

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	14/11/2012
Inspector	Alicea Churchward
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	20/03/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home provides care and accommodation for up to six young people of either gender, with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. This home is operated by a private organisation.

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**.

There is a variable degree of success in some young people's educational outcomes and young people engaging in their health plans. Because of this some young people are making good progress and other young people's outcomes are not so positive; as a result the home is judged to be adequate in outcomes, quality of care and overall effectiveness. Staff do try to engage young people but despite their efforts some young people are refusing to engage in education and health services. The home is comfortable, although there are several areas within the building that need attention if a good standard of decoration and cleanliness is to be achieved.

Young people say that they are safe in the home and although some young people do go absent and missing they say this has nothing to do with quality of care or staff in the home. Relationships with the staff are good and staff have had to deal with some challenging behaviour. Young people say 'it's a good home... staff are wonderful; they try their best ... the manager is lovely and efficient... staff ring me (If I fail to return to the home or am missing) there is no bullying... it's one of the most accepting homes... no one gets judged here.' Comments evidence that young people feel that they get a good service. Other professionals such as social workers and independent reviewing officers were generally positive about the service.

At the time of this visit there are some documentary shortfalls that are not impacting upon young people's welfare such as failing to display the most recent certificate of registration. However ensuring that all young people benefit from education and access to health professionals are key areas in improving young people's individual outcomes and enhancing their development. This also extends to ensuring staff that

support contact with families are suitably trained to facilitate this. Finally, young people are not consistently able to gain access to a phone at reasonable times without recourse to asking staff.

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
18 (2001)	promote the educational achievement of all children accommodated in the home including regular attendance at school and participation in school activities of children of compulsory school age or regular attendance at college where applicable (Regulation 18 (b))	31/01/2013
31 (2001)	ensure that all parts of the children's home used by children are kept clean and reasonably decorated and maintained (Regulation 31 (2) (e))	25/12/2012
15 (2001)	ensure that young people are provided at all reasonable times with access to facilities which they may use without reference to persons working in the home, a telephone on which to make and receive telephone calls in private (Regulation (15)(4))	19/11/2012
33 (2001)	ensure that Regulation 33 reports make specific reference as to whether young people and staff are given the opportunity to meet with the visitor in private, (Regulation 33 (4)(a))	31/01/2013
4 (2001)	ensure that the Statement of Purpose includes the home's policy and procedures for emergency admissions (Regulation 4 and Schedule 1 (9))	31/12/2012
2000	ensure that the new certificate of registration is on display in the home (Care Standards Act 2000 Section 28)	30/11/2012
28 (2001)	ensure that where necessary there is a copy of any statement of special educational needs maintained in relation to a child with details of any such needs. (Regulation 28 and Schedule 3 (12))	14/12/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure that children's health is promoted in accordance with their placement plan; with specific reference to developing a clear strategy to address a young person's persistent refusal to engage with health services (NMS 6.5)

- ensure that staff have appropriate training if they are required to supervise and facilitate contact (NMS 9.2)
- include contact details in the children's guide for the Children's Rights Director, Ofsted. (NMS 13.5)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

All young people are encouraged to be healthy and they can benefit from support and treatment from a range of professionals. For example, young people make regular visits to a doctor, dentist and optician. Specialist support is also available from a nurse for looked after children and from professionals who provide support for young people's emotional health.

It was clear from evidence at the inspection that many of the young people's health has improved since they were admitted to the home. Unfortunately this is not the case for all of the young people and it is not clear what is done to improve this outcome area for those young people who persistently refuse to engage in health services provided. All of the staff are trained to administer first aid and medication.

Some young people have good attendance at school and college. Other young people do not benefit from regular attendance at education and as a result their levels of attainment are low. Staff, offer young people daily support and encouragement to attend school and continue to explain the importance of a good education. Success and achievements in education are celebrated to offer further encouragement to young people who are attending. The home has good links with Connexions and an education co-ordinator but despite this some refusals to engage in education persist.

Young people benefit from being able to maintain and build on contact with their family and friends. This helps to improve their emotional well-being and helps their overall development. The staff provide transport and supervision when necessary; however they have not had training to assist them in supervising contact.

Young people develop skills and knowledge which will be helpful when they are older and living independently. For example, the staff help them to develop skills in cooking, looking after their bedrooms, budgeting money and laundering their own clothing.

Quality of care

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

Overall young people have positive and constructive relationships with staff and with each other. The home provides a supportive environment in which young people can develop both physically and emotionally. Staff, generally have a friendly and

informal manner with young people, although they are also able to offer firm boundaries when necessary.

Young people are invited to attend a regular house meeting. Issues about the running of the home are discussed at the meetings and young people are encouraged to express their opinions and make suggestions. Young people are supported to have a say in how the home operates; the home has acted upon young people's suggestions by purchasing additional equipment. In addition each young person has a key worker who takes a special interest in supporting their development and young people spend individual time with their key workers discussing any issues affecting them. This helps to ensure young people's individual needs are met.

Young people know how to make a complaint, they are provided with information about how to do this upon admission to the home in the children's guide which provides for additional sources of advocacy should young people wish use these. The guide has a minor shortfall in respect of information for the Children's Rights Director, Ofsted if they wish to raise a concern with inspectors; remedial action was taken to address this matter during the inspection. There are good records of any complaints made and their outcomes. Young people also benefit from regular visits from the children's rights officer for the area.

On the first day of this inspection there is no telephone for young people to use without reference to staff working in the home; the Registered Manager reports that this was due to damage caused. Remedial steps were taken to provide a telephone. However young people still need to ask staff and therefore do not have independent access.

Individual placement plans are detailed and include individual needs relating to young people's personal identity. Detailed care planning and proactive relationships with partner agencies contribute to the quality of care received by young people. However, the plans do not sufficiently tackle weaknesses in educational attendance and attainment and health planning where individual young people's outcomes are adequate.

Young people can take part in a variety of leisure activities. The home also provided an annual holiday for the young people. The home also has a range of games and leisure activities for the young people including the provision of a computer.

The home is appropriately located and maintained to an adequate standard. The overall appearance of the home has been affected by a lot of damage by young people no longer residing there since the time of the last inspection. Efforts are being made to improve this by putting pictures up and there are plans for the re-decoration of the games room in the home. However, at the time of this visit there were shortfalls in respect of some damage to flooring, some graffiti to the front door, which the staff have tried to remove and graffiti on the games room notice board, there is insufficient ventilation in one of the young people's bathrooms and the staff toilet. The overall cleanliness of the home is found to be adequate.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people say that they feel safe and protected in the home. There is no bullying and the staff are proactive in making it clear that bullying will not be tolerated. The staff issue sanctions to young people if their behaviour is not acceptable; these are fair. The staff restrain young people when necessary to protect the safety of the young person, or others or to avoid serious damage to property. Records of any interventions are clear and show that physical intervention is rarely used; they also demonstrate that interventions are brief and appropriate. The staff receive regular training in child protection. They are clear about how to respond to any allegations, suspicions or evidence of harm.

The home has an up-to-date protocol with the local police regarding occasions when young people may fail to return to the home on time or go missing. The protocol for recording these occasions provide sufficient assurance that absences are responded to appropriately. The numbers of absences and young people going missing are high but these are being managed well. The home works with the local missing person's co-ordinator and placing social worker in undertaking strategy meetings to manage associated risks outlined clearly in young people's detailed individual risk assessments. Young people say they there are no reasons in respect of the care and support offered in the home that causes them to be late or stay out.

Young people live in a physically safe environment in which health and safety matters are fully considered to protect them. Written records clearly show that staff carry out routine health and safety checks around the home. Safety and insurance certificates are up-to-date and regular fire drills take place to ensure young people and staff are aware of an emergency evacuation route in the event of a fire. Staff are vigilant and take appropriate steps to verify visitors identity to ensure the safety of young people.

Staff are vigilant and take appropriate steps to verify visitors identity to ensure the safety of young people. There is also a robust recruitment process, Criminal Records Bureau and reference checks are all undertaken before any appointment of staff is made; this further safeguards the young people.

Leadership and management

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

The home benefits from a suitably qualified and experienced Registered Manager. Staff members are motivated and are encouraged to create new opportunities for the young people living at the home and do try and engage the young people. The home meets the aims and objectives set out in its Statement of Purpose and provides clear information about the skills, qualifications and experience of the staff team. However the admissions section does not include the home's policy and procedure for

admitting young people in an emergency. In addition a new certificate of registration was issued in June 2012; this is not on display but the previous certificate is displayed on the wall in the office.

Staff in the home have induction, regular supervision, appraisals, team meetings and training opportunities that contribute to their competence in providing care to young people. Staff have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They confirm that the management team are available to them and that they enjoy the work they do.

Quality assurance systems are in place that include monthly management monitoring. However shortfalls identified at this inspection were not identified during the registered manager's own monitoring. Also the independent visits by a designated person do not include or report on whether or not young people and staff are given the opportunity to meet with the visitor in private.

All significant events relating to young people are notified to the relevant authorities and appropriate action is taken to protect them. The management team are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the home and the two requirements made at the time of the last inspection had been addressed; however, further damage has occurred resulting in one requirement being repeated. The other requirement met has improved the recording of the duration of any restraint. Developmental plans are in place and demonstrate a commitment for improvement.

Recording of information is good and provides a picture of young people's daily lives. However, in one case a statement of educational need was not on file. Young people's information is securely stored and shared confidentiality to protect their safety and privacy.

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 children's homes.