

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Debbie Foster
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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.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service that exceeds minimum requirements

Satisfactory: a service that only meets minimum requirements

Inadequate: a service that does not meet minimum requirements

Service information

Brief description of the service

The setting is registered to provide care for up-to-two young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties and, or with learning disabilities. The ages of the young people accommodated are between 11 and 17 years.

The Statement of Purpose specifies medium to long-term placements are provided for young people.

Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be **good**.

Young people receive personalised and well-planned care which reflects their individual needs. The staff team are committed and child centred supporting young people effectively to reach their potential. Good opportunities exist for young people to give their views on the care they receive.

Strong and positive relationships exist between the young people and the staff. This assists young people in building trust and in turn is enabling them to work well with staff. Young people are safe and they benefit greatly from the safety measures and practices staff implement to keep them safe. Young people say they are safe.

Staff use and implement the agreed placement plans and strategies to support young people well. However, the behaviour plan is not in enough detail. The records for direct work do not always fully reflect the placement plan aims for young people or document the progress they are making.

Mandatory training is provided to the staff. However, not all staff have attained the level 3 Children and Young People Workforce Diploma qualification and they have not completed all specialist training in areas relating to caring for young people with learning disabilities.

Although there is a new manager in post the provider has not actively pursued registering this person in a timely manner.

Areas for improvementStatutory 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
7 (2001)	ensure the manager submits an application to register. (Care Standards Act 2000 Part 11 para. (11) (1))	25/10/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure each young person's placement plan is monitored by the key worker within the home who makes sure that the requirements of the plan are implemented in the day-to-day care of the young person. In particular, the aims and goals set in safety, education and social skills (NMS 25.2)
- ensure behaviour plans specifically detail the strategies to be used with each young person. Thus, enabling all staff to be able constructively and consistently apply these to support and develop positive behaviour (NMS 3.7 & Volume 5 children's home guidance para. 2.86)
- ensure risk assessments specifically detail the risks to the young person and how they are to be reduced. In particular, balancing the locking of the front door and rights to liberty (NMS 4,10 & Volume 5 children's home guidance para. 2.108)
- ensure that reference requests ask specifically if the person is suitable to work with children and young people (NMS 16)
- ensure the staff team are sufficient in number to provide care to young people at all times and meet the Statement of Purpose (NMS 17.1)
- ensure the Statement of Purpose and children's guide are reviewed and updated. The children's guide should be in a format suitable for young people using the service. (NMS 13)
- ensure staff are equipped with the skills required to meet the needs of the young people and the purpose of the setting. In particular, specialist training relating to young people with learning disabilities and the conditions of young people receiving a service (NMS 18.1)
- ensure all staff attain level 3 Children and Young People Workforce Diploma qualification (NMS 18)
- ensure the home's development plan identifies any planned changes in the operation or resources of the service, or confirms the continuation of the home's current operation and resources (NMS 15.2)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people enjoy good health and are developing an appropriate understanding of

the importance of keeping healthy. Young people enjoy planning and cooking basic meals, with staff, to learn about healthy foods. Staff promote a balanced diet and encourage young people to eat healthily. Individual needs such as diet and weight are well managed and so meet young people's diverse needs. Young people frequently participate in physical exercise and enjoy the benefits of cycling, swimming and walking to keep active and fit. They attend routine health appointments as part of a healthy lifestyle. Young people can make important choices about their daily routines and this reduces young people's anxiety about new activities. As a result young people have opportunity to develop emotional security.

Young people have good opportunities to achieve in education and are supported through important transitions, for example from school to college. Contact between the home and school is regular and effective, enabling staff to support young people successfully. As a result young people benefit from good educational experiences which aids learning and improves their socialising skills. Therefore, young people receive care which prepares them well for adulthood.

Young people are supported to keep in touch with family members and maintain important relationships. Young people say 'I make telephone calls and have weekly visits to see my family'. Young people have regular opportunities to speak in private to an independent visitor to express any wishes and feelings they wish to. Therefore young people can express any matters of concern and they benefit from an advocate.

Young people learn day-to-day skills and enjoy getting involved in household chores.. Young people have opportunity to improve their socialising skills for example attending a local youth club. This is building young people's confidence and life skills in readiness for adult life.

Quality of care

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

A small staff group deliver and demonstrate commitment to addressing young people's care and safety needs effectively. A young person said, 'the best thing about the home is the staff, I get on with them all'.

Young people benefit greatly from staff who are caring and supportive; they pursue opportunities for young people to assist them in reaching their potential. Staff say that they build trust and strong relationships with the young people by 'actively listening'. The communication aids and visual daily routine planners are used involving the young person. This allows young people to make decisions and choices about their daily routines and activities. This is assisting young people to build their confidence and self esteem.

Young people enjoy fulfilling relationships with the staff and there is a positive rapport between them. Staff explain and support young people with all aspects of their individual needs. As a result this tailored care supports young people's social

and independence skills. Staff work consistently as a team with young people which helps young people quickly settle.

The views of young people are constructively sought and acted upon. Staff facilitate this by actively involving young people to make decisions about their lives and influence the way that the home is run. Daily chats, one-to-one discussions, key worker sessions and weekly meetings give young people regular opportunities to express their views and opinions. Examples of how young people's choices are implemented include: activities; personalising bedrooms; decorative changes with the home; menu planning and trips. Young people feel important and central to making decisions about their lives. As a result young people's behaviours quickly and significantly improve following their admission.

Young people know they can complain and say, 'I would tell staff if I was not happy about something'. There is good, clear information in the children's guide about how to complain. A social worker confirms the complaints procedure has been explained to a young person during their admission. Young people are well supported to make a complaint and staff proactively advocate where required.

Young people are well supported to move into this home. A young person said they had visited the home a few times before moving in. Young people have their needs assessed, and satisfactory written placement plans outline how these needs will be met. There are daily routine plans which are detailed and include the young person's preferences for personal care. Placement plans are sufficiently well recorded with reasonable detail to inform the staff what they need to do to meet the identified needs of individuals. However, staff have not undertaken one-to-one work in all areas identified in the placement plan. The records do not clearly demonstrate all the progress made by the young people to achieve aims, goals and targets set within safety, education and social skill areas.

Young people participate in their statutory reviews and are able to give their views on the care they receive. Following reviews, placement plans are promptly updated to ensure young people's continued progress. Good policies and accurate practice around the storage, handling, administration and disposal of medication safeguards young people's welfare.

Staff support young people to pursue their particular interests and leisure activities. Young people are encouraged to socialise which enables them to build self esteem and confidence. Young people say they choose the weekly activities they want to do. Young people experience a wide range of activities, building on interests and social skills. Examples of organised activities include: cycling; bowling; cinema; youth club; interactive electronic gaming; swimming and walking.

All young people benefit from a home which is decorated and furnished to a good standard. The home is kept clean and there are homely touches throughout. Each young person has a single bedroom which they can personalise. There is a satisfactory maintenance and repairs are promptly addressed. The garden is maintained and safe allowing young people to enjoy using the trampoline and watch

nature, such as the birds feeding.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people feel safe. Staff follow clear safeguarding procedures and guidance to promote young people's welfare. Staff members benefit from mandatory training on signs and symptoms of abuse to be alert to any concerns. The staff are aware of good anti-bullying practices and are vigilant to any signs of this. Staff and young people say there is no bullying occurring in the home currently.

No young person has gone missing from the home, but in the event of this the home deploys effective measures to search, report and then return young people safely. All young people are risk assessed as to their individual needs and areas where they may be more vulnerable when absent from the home.

Staff focus and promote the good behaviour of young people. Young people say staff treat them fairly. Rewards for positive behaviour are given to young people. The ethos of the home is to de-escalate any challenging behaviour and the staff strongly reinforce this practice. As a result restraints do not happen and young people are supported to manage their frustration in other ways.

Young people have behaviour plans to assist staff on how to manage individual behaviours. Staff are knowledgeable on the individual strategies they use to support young people with their behaviour, which reflects their abilities and understanding. However, the behaviour plans do not always give specific detail on the strategies to use for each young person. For any new staff working in the home this could present difficulties in their approach and dealing with behaviours in a clear and consistent manner. In turn this could impact on the young person and their behaviour.

The health and safety of the young people and the safety of the building is considerably well managed with regular reviews and oversight by the manager. Health, safety and fire safety is well maintained and the home carries out regular fire evacuation drills and health and safety risk assessments for the protection of young people.

Young people benefit from overall sound risk assessment and plans, covering both environmental risks and risks based on likely and known behaviours. However, some risk assessments are not explicit on the balance of young people's liberty versus their safety to suitably guide staff.

All visitors to the building are strictly monitored and they must identify themselves and sign in and out of the home. All staff are employed through well-managed and formal interview and recruitment process. However, references do not ask if the person is suitable to work with children to fully ensure safety and welfare is promoted.

Leadership and management

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

The Registered Manager post has been vacant for several months. Although, a manager is in post and manages the home sufficiently, the registration has not been pursued in a timely fashion in line with legislation. Since the last inspection of the service Ofsted has issued a warning letter relating to a breach in a condition of registration relating to the category of children and young people the service can admit. The provider has now amended the conditions of registration and is currently meeting these.

A good proportion of the previous actions and recommendations are met. The recommendation not met is; for all care staff to complete a National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in caring for children and young people or equivalent.

A Statement of Purpose is available to inform professionals and members of the public about how care is provided at the home. However, this document is not up to date and the children's guide is not in a format suitable for all the young people to fully understand the information about the service.

There is a small consistent staff team with relevant experience to care for the young people. However, some vacancies currently exist. This has not impacted directly upon the care of young people at the home so far. The manager has worked on the care rota and made every effort to ensure continuity of staffing by the use of two familiar staff from within the organisation. However, potentially this could impact during holiday times, covering sickness and training should the home be at capacity.

New staff receive induction training before commencing work with the young people. Staff are knowledgeable on the policies which underpins their practice. The staff team describe the management support and supervision as, 'good and the manager is always available to discuss any matter'. Staff receive training in core subjects although, there are shortfalls for new staff in specialist training relating to the care of young people with learning disabilities.

There is satisfactory monitoring of the quality of care for the young people. The manager has a system to report and evaluate the administration systems and identify any areas of weakness. This is supported by regular independent visits to check the quality of care. However, this monitoring has not identified all relevant matters, in addition young people are not always consulted for their views about their care. There is a development plan in place however, this does not set out clearly the developments to improve the operation or resources of the service, for example staff training.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.

