

Inspection report for children's home

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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 **good**.

This home provides good outcomes for young people. There is a new Registered Manager and Registered Individual in place. They and the staff team are committed to ensuring that young people reach their full potential. A particular strength of the home is its consultation with young people and communication with professionals. This had led to young people making good progress in respect of their individual starting points, in all aspects of their physical and emotional well-being. Young people feel safe within the home and supported by staff to take responsibility in relation to their behaviours.

One statutory requirement and three recommendations were made in respect of: the implementation of recruitment procedures; young people having access to Wi-Fi and food that reflect their culture backgrounds; an ensuring that information in files is more easily accessible.

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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26 (2001)	ensure that full and satisfactory information is available, in relation to the matters specified in Schedule 2, for all staff.(Regulation 26 (3) (d))	12/07/2013
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Recommendations

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

- ensure that records are written in a way which will be helpful to young people when they access files now or on the future (Standard 22.5)
- ensure that young people receive care which promotes all aspects of their individual identity (Standard 2.1)
- ensure that young people are provided with facilities which helps them to achieve their educational goals (Standard 8.4)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people's diverse needs are generally well met. Full attention is paid to individual's gender, sexuality and linguistic needs. However, complex issues that arise from young people growing up within an urban environment are not always communicated to staff, leading to a particular need not being met. For instance, Caucasian young people who enjoy Caribbean food.

Young people are well supported to achieve good educational outcomes. They are accompanied to school to and have good attendance and are punctual as a result. Young people are motivated to do well in their GCSE exams and are confident in their abilities to succeed. Due to the company's policy, they do not have access to the internet, although this is available within the home. Young people can access their local library facilities, but their revision for their imminent GCSE examination is hindered should they wish to revise outside of library opening hours.

Young people enjoy positive relationships with their key worker and the support that they receive promotes their emotional well-being. They are positive about all aspects of their care, stating, 'I love it here, this is my home.' Young people are supported to enjoy good emotional health and as a consequence have developed strategies to cope with challenges that they may face in respect of this. This alongside bespoke access to services such as the local Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service, (CAMHS) has led to the successful management of complex emotional difficulties, such as self-harming and offending behaviours. Young people have a good knowledge of issues that may affect them as individuals and within the community. They know how to keep themselves safe with regards to a range of issues, including their sexual health and the reduction of drug and alcohol misuse. They regularly participate in activities which promote their good health, such as going to the gym.

Young people have the opportunity to contribute to the way that the home is run and wider issues. They are consulted on matters such as restorative justice, and have their say on what sanctions they believe are fair. Their views are taken into account when contributing to the home's placement plans and they set goals which are important to them.

Quality of care

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

Staff have high expectations of young people and for what they can achieve. They encourage young people to experience a wide range of opportunities that their peers take for granted. These include young people developing and maintaining relationships with key people in their lives, such as friends and family, which can be sustained into adulthood. Staff make decisions in line with their delegated authority. They allow young people's friends to visit the home and allow young people to visit their friends in their own homes. They also arrange for young people and their friends to go on day trips and holidays together. Staff encourage young people to take ownership of their home; they have ensured that their entire bedrooms are decorated and furnished to the young people's individual tastes, rather than one wall, which was previously the case.

There are robust risk assessments and behavioural management guidelines in place. These set out how young people's safety, welfare and individual needs are to be met and these take into account their wishes and feelings. This helps staff to understand young people's behaviour and intervene constructively so that they have the right kind of support to develop positive behaviour. Staff support young people to take acceptable risks and make informed professional judgements for young people to have the opportunity to explore the world around them in a safe manner. Sanctions provided are restorative in their nature and enable young people to take responsibility in understanding and managing their behaviours differently.

Staff work proactively and positively with other agencies to secure good outcomes for young people, including social workers, the police and CAMHS. They have regular discussions with these agencies and work with them to develop strategies to help young people manage their emotional difficulties; this helps to divert them from offending behaviour. Professionals have positively commented on the progress that young people have made, stating that 'the home understands and meets young people's needs.' They added that they, 'could see measurable outcomes in young people' and that they, 'could not wish for a better placement.'

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are, and report that they feel, safe. There is a strong safeguarding culture and ethos within the home where young people's safety and well-being is

paramount. Staff will often drop off and collect young people to and from their chosen destinations in line with good parenting. This has been effective in reducing instances of young people going missing and to help them feel safe while out in the community. Staff effectively implement the Running and Missing From Home and Care procedures. They refer young people who may be absent without authority, or who are missing, to the police; especially where there are concerns with regards to their vulnerability. The police work in partnership with the home. When there are concerns with regards to the absence of a young person the police will visit the home.

Staff are skilled and confident in their interaction with young people and provide them with opportunities to shape the home's overall ethos, nature and routine. Young people's views are regularly sought during key-work and residents meetings. Young people contribute to key policies, their care plans and make choices with regards to their daily living, such as planning weekly menus and activities.

There are clear records of restraints which confirm that these are only conducted to prevent likely injury to young people, others and property. The Registered Manager and the Regulation 33 inspector monitor these to make sure that they meet young people's individual needs and that staff are operating in accordance with agreed behavioural management strategies. Young people's views are sought on strategies which they think may de-escalate or calm a situation to prevent a restraint taking place.

Good progress has been made with regards to the implementation of the bullying policy. Intervention by staff has proved effective and has eliminated such incidences taking place. Staff are alert to the signs of bullying and young people now feel safer in their home.

Overall, the implementation of the home's staff recruitment procedures is strong. However, for one member of staff there is a lack of a full documented employment history. The impact of this is minimal as this relates to just one member of staff and all other information is available to ensure that the home has made an informed decision about the suitability of staff.

Leadership and management

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

There have been a number of changes within the staff team, many who have since left the organisation. The home is in the process of recruiting staff and relies on trusted bank staff to ensure that it meets its fulfilment in relation to staffing. The team of bank staff are known to young people and have worked for the organisation within this capacity for a long period of time and provide consistency of care. Not all bank staff can attend team meetings, but the impact of this is minimised as they have in-depth handovers. They are also informed about issues through reading the documentation available. However, while information is available, the way that it has been filed means that information is often not easy to find and needs to be cross

referenced.

There was one external complaint received by Ofsted, which raised concerns in relation to the management and working practices within the organisation. This was investigated by Ofsted and the concerns raised were unfounded.

There is strong leadership and management in place. A Registered Manager is newly in post. He has the appropriate skills, knowledge and qualifications to deliver an efficient and effective service. His key strengths are in promoting the inclusion of young people's views in key aspects of their care as well as communication with professionals. This ensures that young people's care is planned in a way which their best interests are known and everybody in their network is working in partnership to achieve best outcomes. The Registered Manager ensures that young people's welfare is promoted and will only take young people who fit the criteria of the home and whose behaviours do not impact on those who are already settled within the unit.

There has also been a change of the Registered Individual. The new post holder has social work experience and is experienced in running homes in the North of the country. He is committed to ensuring that each young person reaches their full potential. His vision for the service includes providing therapeutic input and offering staff bespoke training that is relevant to the individual setting and which takes into account young people's diverse needs.

Staff speak highly of the management support that they receive. They state that this has been implicit in guiding them to provide high quality care. Staff are particularly complimentary of team meetings in which they have in-depth discussions about young people's needs, progress and to work out strategies to promote attainment in all aspects of their lives. They highlight that training has been instrumental in their individual development, for instance, those who had been promoted within the organisation. All staff have specific responsibilities in areas such as diversity and inclusion champions which develop skills within the organisation as well as improving the quality of care that is provided.

Monitoring of the home is robust and clearly identifies the strengths of the home. Records are routinely examined. Any issues arising are quickly acted upon to ensure that the home provides stable, safe and secure care. Written reports of monitoring are provided in a timely manner, in accordance with statutory guidance, to enable Ofsted to discuss with the Registered Manager any patterns or themes emerging.

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.