

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	19/08/2013
Inspector	Karen Malcolm
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	15/03/2013
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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 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 overall effectiveness following this inspection is good in most areas. However, the leadership and management of the home is judged as adequate, this is mainly in relation to effective monitoring of the service. One recommendation was made at the previous inspection and this has been met in relation to the home managing young people who may go missing, as this has now significantly reduced.

Young people's needs are assessed and each young person benefits from individualised and tailored care. Young people are safe, have a good relationship with staff and also benefited from well organised planning for their care. It is noted outcomes have been exceeded in some key areas of their care related to their social achievement such as extra-curricular activities in drama and football. Equality and diversity is valued in this home.

At the time of the inspection the majority of the young people were in Barcelona on holiday.

Staff in the home demonstrate a good understanding of safe working practice to meet individual young people's needs. All staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and this, in turn, allows them to be confident and supportive to the young people.

The areas where shortfalls were identified following this inspection are in relation to the registered persons' requirement to submit copies of regulation 33 reports to

Ofsted in a timely manner. The policies and procedures especially relating to child protection and safeguarding are to be updated and copies of each out of borough missing person's protocol are to be in place. Any advice or support provided by other professionals in relation to a young person's care is not clearly documented. Although a review of the quality of care has been completed, this system does not effectively monitor all records kept by the home.

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
33 (2001)	supply a copy of the Regulation 33 report required to the HMCI (Regulation 33(5)(a))	30/09/2013

Recommendations

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

- prepare and implement, as required, a procedure to be followed when any child is missing from the home, having regard to any relevant local authority or police protocols. They must ensure they are familiar with and can comply with the Runaway and Missing From Home and Care (RMFHC) protocols of the local authority within which the home is located and with the RMFHC protocol of each local authority commissioning services from them. (this relates to the home having copies of out of borough RMFHC protocols on site)(Volume 5, statutory guidance, paragraph 2.81)
- ensure staff receive guidance and training to provide appropriate care. If looking after children with complex health needs, there should be a chronological account of how any support or therapy is managed (NMS 6.8)
- ensure the children's home procedure is in line with Government guidance and requirements including the duty to refer information to statutory bodies. It is known to staff, volunteers and children (this is in relation to updating the safeguarding and child protection policy) (NMS 20.2)
- ensure that the management of the home complies with these Regulations and NMS, the home's policies and procedures. (this is in relation to reviewing policies and procedures)(NMS 21.3)
- ensure there is regular monitoring, in line with regulations, of all records kept by the home to ensure compliance with the home's policies, to identify any concerns

about specific incidents and to identify patterns and trends. Immediate action is taken to address any issues raised by this monitoring. (NMS 21.2)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people benefit from good quality and well-organised individualised support, enabling them to make consistent progress in all aspects of their lives. They are encouraged to undertake new adventures in their personal and social lives and improve their confidence, self-esteem and understand their own abilities. Each young person is unreservedly valued and respected as an individual, and targeted support enables young people to challenge themselves, strive for and achieve greater independence. Active promotion of all aspects of physical and emotional health ensures young people have a thorough understanding of healthy lifestyles and what this means for them. Young people's health needs are addressed and any additional support is appropriately sought with other professionals, ensuring that there is a consistency of care maintained such regular check-up with dentist and support through Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

The home provides young people with a stable secure and happy environment. Young people benefit from individualised care, which encompasses their diverse heritage and life experiences. Young people refer to the home as a good and safe place to be.

Young people are able to make and sustain relationships with staff. Relationships with young people's families have been successfully fostered, enabling young people to have better understanding of their backgrounds.

Young people are encouraged to find community activities, hobbies or interests outside of the home to help them become integrated into the wider community, which they enjoy. They also are supported on appropriate annual holidays, which introduce them to new life experiences and different social and cultural lifestyles such as holidaying abroad.

Attendance at school is high and young people are progressing and achieving tasks, which they may have considered difficult to achieve in the past. Young people have made improvements in all aspects of their education. This has boosted their confidence and self-esteem, therefore enabling them to develop good and appropriate social skills all around. Those who have reached school-leaving age and are considering their next steps have personalised support. Transitional supports are aimed at the level of the young person's understanding to enable them to move forward in a timely and productive way. This ensures that young people are as stress free as possible to move on with their independence.

Quality of care

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

Young people benefit from positive and constructive relationships with staff who are in tune with young people's individual needs. 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. Young people are confident to express their individual and collective views and feel that staff value and consider their views appropriately. To reinforce any forthcoming event or achievements of young people, the home has introduced a monthly bulletin called 'Bartram Chit Chat'.

Comprehensive placement plans detail all aspects of the young person's care and their support needs. These include individual young people's achievements and characteristics. This approach ensures young people benefit from consistent boundaries in a caring environment. CAMHS provide staff with additional support to effectively manage some young people's care. However, although the majority of information filed pertains to email correspondence, there is no chronological account of what action has been taken and how this is managed.

Young people are respectful of the needs of their peers. Relationships between the young people are supportive and harmonious. Young people say that they get on with one another and enjoy good relationships with the staff and they understand the importance of mutual respect for one another.

Formal complaints procedures are in place and these are managed, comprehensively recorded and maintained. This enables young people to feel that their complaints are listened to and acted upon. Any concerns or grumbles are addressed quickly resolved informally through a brief one to one discussion.

Staff are proactive and consistent in supporting the educational achievement of young people, engaging with their schools and successfully promoting their attendance. The educational achievement of young people has been exceptionally maintained, taking into account both their attainment and their progress from their starting point at the time of placement. Young people like going to school and now understand what the benefits are and what they can achieve.

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 is 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.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people feel safe in this home and say that the staff take good care of them

and care greatly about their welfare. Staff have been kept up to date with child protection and safeguarding training and understand clearly what action to take if there is a safeguarding matter. However, the current policy, although recently updated, has a number of out of date information relating to child protection and the working together to safeguard children procedures.

The number of young people missing from the home has reduced significantly in the last six months. Where young people have been absent or missing without authority, the procedures to safeguard them is well managed. Staff are clear what they should do if a young person is missing and files contain up-to-date profiles of young people alongside their individualised care plans. Thoughtful planning and consultation with individual social workers assesses individuals' ability to manage personal freedom, such as travelling home from school unsupported. This enables young people to build-up trust and has minimised the risk of them going missing.

The home's missing person's procedure is compatible with the runaway and missing from home and care (RMFHC) protocols and procedures. However, the home supports young people who are placed from the different boroughs and councils who may at any time go missing from care and do not have copies of each borough or councils RMFHC protocol. Therefore, it is unclear if staff are familiar with each protocol, as there is no guidance in place to ensure this is managed appropriately for each young person.

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.

Staff have provided effective care and control and taken necessary and appropriate action to keep the young people safe. This process has been very effective due to the reduction in the numbers of consequence imposed. Young people therefore manage and adapt their own behaviour and it was noted that systems of control are largely educational and taking responsibility. This is significant and important in developing and empowering the young people to take responsibility for themselves and provided them with insight and respect for themselves.

To ensure that only suitable and appropriate staff are in the home, all staff undertake rigorous checks before they are employed. All statutory checks and reference checks are completed before the staff members work with the young people. All visitors to the home are supervised and no visitor is permitted to have unsupervised access to the young people or the home. Young people feel safe in the knowledge that staff value and protect their welfare.

The home provides a safe environment for young people. Fire safety and other household checks are conducted at frequent intervals. All essential equipment checks have been conducted within the past year. All safety measures in the home are carefully monitored and updated regularly.

Leadership and management

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

The Registered Manager is aware of the home's strengths and improvements that need to be made. Staff and the young people benefit from consistent and effective management of the home. There are adequate and experienced staff in sufficient numbers to meet the needs of the young people. The home is financially sound and is well furnished, and provides a service to the young people that they like and enjoy.

The home is managed effectively on a daily basis, especially with regards to the care and support of the young people. However, the overall monitoring of records are not consistently reviewed or monitored in relation to the quality of care provided and ensuring Regulation 33 reports are received by Ofsted within the allocated timescales as required. Records in relation to the management of care files, reports following support and advice from other professionals and updating the policies and procedures especially in relation to safeguarding where identified as areas where further improvement is needed. The manager is aware of these shortfalls and has put some actions in place to address this with the staff team, but they are not yet fully implemented.

Development areas are identified in relation to ensuring the maintenance of the home is kept in good order and a formal development plan is in place. The Statement of Purpose is regularly reviewed and services to the young people are adapted and developed to meet assessed needs. The aims and objectives in the Statement of Purpose are met effectively.

The recommendation from the previous inspection has not been addressed. This is in relation to the Registered Manager ensuring all missing from care protocols for out of borough placements are on site.

Supervision is seen as supportive, as there is opportunity for staff to develop. Staff are aware of their responsibilities and the expectations of their roles. Young people benefit from confident and focused staff support and the staff feel supported in their role caring for the young people.

All staff receive regular and good quality supervision tailored to support their professional development and ability to meet the needs of the young people. Training takes place to ensure that staff are competent and effective in their care of the young people, such as self-harm.

Any significant event in the home is reported to the appropriate authority. All reports and notifications of this nature are clear, comprehensive and made in a timely manner.

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.