

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	12/03/2014
Inspector	Michelle Bacon
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	17/10/2013
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is privately owned and 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 **good**.

Children make good progress in relation to their starting points across all aspects of their welfare and development; particularly in relation to their behaviour, emotional and physical health. This is underpinned by effective, high quality support from the staff. Staff have a very good understanding of the complex needs that individual children present and are skilled, experienced and competent to meet these.

Children are kept safe and are protected from significant harm. Highly effective care planning and practice ensure that children are cared for in a nurturing and supportive environment. A placing social reported that "this placement is doing an excellent job with my child." Staff work closely with education providers and a psychologist to secure improved outcomes for children.

Children are developing positive relationships with the staff team, and as a result are gradually learning to trust adults. Clear routines and consistent boundaries enable children to feel safe and secure. Consequently there has been a decline in the incidents of aggressive and challenging behaviour.

An experienced Registered Manager provides strong leadership to the staff team. She is also the Registered Manager for another home within the organisation but manages her time effectively between the two. The home demonstrates capacity for continuing improvement, based on its track record and performance since the last inspection.

One requirement and three recommendations have been raised as a result of this inspection. These relate to the review report under Regulation 33 of the Children's

Homes Regulations; recording of fire drills; the managers supervision and records relating to the children's finances. These shortfalls do not negatively impact on young people's good outcomes.

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)	ensure that copies of the report completed in accordance with the regulation are forwarded to HMCI. (Regulation 33 (5)(a))	28/04/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure there is an emergency escape plan that all staff and children are familiar with and have practiced; in particular ensure that the fire records show the time that the practice took place(NMS 10.9)
- ensure a written or electronic record is kept by the home detailing the time and date and length of each supervision held for each member of staff, including the manager(NMS 19.5)
- ensure information about the child is recorded clearly and in a way which will be helpful to the child when they access their files now or in the future. This relates specifically to ensuring there is a clear audit trail of children's spending money.(NMS 22.5)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Children are making and sustaining appropriate attachments to staff and those significant to them. Their emotional resilience is improving and they are developing good self control. As a result, they are benefiting from spending regular time with their family and friends. Life story work has been identified for one child to enable them to gain knowledge and understanding of their background.

The educational attendance and attainment of individual children is good, given their starting point. An educational professional commented on the 'massive improvement'

in attendance for one child and how they are engaging positively in school life now. They also commented that the child is encouraged to read and do their homework at home. This means individual children are enjoying good educational outcomes since they came to live in the home.

Overall children's health is good. They regularly access routine medical, optical and dental appointments so that their health needs are identified and addressed. They are also encouraged to eat healthy foods and snacks. One child said 'I like (name of staff) roast chicken dinners the best.' Children benefit from engaging in regular activities that keep them fit and healthy, such as cycling and swimming.

Children are starting to engage in the wider community which increases their interactions with other children of their age. Friends are made very welcome in the home, and where appropriate friends can sleep over. This helps to improve children's confidence and self esteem. Children are supported with their hobbies or interests, for example one child is looking forward to a trip to a comic convention. This provides children with the opportunity to try new experiences.

Quality of care

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

The home provides a nurturing environment where children are provided with high levels of support that assists their development. Staff implement consistent routines and boundaries that enables children to develop improved patterns of behaviour. As a result, children are thriving in a home that is extremely child focused.

Children are well supported through regular one to one sessions with the staff. This allows them to talk through things in a way that is appropriate to their age and understanding. Children understand how to make a complaint and have felt confident to do so. The manager ensures all concerns are investigated thoroughly and children are provided with a response to their concerns; this promotes trust in the adults.

Education is an important aspect of children's lives. Since coming to live at the home their attendance and attainment has significantly improved. One educational professional commented 'the staff have asked for my advice and listened to me...we work as a team... he knows who is picking him up/on shift which settles him...he is taking part in activities now.' Staff assisted one child to dress up as one of their comic book heroes for world book day recently. Consequently children enjoy the time they spend in school, and view their education in a positive light.

The home provides a healthy environment, and children are well cared for in line with their care plans. Staff ensure children's health needs are addressed. For example, they have been extremely proactive in helping children improve their dental care. Children participate in a range of activities that is helping to improve their fitness. They enjoy playing rugby and riding their bike.

Children live in a warm friendly environment that is clean, well decorated and

furnished. They have been encouraged to personalise their bedroom to their own tastes. The home provides them with space to spend time with family and friends. This ensures children feel valued and respected.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Children are effectively safeguarded and say they feel safe from harm. Staff receive safeguarding training and have a clear understanding of their duties in promoting the welfare and safety of children. Children have not been reported missing from the home. There are appropriate procedures in place should this happen, in line with agreed police protocols.

Children's behaviours and their triggers are clearly understood by the staff. Staff are trained in behaviour management which includes de-escalation techniques and physical intervention. However, due to the effective behaviour management strategies, physical intervention has not been used and there is minimal use of sanctions.

Children live in a physically safe environment where 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 checks are up-to-date and regular fire drills take place to ensure children and staff are able to evacuate safely in the event of a fire. However, since November 2013, the time of the fire drills has not been recorded. This means it is not clear from the records if children and staff have had the opportunity to practice leaving the home at night.

Leadership and management

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

Children benefit from a highly effective manager; she spends quality time in the home to support both the staff and children. Staff say she provides them with strong leadership and guidance. One professional commented 'the manager really supports the staff.' A member of staff commented 'I can approach her for advice and support... we use her and each other to reflect on our practice...they're a sounding board for me.' Staff confirm that they receive regular supervision which means that they are able to provide good quality care and support to children. However, there is no record in the home to demonstrate the manager has had supervision.

The staff team is well balanced in terms of gender, age and experience and staff are good role models for the children. The home is adequately resourced to meet the needs of children as it only provides accommodation to one child or young person at a time. Staff report that they receive regular supervision and training, which means that they are able to provide care and support for young people.

Staff are very enthusiastic and committed to the children in their care. They are

highly motivated and speak positively about the children. There is clear evidence that the quality of care and support provided to children is having a positive impact. Staff have access to regular training to ensure they are equipped with the skills to meet the needs of the children.

The home is operating in line with the aims of the Statement of Purpose. It provides families and placing authorities with clear information about the aims and objectives of the service. Children are also well informed through their information guide.

There are records of regular visits under Regulation 33 of the Children's Home Regulations. However, copies of the reports have not consistently been forwarded to HMCI, so that there is an overview of the home between inspections. The manager has systems in place to monitor and evaluate the quality of care.

Young people's records are stored securely. Overall information is up to date and provides a comprehensive picture of a young person's time at the home. However, the records for children's spending money do not provide a robust audit trail of monies deposited and taken out. This means there is a potential risk for money to be misplaced.

All significant events are notified to the relevant authorities to ensure the welfare and safety of children is further protected.

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.