

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC400355
Inspection date	30/11/2011
Inspector	Michelle Bacon
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	09/12/2010
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2011

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.

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

This home provides accommodation for up to three young people of either sex between the ages of 10 to 17 years at any one time. It is operated by a private company.

Overall effectiveness

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

Young people receive good quality care that enables them to make progress from the starting point of their placement. Young people have positive views about how they are looked after and say they feel well cared for. Young people say they feel safe and understand how to make a complaint.

Young people's placement plans ensure care is personalised to meet the individual needs of young people. There is good communication between young people, their family and staff. Those people significant to young people feel they are being well looked after, and one placing social worker commented 'the staff are very supportive'.

Leaders and managers have a good understanding of the home's strengths and weaknesses. Although there are a number of shortfalls that need addressing these are not having a direct impact on young people's welfare and safety. Instead they relate to shortfalls in recording and notifications however, the home demonstrates a capacity for continued improvement.

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
17 (2001)	ensure the following is not used as a disciplinary measure on children accommodated in the home, the imposition of any financial penalty, other than a requirement for the payment of a reasonable sum(which maybe in instalments)by way of reparation.(Regulation 17(2)(g))	30/12/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure the registered person has a system in place to notify within 24 hours the persons and appropriate authorities of the occurrence of significant events in accordance with Regulation 30(NMS 24.1)
- ensure the young people's guide details how a child can contact their Independent Reviewing Officer and the Children's Rights Director(NMS 13.5)
- ensure the home provides a comfortable and homely environment and is well maintained, in particular ensure the damaged doors are replaced(NMS 10.3)
- ensure that systems are in place to monitor the quality and adequacy of record keeping and take action when needed.(NMS 22.1)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people are supported to maintain a healthy lifestyle, in particular good physical and dental health. Comprehensive health care plans are in place and identify young people's specific health needs and the arrangements for meeting these. Young people are encouraged to develop a sensible attitude to healthy eating by allowing them to select the menus, shop for food and help prepare meals with staff. These activities also help to promote young people's independence skills.

Young people's files demonstrate they are being supported to develop their emotional resilience through effective key worker sessions. These sessions allow young people the opportunity to explore ways of expressing themselves more appropriately and to understand how their behaviour impacts on others.

Young people are engaged in education and their attainment since their starting point at the time of placement, shows they are making good progress. Young people say they enjoy school and their attendance reflects this.

Young people benefit from contact with family, friends and those who play a significant role in their lives. Where there are any restrictions in contact these are clearly recorded in a young person's placement plan. Young people are supported to engage in a range of activities in the community, such as football, rugby and sea cadets. This provides young people with the opportunity to mix with other young people and develop friendships outside of the home.

Quality of care

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

Young people live in a caring and nurturing environment. Staff provide young people with consistency, routines and boundaries. Staff view young people in a positive light and are committed to improving outcomes for them.

Young people confirm that staff listen to their concerns and complaints. Staff seek young people's views about the running of the home; for example buying items for the home, the house rules and activities. Young people are helped to understand why it may not be possible to act upon their wishes and feelings, during key worker sessions and the house meetings. Information is given to young people on how they can access advocacy services outside of the home. However, the young people's welcome guide does not contain a summary of how young people can contact their Independent Reviewing Officer or the Children's Rights Director, should they wish to raise a concern about their care.

Staff ensure young people's care is individual to their needs and ensure their well-being is at the fore front of their practice. Young people's placement plans contribute to the day-to-day care arrangements of the home and staff put these into practice effectively. Young people are aware of the content of their placement plans and contribute to them. Staff recognise young people as individuals with differing needs, backgrounds and interests, which is reflected in their placement plans.

Staff are proactive in working with families to gain information into young people's backgrounds. This ensures that they have good knowledge and understanding of a young person's history and previous experiences; this enables the staff to provide the right level of support and build emotional resilience.

Young people live in an environment that promotes their physical health and emotional well-being. Young people report that staff look after them when they are feeling unwell. Staff receive support and guidance from therapists to address specific issues in relation to a young person's needs.

Staff ensure the home's daily routines support young people's school attendance. Staff help young people with homework, attend parents' evening and other educational events. Staff work effectively with teachers to ensure young people's full participation in education.

Young people live in a spacious and comfortable family home in a quiet residential area. Young people are able to personalise their bedrooms to reflect their own personal tastes. The house is clean and well maintained. However there is some damage to the young people's bedroom doors but there are plans to replace these.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people say that they feel safe in the home. Staff have undertaken work with young people to develop their understanding about keeping themselves safe. Staff

follow agreed protocols where young people go missing, every effort is made to locate young people and ensure their safe return. Staff understand their role and responsibility to protect young people.

Young people often present with difficult and challenging behaviours that require high levels of support and close supervision. Bullying is an ongoing issue within the home however, staff are proactive in dealing with this. Young people report that staff deal with incidents of bullying and records confirm this is the case.

Young people are encouraged to develop socially acceptable behaviour however, the home uses sanctioning as the main tool to correct negative behaviour; with imposition of financial penalties being the main penalty imposed. Restraints are used as a last resort to prevent injury. Discussion following a restraint is always followed up with the young person. However, records do not make it clear why staff have used physical intervention or what steps were taken to avoid a restraint. This is because the lack of space in the restraint log limits the amount of information staff can record.

Visitors to the home are asked for identification and required to sign in. Young people are protected by good recruitment practices, staff do not start work until all checks have been completed. A selection of staff files were inspected during this visit. These comply with all the regulatory requirements.

The environment is physically safe and secure, regular fire drills take place with young people and staff. Fire, gas and electrical equipment is serviced regularly. Staff are guided by risk assessments in relation to the home and young people. These measures ensure the safety of young people, staff and visitors is safeguarded.

Leadership and management

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

The Statement of Purpose accurately reflects the aims and objectives of the home and is reviewed annually. This is made available to parents and stakeholders. The home has had a change in management and the staff team since the last inspection. This has improved the stability of the home with the manager setting out clear expectations of the staff team. Young people are supported by sufficient numbers of staff; this ensures they are supported in their activities and appointments. Staff are supported in their work through regular supervision and team meetings. They have access to training to enhance their skills and knowledge.

Evaluation of the quality of care provided is undertaken regularly by someone independent of the home. In addition to this, the manager monitors the operation of the home each month and uses this information to address any issues and improve the quality of the care for young people. The one action from the last inspection has been met, the staff office now provides a separate sleeping area for those staff required to sleep in. The five recommendations have also been acted upon.

All significant events relating to the protection of young people are notified to the relevant authorities with the exception of HMCI. On two occasions the home has not notified HMCI in accordance with Regulation 30.

Records are generally well maintained however, the bound books reference the old standards. Nevertheless this is an issue for the company to rectify. Young people's files provide up-to-date information on them and contribute to an understanding of a young person's life in the home. All records are stored securely.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.