

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Sharon Lewis
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Provision subtype	Children's home

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Service information

Brief description of the service

This is a private home. It is registered to accommodate up to three children and young people with emotional 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**.

The home demonstrates a strong commitment to enhancing young people's lives. Staff succeed in providing a stable environment where young people make good progress in relation to their starting points. The home works exceptionally well with young people who have a history of multiple placement breakdowns. Young people are happy and very satisfied with the quality of care. They respond well to the small, stable foster family-like staffing arrangements. The competent staff team believe in empowering young people and demonstrate a strong commitment to their work.

Young people benefit from passionate leaders who have a desire to promote the best outcomes for them. The extensive strengths of this service counteract the shortfalls. The provider is aware that they must comply with the conditions of their registration. The home must also update the safeguarding policy and sanctions record to fully meet the new regulations. To further improve practice it is also recommended that the missing from care policy is updated. Shortfalls have not had a detrimental impact on young people. There is a culture of valuing young people and their uniqueness. Young people respond well to the supportive, nurturing environment.

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
16 (2001)	update the safeguarding procedure to include all the required information (Regulation 16 (2))	01/11/2012
17 (2001)	update the sanction record to include all the required information. (Regulation 17B (3))	01/11/2012

Recommendations

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

- update the missing from care procedure to ensure it is compatible with local protocols. (NMS 5.6)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people greatly enjoy residing at the home, unanimously scoring the home nine out of ten. They enthusiastically report the positive changes in their lives. These relate to their school attendance, the development of their social, independent living, and self-care skills and their overall, well-being and anti-social behaviour. They thrive within a stable empowering atmosphere and feel they are valued. All young people are making significant progress, particularly in relation to their low starting points. They respond well to the consistent encouragement. This succeeds in strengthening their self-esteem and emotional resilience, which contributes to them having a positive self-view. Young people are learning to trust others and sustain life-enhancing attachments. They actively discuss their feelings which enables them to make sense of their past and current situation and they develop aspirations for the future.

Young people engage in a range of group and individual activities, which build on their interests and talents. Within the home this includes their passion for information technology, music and hair and beauty. Outside of the home they regularly enjoy eating out, going to the cinema and using the local leisure facilities. Young people are learning to take responsibility for their health. This involves registering with the local doctor and pursuing a healthy lifestyle. Examples are going swimming, to the gym and addressing their drug misuse. Young people influence the day-to-day running of the home. They have weekly meetings and say there is 'lots of stuff' they have helped to change. This includes the home's refurbishment and

activity programmes and menu planning. Young people know how to complain. They have no grievances and describe their residence as 'home'.

Young people understand the importance of education. School attendance continues to improve and some young people are experiencing substantial educational achievements. Young people know that the staff strongly advocate for their educational needs. This includes liaising with educational establishments, requesting home tuition and at times taking them to school. Young people learn practical and personal skills which will assist them in adult life. They contribute positively towards life in the home, examples are clearing the table and washing up. Young people learn how to undertake household chores, make their bed, do their laundry and clean their rooms. They have the opportunity to develop their cooking skills and proudly list the variety of meals they can make. They also routinely prepare their own breakfast and snacks. Young people learn money management and benefit from the home's strong emphasis on saving.

Quality of care

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

Young people are very happy with the quality of care; they state 'it is different here.' They describe the home as 'a nice place to live' and feel staff are 'perfect'. Staff equally enjoy their role and state they 'focus on young people's happiness.' The quality of interactions between staff and young people are very good. Young people appreciate the fact that they are able to keep in contact with their family and friends. Staff openly welcome and proactively endeavour to build a relationship with people who are significant to each young person. Young people are able to invite relatives and friends to the house. They are also able to enjoy days out or weekend breaks with family members, as directed by their placing authority. Staff are available to supervise these visits as required.

Young people enjoy an amiable, yet professional relationship with staff. They state 'staff try their hardest.' They highlight that if they need anything they can ask their 'key worker or can speak to anyone.' Young people acknowledge the variety of ways staff have helped them. This includes helping them to reduce criminal activity, doing their hair, keeping healthy and supporting their education. Young people actively engage in informal counselling and key work meetings. This enables them to meaningfully address a broad range of issues. Staff demonstrate a very strong understanding of young people. Care planning effectively addresses the uniqueness of each young person. Plans detail their particular health, cultural, educational, behavioural, racial, faith, gender, sexuality and linguistic needs. There are clear aims and plans of action. This enables progress to be easily monitored. Staff sensitively explore any concerns young people may have in regards to their sexuality. Social workers benefit from regular written updates, which concisely cover the Every Child Matters outcome areas.

Young people receive good health support. Staff appropriately refer and liaise with health professionals. Staff provide valued support during hospital admissions and are

able to efficiently manage a wide-range of health conditions. They successfully work with young people who have complex emotional and mental health needs.

Medication arrangements protect young people. Staff securely store medication and accurately maintain administration records. Staff receive appropriate training in health-related issues. They actively promote a healthy lifestyle through discussions and by providing advice about diet and exercise. Young people enjoy nutritious, balanced meals from a variety of cultures. They describe the food as 'good' and particularly enjoy the way specific staff cook. The home caters effectively for young people's dietary needs and preferences. Mealtimes are social occasions during which young people learn to develop their table manners.

Young people reside in a clean, comfortable modern home, which blends easily into the residential neighbourhood. Photos of young people and inspirational pictures contribute to the warm, homely atmosphere. Young people benefit from and influence the on-going refurbishment of the building. Examples of this are changing the carpet for wooden flooring and painting the communal areas. Young people have their own bedrooms and proudly boast that they have satellite television in their rooms. Young people spend the majority of their time in the lounge, which has a large television. They can also spend their leisure time in the conservatory or the garden. The home provides young people with a selection of books, board games, a keyboard, two computers and games consoles.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

All young people report that they feel safe. Young people state 'if you are scared to go out, staff would come with you.' Young people relate well together. They demonstrate a caring sibling like relationship with each other. There are no issues with bullying. Young people understand the importance of health and safety within the home. They participate in fire drills and understand the need to promptly evacuate the building. Certificates verify the safety of the environment. There are regular fire drills and alarm tests. The home endeavours to ensure unsuitable people do not work with young people through a thorough staff recruitment procedure.

Young people are making good progress regarding modifying their challenging behaviour. Detailed behavioural support plans assist staff in managing incidents effectively. The home appropriately promotes positive behaviour, through motivation, praise and a reward system. Young people rarely display challenging behaviours. Staff occasionally have to issue sanctions and do not use restraints. The sanctions record has not been updated to reflect the new regulations. Records, however, do provide a clear account of incidents. Young people respond well to the home's reward system and enjoy earning money, clothing, activities and other items of their choice.

Safeguarding arrangements are sound. Staff benefit from regular safeguarding training and understand the importance of protecting young people. They have a good understanding of child sexual exploitation and effectively highlight the dangers

to young people. They also proactively refer issues to placing authorities and are instrumental in multi-agency meetings. Risk assessments are subject to regular reviews and appropriately highlight concerns and hazardous behaviours. The home succeeds in helping young people with significantly decreasing their missing from home episodes. Staff warmly welcome young people when they return and keep in touch with them during their periods of absence. The home's good practice has not been appropriately formalised. The home's safeguarding procedure and missing from care procedures, have not been updated. This does not have a detrimental impact on young people. It is, however, necessary to review these procedures to meet the requirement of the updated regulations.

Leadership and management

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

Young people state 'everyone is nice' and that they, 'like this place.' The home has a clear Statement of Purpose, which outlines the home's aims and objectives. This is due to be updated to reflect the new initiatives within the organisation. The home works exceptionally well with young people who have a history of multiple placement breakdowns. Staffing arrangements are centred on providing a small domestic environment, similar to a foster home. Staff comment that they are 'like a family.' There is a great respect for young people and their differences, strengths and potential. On admission young people receive a good induction, which enables them to have a good understanding of the home's expectations.

Young people have good continuity of care from a small, stable, competent staff. Staff feel the way they, 'work together is unique.' They state they are 'committed' to the young people and 'feel privileged to work with them.' Staff are highly qualified for their role and some exceed the necessary level of vocational training. Staff appreciate that they are able to develop personally. They receive on-going support to fulfil their role. This consists of relevant training, regular supervision, team meetings and appraisals. In accordance with the new national minimum standards, young people's views are being incorporated into the staff appraisal process. The home offers a good apprenticeship scheme in conjunction with a college. This provides a valued introduction into a career in social care. It also offers young people another person, closer to their age, who can guide and motivate them.

Management consistently communicate high expectations to staff regarding sustaining improvement. The home proactively works in partnership with placing authorities. Quality assurance arrangements include the views of young people, parents, staff and social workers. These inform the home's practice and contribute to the development of the service. Staff maintain comprehensive records that they store securely. Records clearly outline young people's progress and how staff intervention adds value to their lives. Young people benefit from strong, passionate leadership, which is wholeheartedly centred on promoting their best interests. There was one occasion, when the home unintentionally went over their registered numbers. This has impacted on the judgement in this outcome area. Ofsted will not be taking enforcement action in relation to the matter. This was an isolated incident to

effectively safeguard young people.

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.