

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC397092
Inspection date	04/10/2012
Inspector	Denise Perry
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	07/03/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This children's home is operated by a private company. The home provides care for up to two young people of either gender with emotional and/or 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 living in this home are receiving exceptional standards of care. The staff team consistently have high aspirations for all young people and place them at the centre of their daily working practice. However, not all young people have managed to sustain good progress in their lives regardless of the staff team's on-going committed practice. Since the last inspection, some young people have placed themselves and staff at significant risk. As a result placement changes have been essential to keep young people safe and secure.

However, the motivated, dedicated and supportive staff team continue to promote positive outcomes for young people. This has led to young people attending and achieving at school, developing a positive self-view and emotional resilience. Recently admitted young people are making good progress in their lives, given their starting points at the time of placement. They respond well to daily routines and consistent boundaries which staff effectively implement. This promotes their sense of safety and lets them know that they are valued and cared for.

The staff team respect the Registered Manager and hold her in high regard and this reflects in the running of the home. Staff are clear about their roles and are actively involved in developing this service. This is done through the home's development plan, effective supervisions, appraisals and regular team meetings. The requirements and recommendation made from this inspection do not adversely impact on the quality of care provided to young people.

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
34 (2001)	ensure that the system for monitoring and improving the quality of care provides for consultation with children, their parents and placing authorities (Regulation 34 (3))	20/11/2012
5 (2001)	ensure the registered person shall notify the HMCI of any revision of the Statement of Purpose within 28 days. (Regulation 5 (b))	20/11/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure all staff have their performance individually and formally appraised at least annually and this appraisal takes into account any views of the young people for whom the service is providing. (NMS 19.6)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Some young people have made and sustained significant attachments with the people who care for them. As a result, trusting relationships emerge and young people develop in confidence and make very good progress in all aspects of their lives. Young people recently placed are forming appropriate attachments with the managers and staff team. This is achieved through effective and personalised pre-placement arrangements, from which young people directly benefit. One young person said, 'I like living here, I feel safe and I want to stay here until I'm eighteen.' Since the last inspection, young people have moved to alternative accommodation. This has been essential in order to keep them and other people safe. While there is evidence to demonstrate progress being made for these young people, they were unable or unwilling to sustain this.

Young people have gained an excellent understanding of their specific health needs and take responsibility for their own health. Staff promote young people's health needs through securing strong links with community health services. As a result, young people are competent in self-administering their medication in line with their semi-independent plan. Staff support young people to attend all health appointments, such as diabetes clinic, doctors, dentist and opticians. Young people

learn about the importance of maintaining healthy diets and leading healthy lifestyles. This greatly contributes to improved and continuous outcomes for young people. Young people enjoy taking part in physical activities, such as mountain bike riding, horse riding and dog walking. As a result, young people become appropriately involved in the local community, have a sense of belonging and their general health benefits. Young people also go on activity holidays relevant to their personal interests and talents. This broadens their horizons, helps to develop social skills and promotes greater self-confidence.

Young people attend and take part in their planned educational programmes. They do sometimes struggle to attend school at the beginning of the day. However, given their starting points they are making excellent progress in this area. Young people no longer require direct support from care staff in school, as they learn to manage their environment and develop positive relationships with teaching staff and peer groups. This contributes to young people achieving their short term goals and making impressive inroads into learning outcomes. For young people recently admitted into the home, educational placements have been secured and introduction visits are arranged. This will provide young people with opportunities to develop their learning and knowledge.

Where appropriate, staff effectively support young people in developing their independent life skills, such as laundry, budgeting, cooking, and general household tasks. As a result, young people recognise the importance of building on their skills to prepare themselves for a successful transition to adulthood.

Quality of care

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

Staff have consistently high aspirations for the young people they care for. They place the well-being of individual young people at the centre of their practice in the home, irrespective of the challenges they present. Some young people have displayed unpredictable behaviours, which in one case resulted in extreme violence against staff. As a result, placement changes were necessary to keep staff and young people safe. Having said this, the staff team united and throughout this time continued to have the welfare and well-being of young people as a prime focus in their daily practice. This ensures consistently high levels of care to the young people in the home. Furthermore, written feedback from the placing authority was extremely positive with regard to the quality of care provided within this home.

Young people say they know how to make a complaint and that their views are listened to. Staff take time to talk to young people to help them understand why it may not be possible to act on their wishes in all cases. For example, staff clearly explain to young people why they cannot always have free time or unsupervised contact with their families. This is in line with young people's highly individual risk assessments, which staff continually review. These are comprehensive, detailed, well written and updated to reflect changes in young people's lives as and when they occur. Young people are actively and fully involved in their placement plans, which

also thoroughly identify the relevant equality and diversity issues for each individual. This means that young people's views and feelings are always considered and appropriate action taken when necessary.

The Registered Manager and key staff attend school events such as parent's evenings and take an active interest in young people's educational development. Staff are proactive in their practice and liaise effectively with other professionals, such as teachers and therapists. This holistic approach ensures staff provide highly personalised care and support to young people in their care. This has enabled young people to achieve educationally and develop in confidence and abilities.

The needs relating to young people's cultural background and personal identity are positively addressed in both daily living and care planning. Staff carefully plan young people's holidays to reflect their interests, such as mountain bike riding trips abroad. Also, holiday trips to Tunisia increase young people's understanding about different cultures and the world we live in.

The home is appropriately designed, well located and maintained to a high standard. This ensures that the physical environment meets young people's needs. Young people's rooms are personalised, decorated and furnished in a way that is comfortable for them, so that they feel valued and safe. Young people are confident in welcoming and talking with visitors.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people's safety and well-being is high on the agenda in this home. Staff are suitably trained in safeguarding and the home has extensive policies and procedures in place which underpin effective practice. Staff record and implement clear plans which identify risks and protective factors for individual young people. This contributes to young people's safety both within the home and in the wider community.

The number of young people going missing from care and the use of physical restraints has significantly reduced over time. This coincides with young people moving from the home to alternative provisions in order to keep them safe and secure. When young people have been missing from care, staff have followed agreed protocols with the local police to ensure young people are protected as far as possible. Furthermore, records examined show restraint being used only as a last resort and to prevent injury to people or serious damage to property. Staff are helping young people to increase their levels of self-control and awareness of the impact of their behaviour. They work well with young people to help them reflect on significant incidents. This strengthens attachments and encourages young people to better manage their future behaviour. This shows young people that they are supported and valued.

Staff recruitment procedures are robust and a clear vetting process is in place, which

helps to prevent unsuitable people being employed. The home has a good health and safety regime, which includes medication procedures. All necessary fire precautions and equipment servicing are carried out appropriately and within regulatory timescales. New admissions are provided with written and verbal information on fire evacuation procedures, and day and night time drills are carried out. Some young people have chosen not to partake in recent fire drills. They are however able to explain the procedures and identify escape plans in the event of a fire. Staff are working with young people to secure their active involvement and increase their practical experience of drills. This will contribute to young people's safety.

Leadership and management

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

There were no requirements or recommendations made at the last inspection. The Registered Manager and her deputy effectively and efficiently manage this home. Young people benefit because the managers adopt a visible, involved style and relate consistently and directly to young people. As a result, young people develop trusting relationships and know that their individual views and plans are consistently shared, understood and followed. In addition, young people know that their complaints and concerns are properly addressed and resolved. All records are maintained confidentially, stored correctly and contribute to the young person's understanding of their life.

The home's visual development plan focuses on identifying areas of improvement linked to young people's outcomes, quality of care and the physical environment. This plan is regularly reviewed and shared with staff and young people and demonstrates continuous progress being made both in young people's lives, such as managing their health conditions successfully. The Registered Manager has reviewed sleeping-in procedures following a significant incident where a staff member was seriously assaulted and injured by a young person. Furthermore, staff involved in this incident are receiving support from the company and the whole of the staff team through a number of avenues. This includes access to counselling, supervision meetings and direct support from colleagues. Clear and agreed arrangements are now in place and control measures have been taken to improve the home's alarm systems. This has promoted staff safety and security.

The staff team's performance continually improves with well-planned team meetings, effective handovers between shifts, good quality supervisions and annual appraisals. However, there have been delays in completing some staff appraisals and the Registered Manager has not received any formal appraisal since being in post. There is little impact on staff resulting from this shortfall because there are regular and robust supervisions, which continually address personal development. However, there are missed opportunities for the Registered Manager to review and reflect on her own professional practice.

The Registered Manager sees training as essential to the delivery of high quality care. She seeks and secures external training courses for her staff team, such as

management and child development training. This promotes staff development, increases their knowledge and benefits their overall professional practice. Staff report that they feel well supported and have regular access to training linked to young people's specific needs, such as attachment and diabetes. A member of staff said, 'the attachment training has been invaluable and helped us to focus and deliver a therapeutic approach to support and meet young people's needs.' Another member of staff said that this was one of the best homes he has ever worked in. He reported on how well the Registered Manager guides staff in the delivery of child focused therapeutic care. As a result, most young people's identified needs are met and they make good progress in all aspects of their lives.

The Registered Manager has not yet developed formal systems to ensure that the views of young people, parents and placing authorities are obtained as part of regulation 34 monitoring. However, this shortfall does not negatively impact on young people because their views are consistently heard through daily discussions, key work sessions, young people's meetings, reviews and the company's regulation 33 visitor.

The up-dated Statement of Purpose and young person's guide accurately represent the specific service of the home. A copy of the revised Statement of Purpose has not been sent to Ofsted to reflect changes in the company's management structure and staff team. However, the impact on young people is minimal, as the Registered Manager ensures that they receive the young people's guide as part of the admissions process. In addition to this, she provides young people with a personalised welcome booklet which includes individual messages of welcome from the staff team, along with their photographs. As a result, all young people placed in the home have a good understanding of the home's purpose, aims and objectives and equally important, information about the people who work in the home.

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.