

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC390156
Inspection date	22/11/2013
Inspector	Mark Blesky
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	18/12/2012
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2013

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Service information

Brief description of the service

This private children's home provides care and accommodation for three young people with emotional and 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**.

Young people make good progress in this home from their starting points and their healthcare and education has improved as a result. Young people are engaged in improving these key areas of their development and have learnt the value of developing these aspects of their welfare from the support of the staff.

This has resulted in care planning that has supported the more individual and diverse needs and abilities of these young people. The staff have demonstrated that they have been able to meet highly complex needs in one particular case with resulting progress that has exceeded expectations.

Young people gain self-confidence and develop skills in forming and sustaining relationships with others. Young people understand the importance of taking responsibility for their actions and learn how their behaviour can affect others. Staff members demonstrate respect and warmth towards young people and young people feel valued as a result.

The development of life experience books for young people further demonstrates the value staff place in young people gaining a sense of identity. Interactions between staff and young people demonstrate the value that is placed in these relationships.

Relationships have been key in the progress of these young people and this has been effectively driven by the strong leadership displayed by the manager. However, staff shortages have more recently impacted on formal supervision and training for new staff members.

Staff have demonstrated creative and innovative strategies to work with and engage young people and there is much evidence that this has been successful. Outcomes for young people have been positive and progress has been sustained.

While restraints are currently not used in relation to the resident group physical intervention records relating to young people no longer living in the home have not always been completed clearly; this means it is not clear what method of intervention was used in every case.

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
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, discipline or restraint in a children's home, a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose which shall include a description of the measure used. (Regulation 17b 3 (c))	31/01/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure all staff have access to support and advice, and are provided with regular supervision by appropriately qualified and experienced staff (NMS 19.4)
- ensure that all new staff undertake the Children's Workforce Development Council's induction standards, commencing within 7 working days of starting their employment and being completed within 6 months. (NMS 18.3)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people make good progress in this home and both young people have made progress that has exceeded expectations. Both young people have gained improved self-confidence and have formed and sustained positive relationships with both the staff and each other. Young people have, as a result, been more able to express themselves and make choices that influence their day-to-day care.

Young people have become more engaged in their care planning and making

decisions about their futures. Young people are confident, they understand their rights and they also understand their responsibilities.

Young people have learnt about the importance of maintaining their health and how their lifestyle choices can affect their general health. This has also enabled young people to consider healthy diets and improve their personal care.

Young people have been supported in their education and they understand the importance of attendance and achievements. They also understand more fully how their opportunities in the future are influenced by their education. One young person spoke about enjoying learning and finding out about new things.

Behaviour management is effective and this has resulted in young people modifying and improving their behaviour. In one example previous risk taking behaviour, that was of great concern, has ceased altogether. Young people have learnt to take greater responsibility for managing their own behaviour and understand how their behaviour can affect others and limit their opportunities.

Young people are being supported to consider their approaching adulthood. Plans are in place and staff have formed a collaborative approach to engage young people in planning and considering their future needs. Young people benefit from discussion about the skills they have and the skills they need to develop for a successful transition into adult life. The home appropriately negotiates with young people and placing authorities to ensure their plans are both achievable and realistic. Young people therefore benefit from diverse and highly individual plans which provided them with the greatest opportunities to learn these essential skills.

Quality of care

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

Young people say that staff care about them and look after them well. Young people are respected by the staff and their opinions are valued. Young people benefit from staff treating them as individuals and staff understand young people's more diverse needs. This helps young people form and sustain beneficial relationships, and gain self-confidence.

Staff have worked hard and successfully engaged young people to minimise episodes of them going missing or being absent. One social worker commented that it was the determined and sustained efforts by the staff that prevented a young person going missing and placing themselves at risk.

Complaints are infrequent and the young person stated that there is no need to complain formally as staff will act promptly if there are any difficulties in the home or if you feel unhappy. Young people, however, are aware that there is a formal complaints system and they are confident to use this if necessary.

Young people benefit from expressing their choices and this is reflected in their care

planning and placement planning. Young people are aware of their placement plans and they contribute to both their placement planning and their statutory reviews. This results in young people being engaged in their care and in how they are supported and cared for.

Young people's health is well supported by staff that understand the young people's needs and promote both a balanced diet and healthy living. Young people are guided through one-to-one key working sessions to consider lifestyle choices that may impact on their health. Young people benefit from prompt attendance with core health services such as the GP, optician and dentist.

Young people's education is also promoted and staff take an active role in supporting young people in their studies. One young person attends further education and staff worked very hard to secure this placement and continue to support them effectively. Young people benefit from engaging in these studies and meeting with peers; this increases their opportunities to gain employment in the future. A social worker commented that the staff have shown high levels of commitment and relentless effort to support one young person in their education and studies.

Young people use key working effectively to further communicate their more individual views and express themselves. Key working support has resulted in one young person gaining membership into a local religious group and engaging in voluntary work in the community. Young people know that their views and wishes are important to staff and the staff provide young people with good opportunities to express themselves and become aware of their rights.

Staff members have formed effective relationships with other agencies such as health services, the local authority and the police. All professional support is documented and well-managed and this results in the home providing young people with good opportunities to engage with community services.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are kept safe and they feel safe. Young people are aware that the home has a duty to protect them and they understand that all visitors to the home are checked and identified. Young people are also aware that they have a right to feel safe and all staff members are vetted and checked for their suitability to work with the young people.

Young people understand that they must be protected and kept safe from bullying, intimidation and exploitation. Young people say that if they felt unhappy or worried, staff would act promptly to support them and look after them. Bullying does not feature in this home and the young people live in harmony with one another.

Staff benefit from receiving training and guidance in keeping young people safe and all staff are aware of the importance of prompt and effective responses to any

suspicious of harm or abuse.

Young people's behaviour is well-managed as both staff and young people work together to resolve difficulties. Incidents of negative behaviour are infrequent and young people are supported to manage their behaviour effectively. Staff enable young people to take responsibility for their behaviour and develop strategies to act positively.

Young people's behaviour is positive and physical intervention is very uncommon; neither young person currently living in the home have experienced any physical interventions. Previous physical intervention records, however, have not always been completed clearly leaving some confusion as to the method of the intervention used.

Young people rarely go missing from this home and the home has demonstrated effective measures that have significantly reduced previous episodes of absence. The home is able to deploy additional staff and on-call staff if there are concerns about young people going missing. One young person stated that there is no need to go missing as staff will help and support you if you feel like leaving the home without permission.

The home is well maintained and effective management of the home reduces or removes hazards for young people. Health and safety and fire safety checks are carried out and any repair or refurbishment required is promptly addressed.

Leadership and management

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

Leadership and management are strong and staff feel supported by the permanent Registered Manager. The manager is insightful, proactive and supportive, enabling staff to feel confident and motivated in their roles.

Many systems have been updated since the last inspection and improvements have focused on the experiences of young people. This is exemplified by increased consideration of how the care and support improves the outcomes for young people. This has resulted in young people negotiating free time, engaging more in the wider community and having increased responsibility for themselves. In another example staff have worked creatively and used innovation to engage with a young person with particularly complex needs. A social worker commented that this placement was originally short-term, but due to the effort and high levels of support, this placement was made long term.

The home maintains a Statement of Purpose which details the services and support provided for the young people. Young people are further supported by a children's guide, which details the more individual aspects of the support the young people receive.

Regular quality assurance visits are made in the home by an independent person and

these visits consider the strengths and any weaknesses found in the home. Reports of these visits are comprehensive.

The manager uses these reports effectively to improve the performance of the home. In addition, the manager carries out comprehensive quality assurance and monitoring of the home's performance. Where shortfalls are found, action is taken promptly to address and improve performance.

The home mostly provides sufficient numbers of staff who are appropriately trained and are effectively supervised and supported. However, the home has recently had some staff shortages and this has led to a reduction of staff and some gaps in supervision. Staff confirm that they do receive regular informal supervision and there is always somebody more experienced to support them. Although it is acknowledged that this has only occurred on a few occasions, this has left some weaknesses in the support for staff and young people. The effect of this has been minimised as the adjoining home has provided support when shortages have arisen.

Most staff members receive appropriate core training and additional training, however, the more recently appointed staff, await some core training. Training has been delayed and this has left some staff less able to develop the skills and knowledge as effectively. At the time of inspection it was noted that the manager was already beginning to address these matters and new training schedules are already emerging.

Young people's records and personal files are very well maintained and presented. Each young person benefits from having clear and accurate records. These personal files enable young people to gain a good understanding of their experiences and how they have been supported. In addition, young people are being supported with individual life experience books. These have been designed and developed by the staff in the home and provide very individual and diverse pictures of the young people. These documents value young people's life experiences and this is considered to be very good practice.

All significant events relating to protection of children accommodated in the home are notified by the Registered Person to the appropriate authorities, and appropriate action is taken following the incident.

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.