

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC387784
Inspection date	31/07/2013
Inspector	Michelle Spruce
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	26/02/2013
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for two young people of either gender with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is operated by the local authority.

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 good service provides positive outcomes for young people. The effectiveness with which the home provides well-planned, personalised care is a result of good placement planning. Young people and social workers speak highly of the good care provided by a dedicated and well managed staff team.

Young people remain protected from harm and abuse. They feel safe and understand the boundaries of the home. Young people's risk taking behaviour has reduced. The relationships between staff and young people are strong. Young people make a positive contribution to the running of the home through regular consultation.

The home strives for improvement and continues to develop and evaluate strengths and weaknesses. The manager secures improvement through development plans that outline the key objectives for the year. This strengthens the delivery of care and improves outcomes. However, there are some shortfalls to the service in relation to managerial monitoring. These have no impact on the overall wellbeing of children or quality of care.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure all staff's work is consistent with the home's policies and procedures. In relation to food handling and fire risk assessment (NMS 21.3)
- staff understand the nature of records maintained and follow the home's policy for managing confidential information, and access to files. There is a system in place to monitor the quality and adequacy of record keeping and take action when needed. (NMS 22.1)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people enjoy healthy lifestyles that promote their fitness and well-being. They take ownership of managing their own diet through planning, preparing, and sometimes cooking healthy nutritious meals. A young person said, 'I am on track and have lost weight; this is good, I feel better.' Young people take responsibility for their sexual health. A staff member said, 'He can happily discuss his sexual health with staff and will go to have check up's at the clinic.' Young people make significant progress to improve their health by reducing activities such as smoking. A young person said, 'I do smoke but only occasionally; my drug habit has improved and I don't smoke cannabis.'

Young people remain in contact with individuals that are significant in their lives. They make informed choices through regular discussion with staff and social workers about improving their contact arrangements. A staff member said, 'Contact has improved; he now stays overnights, this has improved his relationships with his family.'

Young people make remarkable improvement in their self-esteem because they are free to explore their identity. They express their individuality through their choice of clothing and personalising their bedrooms. Young people are respectful to the differences of others because they understand the importance of group living. Despite the diversity displayed within the group dynamics, young people live without fear of stereotyping or discrimination.

Young people attend education and have plans for their future. They recognise the importance of having goals and aspirations that help them to aim high. A young person said, 'I want to find a job when I leave school; I want to be a manual worker.' Young people secure their future job and career prospects because they enrol in college after leaving school.

Quality of care

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

Staff have strong relationships with young people that are maintained through mutual trust and respect. Young people get on with each other and where difficulties arise, staff encourage young people to get along. For example, a young person

experienced some difficulty accepting a peer moving on and a new resident moving in. The staff talked to both young people about how they could get to know each other; they agreed to go on a climbing activity. This significantly improved the relationship. A staff said, 'Amazing result; they formed a brilliant relationship with each other.'

Young people take part in the review of their care to ensure that their individual needs are met. Staff support young people to plan their care by sharing their thoughts, wishes and feelings openly during regular one-to-one meetings, statutory reviews and group participation. This empowers young people to have their say about the care they receive.

Staff are clear about the needs of young people because the care planning is clear and robust. Staff work in partnership with education staff, social workers and other significant professionals to improve their health and education. A staff member said, 'We have regular contact daily with the mentor at school; there is good communication to ensure staff at school are up-to-date with the current events which may affect him while in education.'

Young people are at ease with raising grumbles or concerns. They understand the importance of raising their concerns to ensure they remain safe. There is an independent advocate that visits the service. This enables the voice of young people to be heard independently should they have any concerns.

Young people take part in activities of their choice that meet their social and emotional needs. The home is excellently presented, homely and welcoming creating an atmosphere where young people can relax.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people feel safe and protected from harm. These young people are confident in their life at this home. They behave well and understand the boundaries of the home because staff are consistent in their approach. Physical intervention is not used because behaviour is managed well with effective praise and reward.

Young people rarely go missing. During episodes of missing from care, staff work in partnership with the local police to ensure young people are returned safely. A young person said, 'I sometimes have unauthorised absence because I stay with my brother; staff know where I am.'

Staff monitor the safety of young people through regular review of their risk assessments, daily discussions and close monitoring of their behaviour. This helps to keep them safe and identifies any areas for concern. Young people can lock their bedrooms themselves. A young person said, 'I feel safe and have a key to my room.' This protects their privacy and dignity. Staff set curfew times at night when young people are off site and make regular calls to their mobile phones. Young people

return on time. This helps to keep them safe.

The home is well maintained and health and safety matters are monitored regularly. Fire safety arrangements are good. The staff carry out frequent checks and tests to make sure everyone knows what to do in an emergency. However, some fire documentation mistakenly names a different home.

The manager vets new staff before they start employment. This keeps young people safe from unsuitable people having access to them.

Leadership and management

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

The Registered Manager is supported by a stable and committed staff team. The team are a valuable asset in delivering quality care and improving outcomes for young people. A staff member said, 'I feel very supported by the manager; she has supported me to access a course that benefits our children and young people to access mountain activities; young people have achieved amazing results.' Staff receive training, support and regular supervision to maximise their skills and learning potential that assists them in the delivery of care.

The manager reviews the quality of care by evaluating the feedback provided. This identifies improvement to be made where shortfalls occur. However, while management monitoring happens regularly and staff practice is generally good, it sometimes does not meet the organisation's own policies and procedures. For example, some documentation for fire safety has the wrong name, although all other information relates to this home. Food hygiene practice is safe, but does not always include additional checks required by internal risk assessments. This has not been identified by routine monitoring.

The manager has implemented changes to meet requirements made at the last inspection. There are new recording systems to better evidence the support that young people may require after any physical intervention. However, the home has been successful in managing children's behaviour without restraint. An external visitor monitors the home monthly and provides a report to the manager; this now includes regular consultations with children. Young people's views are also better represented about their behaviour and consequences, so they can have a say to the wider organisation.

Young people's records are stored safely and sensitive information is shared on a need to know basis. However, complaint records that hold sensitive information about staff are not locked away to ensure only authorised personnel have access to them.

Young people thrive and placements remain stable. Life chances have improved because of the positive outcomes achieved from when they moved into and out of the home. For example, young people that have moved on regularly visit the home to share with staff how well they are doing. This confirms the value the service has

been to the young people.

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.