

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC392549
Inspector	Michele Hargan
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered manager	Lesley Holywell
Date of last inspection	30/06/2014

Inspection date	06/08/2014
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Previous inspection	inadequate
Enforcement action since last inspection	Compliance notices (requirements) from the last inspection; ensure that the children's home is conducted so as to promote and make proper provision for the safeguarding and welfare of children accommodated there (Regulation 11 (1) (a)) prepare and implement written a policy which sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of any allegation of abuse or neglect (Regulation 16 (1) (b)) not employ a person to work at the children's home unless that person is fit to work at a children's home (Regulation 26 (1) (a)) ensure the registered provider and the Registered Manager shall, having regard to the size of the children's home, its statement of purpose, and the number and needs (including any needs arising from any disability) of the children accommodated there, carry on or manage the home (as the case may be) with sufficient care, competence and skill (Regulation 9) ensure that all persons employed by him receive appropriate training, supervision and appraisal and are enabled from time to time to obtain further qualifications appropriate to the work they perform (Regulation 27 (4) (a) (b)) establish and maintain a system for

	monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 at least once in every 3 months, and improving the quality of care provided in the children's home (Regulation 34 (a) (b).)
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This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	adequate
Outcomes for children and young people	adequate
Quality of care	adequate
Keeping children and young people safe	adequate
Leadership and management	adequate

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	adequate
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Overall Effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be adequate.

Leadership and management are judged to be adequate. It is not clear if there are any plans to maintain or change the home in any way as a development plan is not in place. The Registered Manager is required to have a development plan for the home.

Outcomes are judged as adequate. Young people go to school or are in higher education appropriate to their needs and age. Staff want young people to do well and they work in partnership with education staff to make this possible. Young people receive some support from staff with learning how to live independently. Staff need to ensure they challenge placing authorities to minimise any drift in young people's plans, so that young people are confident about the future.

The quality of care is judged to be adequate. Opportunities to improve the quality of care for young people are being overlooked. The Registered Manager is not monitoring all aspects of care that young people receive within the home, as required by legislation. This means weaknesses can be overlooked and opportunities for building on good practice can also be missed. Staff ask young people to sign various documents as a means of reducing risk. This practice is institutional and gives a confusing message to young people about their own and others trustworthiness.

The safeguarding of children and young people is judged adequate. Young people are safe and feel safe. Bullying does not take place. Staff and other professionals also feel that young people are safe. The Registered Manager and responsible individual have made improvements to ensure that young people's safety is central to all aspects of daily life in the home. The Registered Manager has induction procedures in place for new staff. However these are not sufficiently effective as they do not currently comply with those required by the Children's Workforce Development Council.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for three children with emotional and behavioural problems. The home is owned and operated by a private provider.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/06/2014	Full	inadequate
25/03/2014	Interim	inadequate progress
12/06/2013	Full	adequate
25/10/2012	Interim	good progress

What does the children's home need to do to improve further?

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
34 (2001)	ensure monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 at least once in every three months; and improving the quality of care provided in the children's home. In particular ensuring that all aspects within Schedule 6 are included and provide an accompanying action plan (Regulation 34 (1) (a) (b))	31/10/2014
34 (2001)	ensure monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 at least once in every three months; and improving the quality of care provided in the children's home. In particular ensure that consultation with children accommodated in the home, their parents and	31/10/2014

	placing authorities are incorporated into the Regulation 34 reports (Regulation 34 (3))	
29 (2001)	maintain in the children's home the records specified in Schedule 4 and ensure they are kept up to date. In particular ensure a copy is kept in the home of medication records and staff details. (Regulation 29 (1))	08/09/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure each young person has on their file prior written permission from a person with parental responsibility for staff to administer first aid and non-prescription medication (Volume 5: Children's Homes paragraph 2.54)
- ensure young people's privacy is appropriately protected. In particular by the provision of a covering to the bathroom window (NMS 3.7)
- ensure that new staff undertake the Children's Workforce Development's Council's induction standards, commencing within 7 working days of starting employment and being completed within 6 months (NMS 18.3)
- ensure the development of an annual development plan to include confirmation of function and budget of the home (NMS 15.2)
- ensure that risk reduction does not lead to an institutional feel. In particular this relates to the practice of requiring young people to provide a signature when they take part in key worker sessions, receive pocket money and clothing money (NMS 10.3)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **adequate**

The provision is judged to be adequate.

Young people experience nurturing relationships with staff. Young people, staff, managers and other professionals all describe young people's relationships with staff as positive. Staff know the young people well. They are thoughtful about how to build trust and approach sensitive issues with them. This approach builds young people's confidence and emotional resilience.

Young people are able to take better care of themselves through increased understanding of their physical and emotional needs. Staff understand the reasons that lead to young people living in children's homes. They know that these difficulties can affect young people's general wellbeing. Staff make sure that young people's health needs are met. Staff provide advice and guidance to young people to promote their improved physical and emotional health. This approach promotes improved health in adulthood.

Young people's access to education and training improves from their point of admission to the children's home. Staff support young people in accessing education and they have regular contact with the education staff who work with young people. A young person said, 'I'm doing a lot better in education, I go every day now.' Other professionals also said that young people are doing better in education. Staff help young people to work through challenges that can arise within educational settings. This builds young people's trust and confidence in staff and helps with recognition of achievement.

Young people have the opportunity to try new activities with support from staff who are interested in helping young people learn new skills. Young people participate in meetings aimed at encouraging their involvement in the running of the home. A young person said, 'we go on different activities and I like swimming the best. I can go on my x-box a lot as well.' Staff work alongside young people with carrying out activities in the community. This helps build young people's self-esteem and confidence and their willingness to try new things.

Young people are supported by staff who work in partnership with placing authorities so that young people maintain links with their families. Young people gain a sense of trust with staff because they receive support from them at times of increased vulnerability. Young people's families are kept up to date about how young people are doing by staff from the home who contact them on a regular basis. Young people are supported by staff who know how to help them manage difficult feelings that can often arise at such times. This builds trust between young people and staff and gives young people permission to talk about their feelings.

Young people's transition plans for independence are not managed effectively. The Registered Manager and staff are not ensuring that young people are as prepared as well as possible for independence. The partnership working with placing authorities is not sufficiently rigorous. This means timescales in leaving care plans are drifting and targets are becoming less defined. Young people receive support from staff to help them learn daily living skills. Young people said they felt staff 'were all there to help' with learning to be independent. Uncertainty with planning for independence is unsettling for young people and can undermine their confidence in this process, causing increased anxiety.

Quality of care

adequate

The provision is judged adequate

Young people do not need staff to intervene to manage their behaviour. Staff make meaningful relationships with young people, adopting a friendly but not overly familiar approach. A young person said 'all the staff are nice and the home is nice, we get along well with staff.' The atmosphere in the home is quiet and relaxed. Young people know that staff are in charge and that they want to keep them safe. They accept the boundaries and routines that staff have in place and this helps build feelings of security.

Staff listen to what young people say and their views lead to increased opportunities. Young people's meetings take place regularly and staff actively encourage young people to express their opinions. Staff review young people's progress with them on a monthly basis and again they are encouraged to say what they think. The Registered Manager and staff value young people's views and opinions. This increases their confidence in expressing themselves. The Registered Manager takes effective action regarding complaints. This means young people's welfare is appropriately maintained.

Young people's sense of where they came from is preserved. Staff enable young people to maintain positive links with areas in which they grew up. This supports young people's emotional development through raising their awareness of their cultural identity.

Young people have confidence that staff are available to help and support them. Young people say they feel safe in the home and that their needs are being well met by staff. Staff know that building trusting relationships with young people helps them feel safe. This increases the chances of young people going to staff for assistance when they need to. The Registered Manager and staff have not sought written parental consent to allow the staff to administer first aid if necessary. There is therefore no guarantee that, should the need arise, the staff will be complying with parental wishes in this important issue.

Young people experience a consistent approach both by staff that care for them at home and within school. Staff support young people's educational achievement and maintain effective links with school professionals. Staff encourage young people with friendships in school. They also provide young people with advice and guidance about how to manage difficult feelings that can sometimes arise within educational settings. This improves young people's quality of life within school.

Young people's confidence is increased by taking part in adventurous outdoor activities with staff. A member of staff said 'menu's and activity logs are done every Thursday with young people, we try to encourage them with making choices.' Young people said that they enjoyed the camping activities in particular. These experiences help young people's self-esteem and create positive childhood memories for the future.

The home is an older property that has been modernised and provides comfortable homely accommodation. It is situated in a small rural area with surrounding countryside that lends itself to outdoor activities. The property is well maintained. There is insufficient privacy for young people within the bathroom because one of the windows does not have a covering.

Keeping children and young people safe adequate

The provision is judged adequate.

Young people are safe and feel safe. Staff said 'every couple of months we do something on anti- bullying.' 'We give them ample opportunity to talk.' Staff complete risk assessments on all young people including the views of the young people themselves. However, risk assessments do not make clear what staff must do to reduce the risk. Bullying is not taking place, and staff know what to do if this were to happen. Young people experience what it is like to live in a safe and nurturing atmosphere. This helps young people relax and increases opportunities for young people to think and reflect on their behaviour.

The Registered Manager is improving practice in safeguarding and any issues of concern are now effectively responded to. The Registered Manager works with local authority safeguarding representatives to ensure young people are protected. A member of staff said, 'we did some extra safeguarding training a couple of months ago, we can be asked questions in supervision and it's raised at staff meetings.' The safety and welfare of young people underpins actions taken by staff to any causes for concern including allegations. Staff establish trusting relationships with young people because staff make effective use of the systems designed to protect young people.

Young people do not go missing from the home. Staff are aware of behaviour that

can make young people vulnerable to this. They know what to do and who to contact if a young person went missing, including going to look for the young person themselves. Young people receive care that helps their sense of belonging.

Young people behave well. Staff described meaningful relationship with young people. Staff feel this is an important factor in reducing the need of young people to act out difficult feelings. A member of staff said in relation to young people, 'if they trust and respect you they will listen and you can put your point of view across to them.' There is an incentive scheme which promotes acceptable behaviour and rewards good behaviour. This approach helps young people reflect on their behaviour and builds understanding about choices and how to behave.

Leadership and management

adequate

The provision is judged adequate.

The Registered Manager has been in place since 2009 when the home opened, is suitably qualified and experienced. The manager is updating all the homes policies and procedures and staff are expected to know and understand these. Staff made reference to a quiz on environmental safety that the Registered Manager held at a staff meeting: 'I found out I knew more than I thought I did.' The manager said this process will be completed by the end of the year. This promotes consistent and up to date practice by staff.

Policies and procedures are being overhauled and reorganised to ensure guidance is current, up to date and accessible by staff. The Registered Manager is ensuring that staff are familiar with this revised guidance. Communication has improved between the Registered Manager and the local authority designated officers. The requirements from the previous inspection have been met. The Registered Manager and staff have the necessary resources and networks to underpin safe care practice for young people.

Opportunities to assure and maintain the highest quality of care for young people are not being maximised. The Registered Manager monitors various aspects of the service but not all areas required by regulations. Young people are asked for their views and these contribute to the monitoring carried out. Parent's and placing authorities views about the quality of service provided also need to be included within these required reports. The legislation aimed at monitoring and controlling the quality of care is not being fully implemented.

The Registered Manager confirmed that the Statement of Purpose has not been amended since the previous inspection. It accurately reflects the service provided. This includes admitting young people on an emergency basis. The young people's guide is a child friendly document making clear important information about the home that young people need to know. This means young people receive helpful

written information to aid their understanding about what the home does and what is expected of them.

Young people are given a confusing message about others and their own trustworthiness by care practice requiring that they sign to confirm participation in ordinary activities of daily life. Staff ask young people to sign various documents including agreements for receipt of a key, key worker and review sessions and the receipt of pocket monies. This practice is institutional and is not an effective risk reduction method because a signature by the member of staff is sufficient.

Young people's quality of care is potentially compromised because it is not rigorously monitored. An independent person carries out visits to the home on a monthly basis as required by legislation. Family and young people's views inform this process. The Registered Manager reports do not fully address all that is required by legislation and as such opportunities to realise the highest quality of care are being missed.

The Registered Manager needs to compile an annual development plan that makes clear the function of the home and the available budget. The Registered Manager gave an assurance that the home was adequately resourced. This is required so that it is clear that young people's future plans will not be disrupted.

All staff at the home hold appropriate qualifications with regards to caring for young people. Staff are sufficient in number and the team is fully staffed by permanent appointments. Supervision records have been revised with the aim of improving quality and accountability. Staff receive supervision on a monthly basis and a member of staff said, 'we can ask for this at any time.' Induction procedures for new staff are not in line with the expectations of the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC.) This can lead to inconsistency in the care young people receive. The Registered Manager receives supervision from an independent person who has relevant experience. Systems have recently been put in place to ensure the responsible individual is informed about the outcome of supervisions and matters that need to be progressed. There are plans in place for regular meetings between the Registered Manager and the responsible individual.

Young people's thoughts and feelings are represented within looked after reviews. The Registered Manager confirms that reviews for young people take place as required. Young people are encouraged to express their views and staff also contribute to this process in writing. The Registered Manager supports visits by the independent reviewing officer to meet young people prior to carrying out review meetings. Staff share what they write about young people with them. Young people are confident that their views and achievements are accurately shared within their looked after reviews.

Young people are encouraged to mark and value their achievements. Staff recognise and record young people's participation in activities and events. These are presented in a child friendly format that help young people to look back on achievements as

enjoyable and meaningful experience. Staff understand young people can see their files. They encourage young people to be aware of what they write about them prior to reviews and in key worker sessions. This builds trust and a culture of openness between staff and young people. Young people have medication records on their files, however, a central record is not in place. This needs to be addressed for ease of reference purposes.

The Registered Manager is establishing systems to improve care practice including more effective supervision. In accordance with legislation, the Registered Manager and the responsible individual notify Ofsted and local authority safeguarding officers about significant events. They act on advice and guidance provided by local authority designated officers and liaise as appropriate. The Registered Manager and responsible individual are improving practice in light of previous concerns. These include recruitment processes, closer working with local authority designated officers, as well as the updating and revision of policies and procedures including safeguarding. These will help to ensure the safety and wellbeing of young people.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
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.

Information 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 framework of inspection for children's homes.