has not taken their medication for any reason the form does not enable staff to appropriately record the reason/s for the refusal, especially when the medication prescribed is a short course such as antibiotics.

Complaints are managed sensitively. It is clear that young people's views and wishes are taken into account in the running of the home. The home uses key working sessions to address a range of issues ensuring that young people are effectively communicated with and their views listened to and acted upon, however, the manager is aware that this could be better addressed in some cases.

Young people state they are 'happy' at the home and have some clear bonds with staff and other young people with whom they share. Young people establish good, mutually respectful relationships with staff. The warm, caring atmosphere provides a relaxing environment for young people. Young people enjoy spending time at home and appreciate the guidance they receive from staff.

Young people benefit from care planning which clearly outlines their needs. Young people are given a summary version of their care plan which highlights the actions to be taken and by whom. Care plans highlight young people's individual aims and objectives. Young people's files detail their religion, disability, ethnicity, faith and cultural needs. Staff effectively respond to the individuality of each young person. There is a good understanding of equality and diversity issues.

Young people receive encouragement to lead a healthy lifestyle. Young people benefit from a nutritionally, balanced diet. The daily meetings for a chat reaffirm choices made in the week and if any changes are need to the daily menu plan. Young people all said that the food provided is good. Young people learn to appreciate other cultures through food; through events such as 'diversity days' where foods from different countries are one of the key features of the day. Staff effectively cater for young people's dietary needs and preferences. Young people receive guidance on a wide range of health matters.

Young people live in a well maintained home, which blends easily into the neighbourhood. The home's location embraces numerous communities from a wide range of nationalities. The local area provides a diverse selection of shops, services and amenities. The home has been recently refurbished to a high standard, providing a modern comfortable environment. Young people have their own bedroom, which is personalised to reflect their individuality. Some young people have pets such as hamsters and rabbits which they learn to care for. Bedrooms and bathrooms are located over three floors. This means young people share facilities with a minimum number of people.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

The home can evidence an appropriate recruitment process and careful vetting

process has been undertaken to enhance the recruitment of appropriate staff to secure the welfare of young people. However, the recruitment process does not include a consistent or clear effective system for reaching decisions. For example, circumstances in which an application should be refused, in the light of any criminal convictions or other concerns about suitability are declared or discovered through the recruitment process, are not included.

There are clear records relating to the full history and risk assessments based on known behaviours of individual young people. These are updated and reviewed regularly and care plans amended in light of new information and reflective practice. Staff are acutely aware of relevant safeguarding issues. This ensures that young people are kept safe at all times. Where a notification has related to a child protection enquiry, the home has responded appropriately, liaising with all professionals for the safe of all child and all others concerned. Physical intervention is only used when deemed necessary and records of each incident are recorded. Young people's views are always sought after each incident and this is recorded along with the report.

Young people rarely go missing from the home. There have been occasions where young people have been absent without authority. There are clear procedures in place to manage this safely for the safety of the young person. Staff are clear what to do should a young person go missing from the home and steps to take to minimise the risk of this happening.

Young people live in a home where bullying is not tolerated. Staff are vigilant in their supervision of young people to prevent incidents of bullying arising and to stop any inappropriate relationships developing, hence limiting opportunities for bullying.

Young people are safe and confirm that they feel safe in the home. Staff give young people's safety priority and they are trained in safeguarding. Staff are clear about safeguarding procedures and know what to do if they have concerns. There are good arrangements for the sharing of information between professionals. Safeguarding concerns or incidents are dealt with adequately and where concerns are raised this is discussed with the individual's social worker.

Good health and safety checks and maintenance arrangements ensure that young people live in a home that is physically safe and is kept safe. Young people are further protected by evacuation drills which ensure they would know what to do in the event of a fire.

Leadership and management

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

The home is effectively and efficiently managed. The home has a new Registered Manager who has been in post since February 2012. Young people benefit from quality time with the manager who knows each young person's care and support needs. The manager is aware of the home's strengths and areas for improvement.

Improvements are identified as part of the home's development plan for 2012/2013. For instance, more specialist training and there is a view to increase the age range of the young people who can be accommodated in the home. The home's budget ensures the service stays financially viable.

The overall quality monitoring of the home does take place. However, some improvement is needed in this area, such as the regulation 34 monitoring report. Although, submitted to Ofsted within the required timescale it does not sufficiently evaluate practice in the home, by following the guidance as set out in Schedule 6 of the regulations. Therefore, on-going compliance with regulations such as medication records being effectively audited and to identify patterns and trends for instances of sanctions imposed, have not been robustly evaluated as part of the overall monitoring process. The manager and Regulation 33 visitor are aware that improvement needs to be made with the overall report summary produced.

The home does operate in line with their Statement of Purpose which outlines the aims and objectives of the service. As a result appropriate placements are made ensuring young people are able to achieve maximum benefits from being in the home. The Statement of Purpose states that the home has a therapeutic approach. Young people spoken to said that upon admission they were given a copy of the young people's guide, which they have not read, but, aware it contains the house rules.

The manager works well within the home and provides good leadership that has stimulated the staff team. Staff spoken to said that the team works well and is good. The atmosphere in the home is like a family unit. As a result, staff are committed and feel well supported in their work and young people are making good progress from their various starting points.

There was one requirement and one recommendation made at the last inspection, which have been met. These relate to the home having a Registered Manager and also having clear and effective procedures for recording complaints.

Young people receive good care from a well-supported staff team. The team comprises of individuals from both genders and various cultural needs of the young people placed. Staff have plenty of opportunities for training and are well supported through formal supervision and annual appraisals. There are also opportunities where informal discussion takes place with the manager on care related issues or in planned team meetings. There is a free flow of information and ideas between staff and managers. Staff are encouraged to be resourceful in their approach to care.

There is a stable staff team at the home, all of whom are confident in their work with young people. They all understand and maintain the records, so that they contribute to a good understanding of each young person's life. There is a sufficient number of qualified staff. This means that continuity of care is assured. The manager maintains a 'hands-on' approach to the home; so that prompt advice and support can be given should there be any notifiable incidents or child protection concerns.

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.