

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Helen Walker
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Provision subtype	Children's home

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Service information

Brief description of the service

This is a privately run children's home. The home provides care and accommodation for one young person 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 **adequate**.

Overall the home provides an adequate level of care and the outcomes for young people are good. Staff have supported young people to make a successful transition in relation to leaving care. Young people currently living at the home have been accommodated for a short period of time and are yet to develop and maintain daily routines.

Young people said they feel staff keep them safe and they feel listened to. Staff understand their duty to protect young people from harm. Information from social care professionals confirms they consider the young people are well looked after and are kept safe. Local police officers comment on the very positive relationship they have with the home. Staff maintain strong links with health and education professionals to promote young people's learning and well-being.

Management systems are not fully effective in supporting the planning and introduction of young people to the home. On admission the young people are not properly informed about the home, daily routines or staff expectations so that they understand how they are to be looked after. Additionally, there are shortfalls in staffing arrangements. In particular, the duty rota shows some recently employed, unqualified staff are given sole charge of young people who have complex needs.

Two requirements and six recommendations have been made as a result of this inspection in order to improve outcomes for young people. These relate to: admission and placement planning, safety hazards, staffing arrangements, effective management, medication procedures and the provision of a computer for young people.

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
11 (2001)	ensure the children's home is conducted so as to make proper provision for the welfare of children accommodated there (Regulation 11 (1)(a))	30/05/2013
25 (2001)	ensure there is at all times a sufficient number of suitably qualified, competent and experienced persons working at the home. (Regulation 25 (1))	30/05/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure children exercise choice in the foods they eat and are able to prepare their own meals and snacks, within the limits that a reasonable parent would set (NMS 2.4)
- ensure children have easy and regular access to a computer to support their education (Volume 5, statutory guidance paragraph 2.120 and NMS 8.2)
- ensure all staff working at the home are able to consistently follow the home's policies and procedures and action is taken to deal with any issues that arise, particularly relating to medication procedures (Volume 5, statutory guidance paragraph 3.23 and NMS 6.14)
- ensure avoidable hazards are removed as is consistent with a domestic setting (Volume 5, statutory guidance paragraph 2.64 and NMS 10.3)
- ensure the Registered Manager exercises effective leadership of the home's staff and operation, such that the home is organised, managed and staffed in a manner that delivers sound, good quality care that meets the individual needs of each child at the home (NMS 14.5)
- ensure the child receives the children's guide at the point of placement and that the contents of the children's guide is explained to the child in a way that is accessible. (NMS 13.4)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people of leaving care age benefit from staff who successfully support them to move from the home to suitable adult accommodation. Young people gain confidence and skills appropriate to their age and understanding. For example, they are able to carry out routine household task, prepare meals as well as access and maintain college placements.

Young people currently living at the home have been here for a short period of time. They do not have established routines and their time in the home is insufficient to measure progress from their starting points. To provide stability, a core staff team have stayed with young people after transfer from another home within the organisation.

Young people said they like living at the home and talk positively about continuing education at their present school. Staff are keen to promote young people's school attendance and have effective contact with designated teachers.

Young people's sense of identity and belonging is promoted by staff through meaningful contact with their families. They benefit from staff who understand the importance of maintaining strong family links. Young people are helped to be aware of their life history and collect memorabilia that enables them to reflect on their time spent in care.

Strong links with a range of health agencies means young people have access to good health advice and support. The local looked after children's nurse visits the home to undertake young people's specific health assessments and provide health promotion guidance.

Quality of care

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

Young people living in this home have recently transferred from another of the organisation's homes along with their staff team. Young people said they actively sought to leave their previous placement and were glad to be at this home.

Prior to their admission to this home, young people were not given the opportunity to visit or supplied with information about the home. Young people did not have a children's guide to inform them of the local area, the home routines or useful telephone numbers. Additionally, none of their permanent staff team were available to work at the home until four days after their admission. Young people said they were angry about this and although they knew the interim staff team they 'didn't get on' with some of them.

Good relationships exist between the young people and their permanent staff team. Young people said they can talk to them and they feel they listen to them. There is regular contact with children's rights officers who significantly promote the interests

of the young people.

Insufficient planning prior to placement means staff have little information about the care needs and routines of young people. For example, young people said 'there's no food in this house'. Although basic foods were in stock, the choice was poor with limited amounts available. Staff had not adequately prepared for young people's admission by involving them in menu planning and food shopping. However, the home's usual practice and routine is shown to involve young people in food planning and shopping.

Staff encourage young people to lead a healthy lifestyle and their involvement in a range of activities outside of the home to keep fit. For example, swimming, use of a trampoline and playing football. A lack of activities in the home means young people are often bored. Staff support young people's school attendance and praise their achievements. However, young people do not have access to a computer in the home and there are no books or board games to support their learning.

Medication is suitably and safely stored. An incident of maladministration is noted on young people's medication record sheets. Appropriate action was taken at the time and medical advice sought to ensure young people's well-being. The incident was not reviewed by the manager to confirm staff competence in medication administration to ensure young people's welfare is fully promoted.

Young people live in a house that is homely, comfortable, well maintained and situated in a pleasant residential area.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are looked after by staff who receive child protection training and understand safeguarding procedures. This supports staff to protect young people from harm. Young people say they feel safe at the home and consider staff listen to their views, for example, their request to move to a home with fewer young people was facilitated by the provider.

Young people say they have people they can talk to if they want to. They have access to independent advocates who are readily available to them. There is very positive contact between local police officers and the home. A police officer said they consider staff promote young people's welfare in a way that helps keep them safe and prevents criminalisation.

Staff are trained to respond positively to challenging behaviour. Staff are familiar with young people's individual risk assessments and manage behaviours appropriately. There have been no young people missing from home since the last inspection. Staff are aware of the protocol to follow should a missing from home episode occur.

Appropriate arrangements are in place to help ensure that staff recruited to work with young people are suitable and safe. The house is well maintained with arrangements to monitor health and safety matters. However, first floor bedroom windows do not have opening restrictors to prevent young people from accessing a low roof of the house. Additionally, the rear garden paved patio area is uneven and a trip hazard. These are hazards that compromise the safety of young people.

Leadership and management

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

The home is managed by an experienced and qualified manager. A senior staff member deputises in the absence of the manager. However, there are areas of weakness in the effective management and running of the home.

The manager has ensured the shortfalls identified at the last inspection have been addressed. There is now a consultation form to obtain the views of placing authorities about care in the home. This assists the manager to identify issues of note and improve outcomes for young people. Staff have undertaken training to help them meet the more specific needs of young people, for example, caring for children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Young people benefit from staff who maintain good partnership working with a range of professional services. Robust arrangements are in place with local police officers who are confident about staff's approach to managing young people's behaviour.

Adequate numbers of staff work at the home and efforts are made to provide young people with continuity of care. A core staff team transferred with young people to look after them in this home. However, none of the core staff team were available to work with young people at the time of their admission and for several days after. Young people said they were very disappointed other staff looked after them. Also, the manager failed to ensure the home was suitably equipped for young people prior to admission, for example, with a computer and books, and foods of their choice.

The manager was unable to locate the staff rota for the current month. The rota for the following month shows recently employed staff in their probationary period allocated to care for young people. Given the complexities and needs of young people this staffing arrangement fails to provide them with high quality care. The manager confirmed this would be changed so that more experienced staff worked with young people.

As part of the home's monitoring process, the provider ensures there are monthly independent visits to the home. The visitor consults with the young people and obtains their views about the home and their care. The report reflects the care given and highlights areas of concern. This ensures that the provider is aware of how well the home is operating and meeting the needs of young people. Issues relating to safety hazards in the rear garden are repeatedly noted on the visitor's report which indicates a lack of action to address the concern.

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.