

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Michelle Spruce
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is operated by a national private provider and looks after three young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The service offers planned and emergency admissions, and provides short, medium and long-term placements. Young people are likely to require high levels of support.

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**.

This adequate service provides an environment where young people say they feel safe. Effective communication and good inter-agency working are key strengths in providing good outcomes and a good quality of care.

Relationships are strong and built on trust and respect that reduce challenging behaviour and promote harmony. The staff place a strong emphasis on good effective placement planning, which promotes education, health and well-being that improve life chances. The home is influenced by the active participation and contribution of young people.

Recent changes to the running of the home have had an impact on the safety and leadership and management of the home. There are some shortfalls within the service and as a result, two requirements and one recommendation have been made. These are in relation to hazards within the home and young people's play equipment. The lack of effective monitoring and management oversight has impacted on the overall health and safety of the home.

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
9 (2001)	ensure the registered manager shall, having regard to the size of the children's home, its statement of purpose, and the number and needs of children accommodated there, carry on or manage the home with sufficient care, competence and skill (Regulation (9)(1))	30/11/2012
18 (2001)	ensure that all parts of the home to which children have access including any activities in which children participate are so far as reasonably practicable free from hazards to their health or safety and free from avoidable risk (Regulation 23(a)(b))	30/11/2012
34 (2001)	shall supply to the HMCI a report in respect of any review conducted by the registered person.(Regulation 34(2))	30/11/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure staff have access to support and advice, and are provided with regular supervision by appropriately qualified staff. In relation to casual staff. (NMS 19.4)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make good progress from their starting point, educationally, socially and emotionally because of personalised assessment and planning. As a result, relationships, education and behaviour have successfully improved. Young people develop a positive self-view demonstrated by their immaculate appearance. They take pride in themselves, their belongings and the environment. Young people's confidence and self-esteem improves because they know and understand their backgrounds. This gives young people a sense of identity and belonging.

The health of young people improves because young people take responsibility for maintaining good health and well-being. Young people benefit from a range of external services that promote and support their physical, emotional and psychological health. Young people enjoy nutritious meals that reflect individual healthy choices. Staff incorporate tasting experiences into themed cultural evenings. Young people do not engage in risk taking behaviour and those that smoke are encouraged to quit or reduce the habit. This improves young people's health and well-being and as a result, they thrive.

Young people make significant progress in education, achievement and attainment. Young people said, 'I love school and have 100% attendance.' Young people new to

the home do not have an education placement, however, staff provide support and encourage learning opportunities by using work sheets while a suitable placement is found. This means young people continue to improve their achievement in education. Young people have aspirations for their future and are confident about achieving success. This improves young people's life chances to gain good education outcomes and work based opportunities.

Young people maintain strong links with family, friends and those significant to them. Young people confirm they see their family on a regular basis because staff provide assistance with contact where required. This maximises young people's opportunities and maintains important links which improves and strengthens relationships.

Quality of care

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

Young people have good relationships with staff that are caring, nurturing and supportive. Staff provide a warm welcoming home that young people feel part of. Staff form healthy relationships because they are sensitive and knowledgeable about young people in their care. This promotes respect and harmony in the home. The views and wishes of young people are captured in regular residents meetings. Young people attend and actively participate to address how they feel about the home. Staff plan agenda items that focus on specific topics covering diverse subjects such as religion, health and relationships. As a result, young people are confident, speak freely and are taken seriously. Young people are empowered and actively influence the running of the home without prejudice.

Staff deliver effective care planning individualised to the needs of young people. Young people contribute to their care through key work meetings and regular reviews. Social workers say the care young people receive is, 'excellent'. Young people benefit from stable placements because staff are committed, passionate and consistent in driving forward progress. This helps young people achieve to their best potential. Staff provide consistent support and focus on the health and well-being of young people. Where additional support is necessary, staff liaise with external partners to maximise opportunities for improvement. Staff provide young people with opportunities to prepare, plan and shop for meals. This teaches young people life skills and promotes independence.

Staff continually strive to improve education attendance and achievement through inter-agency networking. Where young people do not have education placements, staff provide learning opportunities in the home. Young people confirm they want to go to school and show enthusiasm to participate. This ensures confidence is not lost and development continues. Staff enable young people to benefit from a wide variety of activities of their choice to enhance their social, emotional and physical well-being. Young people take part in community groups such as cadets and this gives young people a sense of belonging and acceptance. As a result, young people behave appropriately and become sociably accepted.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people feel safe in the home and their dignity and privacy is respected. Young people have keys to their bedrooms and staff are courteous and knock on doors before entering. Staff know how to keep young people safe from abuse and exploitation and attend training that keep them up-to-date with current legislation. As a result, young people are protected from abuse.

The health and safety of the home is monitored through regular weekly checks. Records show weekly audits take place but these have failed to identify significant defects and the poor state of furniture. There are also safety concerns for some play equipment. Some defects are reported to maintenance; however, some hazards remain and are not removed and are therefore a risk. For example, a table that had significant damage was covered by a table cloth but was still being used, despite the damage being reported. The home's risk assessments are reviewed annually or where risk changes. The trampoline was not in good working order and faulty. However, the weekly risk assessment checks on the trampoline have not taken place since January 2012. During the inspection young people reported they had sustained injury from this trampoline. This was not recorded in the accident book and the manager was not aware of the incident. Current practice does not protect young people from risk of injury or harm.

Staff ensure young people understand the risks against fire and complete fire evacuations. However, some fire risks still remain because assessments do not sufficiently identify how practice will minimise the risks. For example, the risk assessment on smoking is for cigarettes to be disposed of safely in the bin provided. The bin however, is damaged and unable to contain cigarette butts safely. As a result, the environment is not free from risk of potential fire.

Young people rarely go missing from the home because they are settled in placement and feel safe. Staff work hard to understand triggers that contribute to young people going missing and work effectively in partnership with external services. This means young people return quickly and safely. The home has very effective behaviour management systems. Young people are learning to develop socially acceptable behaviours which will enable them to become good citizens as they progress into adulthood. The use of physical restraint is minimal and demonstrates that staff are effectively applying the behaviour management strategies.

The robust recruitment system means young people are protected from the risk of harm. This ensures they are provided with safe care and free from the risk of unsuitable people.

Leadership and management

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

The home has a clear accessible and comprehensive Statement of Purpose and young person's guide giving young people, their families and placing authority's good information about the services offered by the home. The financial viability of the provider is shown by the development plans that show dates of further staff training. However, this is weakened because the current maintenance of defective furniture and play equipment is not being maintained to a good, or safe standard.

The Registered Manager provides practical support to the staff team, which helps to shape individualised and safe care. The permanent staff team are well qualified and are very experienced in working with young people. They receive regular supervision and attend additional training opportunities to help improve their knowledge and skills. However, the provider's casual bank staff are not receiving any supervision although some are undertaking regular shifts. This means that these staff members are not being appropriately supported in order to develop their practice.

Internal quality assurance is provided by the home's manager conducting a monthly audit of all the home's reporting systems. This internal monitoring is supported by monthly Regulation 33 visits, undertaken on behalf of senior managers. These involve consulting young people wherever possible. The effectiveness of these monitoring systems are compromised. The Registered Manager confirms he is only at the home for one and a half days a week as he is currently having oversight of another home within the company. As a result, monitoring systems do not highlight any concern in respect of health and safety deficits within the home. Equally, the home is failing to send Regulation 34 reports to the regulator as required. No reports have been received since April 2011. This shows monitoring is not robustly improving the quality of care provided to young people.

Young people's records are clear, well organised and contribute to an understanding of each young person's life. Staff understand the systems in the home and ensure that significant events are notified to the appropriate authorities and that the actions they take following such incidents are robust.

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.