

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	22/06/2012
Inspector	Caroline Wilson
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Provision subtype	Children's home

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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is a residential home for six children and young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is operated by a private company and can offer planned, emergency and respite placements.

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 **inadequate**.

The overall effectiveness of this home is inadequate. The home are good at ensuring that young people's educational needs are being met and that they enjoy a wide range of leisure activities which promote their good health and inclusion within the local community. However, the breaches in regulation have a negative impact on the safeguarding of young people. This particularly relates to them not feeling safe within the home, as they are not adequately protected by responses to bullying. Some young people are supported to understand their backgrounds, whilst others have not been effectively engaged. As a consequence, they are not helped to build positive relationships with others or learn how to keep themselves safe whilst out in the community. Recruitment processes are not robust. The home does not ensure that they receive proof of staff qualifications to ensure that staff can demonstrate the require skills and knowledge to effectively undertake their role. Monitoring systems do not robustly ensure that staff are meeting young people's individual needs.

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
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11 (2001)	ensure that the home is conducted to make proper provision for the supervision of young people (Regulation 11 (1) (b))	31/07/2012
25 (2001)	ensure that full and satisfactory information is available for all staff before they begin working there (Regulation 26 (2) (d))	31/07/2012
8 (2001)	ensure that the manager has the necessary skills to manage the children's home (Regulation 8 (2) (b) (i))	31/07/2012
16 (2001)	ensure that bullying procedures are implemented which protect young people from bullying (Regulation 16 (4) (a))	31/07/2012
16 (2001)	ensure that procedures are implemented to protect when young people are missing including protection from gang related violence. (Regulation 16 (4) (b))	31/07/2012

Recommendations

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

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people have a number of forums where they can make their views known in relation to their individual care plan and day to day living at their home. Some young people engage well with staff and have good input into the activities that they wish to attend and the types of food that they would like to eat. These young people are given advice and support in their key-work sessions which has enabled them to make progress in relation to areas set out on their individual care plans, and have an understanding of key risks to their health, such as participating in drug and alcohol misuse. Other young people do not engage in this process, they continue to be involved in behaviours that put them at serious risk whilst out in the community and in conflict with other young people in the home. On the occasions where they have highlighted some of their concerns, these have not been resolved in a manner which makes them believe that their wishes and feelings have been taken seriously and have subsequently, disengaged with the process.

Young people's preparation for independence can sometimes be dependent on plans made for them by their placing authorities. Formal plans are not put in place where placing authorities do not believe that this is in the best interests of the young person. All young have a good understanding of how to keep themselves and their living space clean and tidy and are aware of the importance of budgeting to ensure that they have enough money to sustain themselves through each week.

Young people participate in a range of leisure pursuits which promotes their good health and inclusion within the local community. They have access to a wide range of positive activities, such as swimming and trips to amusement parks which they enjoy

and is beneficial for their emotional and physical health. Young people receive good support following concerns with regards to crisis situations relating to their physical and mental health. They are effectively monitored

Young people are making good progress relating to their individual starting points with regards to their education. Young people who are educated by the home, received an individualised education programme, which best fits their needs. They have a number of educational hours allocated per week and can engage at a time that suits them. This helps to facilitate them to overcome barriers, where they have difficulty waking up early in the morning and ensures that they get the most out of the educational process. Young people of school leaving age can be helped to enrol in vocational studies which meet their individual area of interests which will provide them with an advantage over other applicants when they go on to pursue full time employment.

Quality of care

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

Staff work well with young people who fit the criteria of the home and work well with them to meet their individual needs. Staff have good aspirations for what all young people in their care can achieve, however, not all young people have made good progress in relation to their individual starting points. Staff have sufficient skills that are required to promote young people's welfare and how to keep them safe. Their knowledge of key issues such as safeguarding and reporting of young people who run away or are missing from care are sound. However, records of key work sessions demonstrated that staff have not been successful in engaging some young people nor are key work sessions effective in supporting young people to develop positive behaviour or make sense of the reasons why they came into care. Some care plans initially provided for young people, lack clarity and do not clearly set out the scope of work that is to be undertaken. Risk assessments are regularly updated, but not always in a meaningful way. They do not set out new strategies for behaviour management where existing ones are ineffective. This has meant that not all young people have learned how to appropriately react to crisis and traumatic experiences that have happened in their lives.

Staff support young people to reach their full educational potential. They help transport young people to school and have frequent communication with young people's schools to enable them to overcome any difficulties that will prevent them from receiving good quality education.

Staff help young people do understand their diverse needs. They ensure that young people have access to appropriate hair and skin care to help them feel pride in their identity and heritage. Young people are supported to enable a culture of mutual respect and tolerance. Staff help young people to learn about other cultures and have themed nights. For example, during the European football tournament, young people experienced tasting food from the Ukraine, the team in which England were playing against.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people do not feel protected by the home's response to bullying. They feel that the home does not consistently implement sanctions or other options available when an incident occurs. Bullying events are not effectively recorded to enable good monitoring. There is no evidence to suggest that use has been made of the home's procedure to reduce bullying behaviours. Structures in place to counteract bullying, such as convening disruption meeting or working with young people to understand how their behaviour is affecting others have not been used. As a consequence, young people have been left vulnerable and feeling unsafe in their home.

Recruitment systems are not robust. Full and satisfactory information is not available for all staff to enable them to make a sound judgement with regards to the suitability of potential members of staff. All staff have CRBs and references in place that would indicate that a potential member of staff is safe to work with young people. However, proof of qualifications have not sought for some staff where this is a requirement of their position. This means that these staff may not be able to demonstrate the necessary competencies for them to safeguard and promote young people's.

Correct reporting procedures are followed where a young person has run away or are missing from care. Relevant people are notified and young people have de-briefing sessions with the police and staff so that they can assess whether young people may be vulnerable to sexual exploitation whilst they are away. Young people are informed of the dangers of this by staff who are concerned for their well-being. There are gaps relating to action that is taken by young people who persistently abscond. Staff are regularly in contact with the young person and those who are important in young person's life. However, the length of time that they are missing means that the home cannot safeguard the welfare of young people and insufficient strategies are in place, particularly where a young person may continue to place themselves at risk whilst they are away. Strategy meetings are not held where young people persistently go missing to strategically consider ways of minimising the risks, including their involvement in gang related activity.

Some staff show a good understanding of safeguarding matters and how to respond to an allegation of abuse being made by a young person. However, there is inconsistency regarding the reporting of concerns that arise when young people are out in the community. Some are dealt with by staff, others given to the responsibility of young people, which is contrary to the home's policies and procedures. This may mean that some people do not feel that their concerns are being taken seriously or ensure that they feel adequately safeguarded whilst outside of their home.

All health and safety inspections are undertaken at appropriate intervals. This keeps the environment physically safe and secure and takes into account the needs and

characteristics of the young people being cared for.

Leadership and management

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

The acting manager has applied for registration with Ofsted, she has relevant experience and is working towards obtaining the relevant qualification to enable her to deliver an efficient and effective service. The acting manager has a good knowledge of the young people and certain processes that are required to manage the home. There excellent support in place. There are other managers within the organisation are available to help with any queries that she may have. This is also beneficial for staff when the acting manager is not on site. However, the manager has yet to make full use of her authority, particularly with regards to challenging care plans which are not in the best interests of young people or a delay in action to be taken to promote their welfare. This has negatively impacted on the overall care that the home provides and to inconsistent outcomes for all young people.

Staff receive mandatory training which provides them with the knowledge of the systems of the home and their care of young people. There are no specific processes in place to assess whether staff have a sufficient understanding of what they have learnt and how what they have translated this into practice. Staff do not routinely receive training to meet young people's specific needs, such as working with challenging behaviour or hard to reach young people which would enable them to effectively supervise and support each young person with the care that they need.

Regular monitoring of the home is undertaking the aim of which is to monitor the welfare of young people and to control how the home is run. The monitoring is effective in ensuring that house keeping matters, such as ensuring that health and safety inspections and staff receive mandatory training within required timescales. However, these processes do not robustly monitor the quality of the work being undertaken, for instance, ensuring that all young people receive key work sessions on a regular basis and the content of these can enable them to meet their full potential.

The home evidences capacity for improvement. The statutory requirement set at the last inspection has been met and they now routinely obtain the views of young people as part of their Regulation 33 monitoring of the home. The acting manager also ensures that she keeps up-to-date with changes in legislation and childcare practice through reading related social care literature. The organisation also has its own systems in place to alert staff to any changes to childcare guidance and practice.

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.