

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	23/12/2013
Inspector	Dawn Bennett
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Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	04/11/2013
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This home is part of a large private children's care organisation and is registered to accommodate up to three young people, who have 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 **adequate**.

The overall judgement for this home is adequate. The home was judged as inadequate at the last full inspection at the beginning of November 2013. Since then the Registered Manager and organisation have made progress in addressing the requirements and recommendation made. Leadership and management is adequate. An internal investigation into a serious allegation has taken place but does not include clear actions or timescales. This does not ensure that the findings will improve quality of care or outcomes for young people in the future.

A number of requirements were linked to compatibility of young people living together. These issues have been partly addressed after a decision was made by the organisation and placing authority to support a young person to leave the home. Prior to this decision the level of high risk behaviours and police and health involvement was high. Safeguarding is adequate as the staff team worked hard to establish positive relationships but the duration and number of physical interventions did not reduce but were required to safeguard the young person and staff.

Young people are now making good social, emotional and educational progress. Young people would like to discuss the organisation's rule of no mobile phones in bedrooms overnight. Staff deliver good quality individualised care to young people through their daily working practice. Young people talk positively about living in the home and state that they feel safe. Staff place considerable importance on supporting young people to take proportionate risks while prioritising their safety and well-being. They recognise the particular vulnerabilities of the young people they

look after. When high risk incidents do occur staff work effectively in partnership with other agencies to achieve safe outcomes.

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 registered person maintains a system for monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 at appropriate intervals. This specifically relates to ensuring the internal investigation into the serious allegation has clear actions and timescales. (Regulation 34 (1))	31/01/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure young people are supported to develop positive self esteem. This specifically relates to enabling a young person to discuss on an individual basis the organisation's rule of no mobile phones in bedrooms overnight (NMS 12.1)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people are making good progress in the home. They receive well-planned personalised care and support. They form and sustain positive attachments with staff and friends from school and make good progress in developing emotional resilience.

Young people who are not making good educational, emotional or social progress are supported by the dedicated staff team to address issues and move forward. Where young people do not progress and it is assessed that their needs are not being met, the organisation supports the placing authority to find alternative placements and support the young person to move out of the home. This action ensures the safety, well-being and continued success of those young people making good progress.

Young people are in good emotional and physical health. They lead healthy lifestyles, enjoying nutritious diets and physical activities. As well as identifying and responding to specific health needs, the staff team also give good advice, support and guidance

on a wide range of health topics. Young people understand the importance of good health. They attend medical appointments and stop or moderate their unhealthy habits for example; a young person has successfully lost weight.

Young people are active and constructively occupied. The routine of the house and ethics role modelled by staff promotes opportunity and participation. Young people have excellent attendance in mainstream education and are making good educational progress. They are working towards exams and are exceeding targets in a number of subjects. Staff support them in their progress by attending parents evenings and college open days. Staff are proud of young people's educational progress and praise and reward success. Due to their educational achievements young people are able to apply for the college courses they are interested in. A young person stated 'I had an interview for college, which went really well. They offered me a provisional place straightaway. Everyone has been really pleased for me.'

Young people are actively involved in their local community through friendships and activities. There are clear procedures in place that are known to staff and young people that promote young people's independence but also keep them safe. These processes enable young people to safely socialise with friends and do not stigmatise them as 'children in care'.

Young people have a good range of independence skills which are relevant to their age and understanding. They learn to manage their money by opening bank accounts, saving and budgeting. They participate in everyday household tasks such as planning and preparing meals, keeping their bedrooms clean and shopping. The priority for learning these skills is appropriately balanced by good parenting. For example, the priority for one young person is to revise to achieve good exam results. Therefore staff are supporting her by preparing healthy meals around study times. The organisation currently operates a policy which states young people are not allowed their mobile phones in their bedrooms overnight. This is a blanket rule and does not allow for the individual abilities of young people.

Quality of care

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

Staff have good knowledge and understanding of young people's individual needs and backgrounds. They identify and address the diverse and complex needs of young people, both in daily living and placement planning. Consequently, young people make good progress in most aspects of their lives.

Where young people struggle to make progress, and display behaviours that continue to be challenging, the staff team work hard to engage them irrespective of the barriers they experience. They communicate effectively with partner agencies and use a wide range of strategies to try and address issues and advocate on the young person's behalf. Where this is not successful they support the young person to move onto an alternative placement that might better meet their needs. For example, staff initially continued to work with a young person to help them settle in

to their new home within the organisation.

Young people successfully sustain and develop relationships with their birth family and with wider support networks. Young people have access to the Children's Rights Team, social worker and their independent reviewing officers. The staff work effectively in partnership with family members increasing contact where appropriate, in agreement with placing authorities. Parents are positive about the impact increased contact is having upon the young person, themselves and other family members. Staff understand the emotional importance and impact of contact for young people. They are proactive at liaising with placing authorities prior to key events such as Christmas to ensure arrangements are clear and well organised.

The standard of accommodation is good. There is a programme of refurbishment as well as regular day to day maintenance work. Work to repair damage caused to the environment by a young person has been completed since the last inspection. Due to young people leaving the home there has also been a reallocation of bedrooms. As a result young people have been involved in choosing décor and furnishings then moving in and arranging their new rooms. The home is bright, cheerful and welcoming. Staff and young people had decorated most of the rooms throughout the house ready for Christmas and the Registered Manager was busy hanging lights outside.

Young people's comments, and feedback from their social workers, indicate they are happy with the quality of care at the home. Young people state that a key strength of the home is the staff team. Social workers confirm that they are provided with regular good quality information.

Young people's views and feelings are gathered on a regular basis through meetings, key worker sessions and day to day discussions. Young people state that they can express their views both in terms of their placements and the running of the home. Young people are very reassured in that they can talk to the staff and have easy access to the home's manager.

Young people know about the home's complaints procedure and they are confident that just talking to staff will help resolve concerns. No complaints have been formally received in the home.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Staff have access to a range of policies and procedures that promote the safety and well-being of young people. These policies underpin staff induction and mandatory training this ensures staff know the actions to take, in partnership with other agencies, if a young person is at risk.

The staff team have been supporting young people with very diverse and different

needs.

Young people currently living at the home are settled and have very positive established relationships with staff. They have a good understanding of the impact of their behaviour on themselves and others and have developed effective communication skills. They do not display any inappropriate behaviour and they work well with staff to keep themselves safe at all times. Staff use key worker sessions to work towards aims and objectives that increase young people's knowledge, skills and independence whilst discussing age appropriate strategies to keep them safe. As a result, young people have made good progress in a range of areas, for example, they attend mainstream education, they have long established friendships in the local community and they can make informed decisions that ensure they keep themselves safe.

The staff team have also supported a young person who displayed extremely high risk behaviours. These extreme and dangerous behaviours resulted in injury to the young person, staff and damage to the environment. The number and duration of these incidents and the need to use physical intervention, health and police involvement increased. However, staff remained calm and used a range of strategies to try and engage and stabilise the young person. They advocated on behalf of the young person and liaised with medical professionals, police and placing authority. However, there was no improvement or reductions in the behaviour. In addition to the risks the young person placed upon themselves and staff, their behaviour also impacted on the other young people living in the home and on a neighbouring children's home. As a result the organisation and local authority made the decision to move the young person to another children's home within the organisation.

Since this decision was made, and the young person has moved on, there have been no other incidents, use of physical intervention or involvement of partner agencies in this home.

Leadership and management

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

This home was judged to be inadequate at its last full inspection on 04th November 2013. Prior to this inspection this was an outstanding home making good progress. There were eight requirements and one recommendation made as a result of the last inspection. All have been actioned by the organisation and Registered Manager.

The organisation's investigation into recent practice issues that resulted in a serious allegation being made has been completed. Actions arising from this investigation, and timescales for completing them, are not detailed or specific enough. This could result in the findings having a limited impact on driving up standards of care in the home, or addressing the lessons that need to be learnt to ensure good outcomes for young people in the future.

The revised admissions procedure now means that the Registered Manager will be involved in the process at an earlier stage. He will look at referrals for young people to live at the home and the impact they may have on young people already living there. Until these procedures are fully implemented it is not possible to judge their impact on the compatibility and safety of young people living together at the home.

Staff are provided with an established programme of induction and mandatory training. They also have fortnightly input at staff meetings from the organisation's clinical team. There are records of mandatory staff training and these ensure that refresher courses are arranged where necessary. The core group of staff at this home are experienced and are all trained to level three. The three newest staff members are either still on probation or have just started their level three training. As a result of managing extreme high risk behaviours staff have had recent training to support them in managing self-harming behaviours. This means that young people are looked after by staff who are equipped with the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to understand their needs.

The manager ensures that detailed individualised placement plans are in place for each young person. Staff and young people regularly review the plans, which clearly outline individual needs and focus on clear measurable outcomes. Young people benefit from working with a well-informed and committed staff team. The Registered Manager makes good use of a range of monitoring activities relating to quality of care. This includes responding to the monthly independent quality assurance reports. This helps him understand the strengths and weaknesses of the home. The Registered Manager is then proactive in producing an action plan to address any issues raised within clear timescales. For example, the visitor made a recommendation about the quality of physical intervention reports. Action was taken immediately to discuss and address the feedback.

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.