

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Louise Redfern
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This is a private children's home that provides care and accommodation for up to four young people with emotional and/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 **adequate**.

Young people live in a home where the overall effectiveness is judged to be adequate. Individual plans are in place for each young person. These are implemented in a way which achieves positive outcomes for young people and demonstrates a good standard of care. This means that young people are regularly attending education and have a good understanding of their own individual needs.

Young people are positive about how they are looked after. They say they feel safe at the home and parents and professionals concur with this view. Staff are supported and maintain their skills and competences through relevant training.

Requirements and recommendations are set to help improve performance in relation to securing pathway plans and equipping young people with the skills to successfully move into adulthood, safeguarding practice, monitoring and leadership and management.

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
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5 (2001)	ensure that the registered person notifies the HMCI within 28 days any revision to the Statement of Purpose (Regulation 5 (5))	22/11/2013
15 (2001)	ensure that children accommodated in the home are provided with access to a telephone on which to make and receive calls in private, without reference to persons working in the home (Regulation 15 (4)(a))	13/12/2013
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, restraint or discipline in a children's home, a written record is made in a volume kept for the purposes and fully meets the regulations (Regulation 17B)	29/11/2013
23 (2001)	ensure that any activities in which children participate are so far as reasonably practicable free from avoidable risks (Regulation 23 (b))	29/11/2013
28 (2001)	maintain in respect of each child who is accommodated in a children's home a record in permanent form which includes the information, documentation and records specified in Schedule 3 relating to that child (Regulation 28(1)(a))	29/11/2013
34 (2001)	ensure that the registered person provides for consultation with parents, children and their placing authorities. (Regulation 34 (3))	29/11/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure that children receive care that prepares them for transition into adulthood (NMS 12.1)
- ensure all 'eligible' children have a pathway plan (NMS 12.2)
- ensure the children's guide includes how a child can contact their Independent Reviewing Officer and the Children Right's Director (NMS 13.5)
- ensure supervision is provided by an appropriately qualified member of staff (NMS 19.4)
- ensure that all staff have their performance individually and formally appraised at least annually and this appraisal takes into account any views of children the service is providing for (NMS 19.6)
- ensure that monitoring identifies any patterns and trends in the home. (NMS 21.2)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **adequate**.

Young people are supported to gain an understanding of their lives. Staff encourage them to talk about their experiences and come to terms with their past. This helps young people understand the challenges they face in their lives. Young people receive consistent support and care from the staff team. As a result, they are forming and sustaining positive attachments with staff and make progress in developing emotional resilience. One social worker commented, 'the staff work well with X he is making good progress and becoming a part of the home, joining in with other young people doing activities. This is a significant achievement for X.'

Young people are provided with the emotional and practical support they need to maintain contact with their family, friends and other people who are important to them. All contact is risk assessed and staff work closely with families and professionals. This ensures contact is well planned, safe and a positive experience for young people. However, young people only have access to the home telephone if they request it. In addition, this telephone is located in the staff office, which means that they cannot communicate their views in private with appropriate adults; if they should they wish to, as staff remain in the office with them.

Young people actively participate in day-to-day decision making about their care, through daily discussions, individual work with staff and young people's meetings.

Young people's physical and emotional health is good. They receive support from health professionals and staff to understand the importance of making healthy lifestyle choices. They benefit from attending routine health appointments to maintain their general health. Young people have excellent attendance at school; they are well prepared for the school day and enjoy attending school.

Young people are encouraged to develop very basic life skills such as washing dishes, and keeping their bedrooms tidy. However, older young people are not encouraged to develop skills to prepare them for adulthood, such as cooking and budgeting. This significantly impacts on their readiness to move into independent living. Furthermore, young people who are 'eligible' do not have pathway plans in place. Consequently, there are no formal plans in place to prepare young people for leaving care.

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy good relationships with each other and staff. Staff are consistently concerned with young people's welfare. One young person commented, 'I like it here, it's more like a home than a care home. The staff are all good I can talk to all of them.' Young people interact positively with one another and report that there is no bullying in the home.

Young people know how to make a complaint; they are provided with information about how to do this upon admission to the home and information is available around the home. There are good records of complaints made and their outcomes.

Individual placement plans are sufficiently detailed and include individual needs relating to young people's personal identity. Detailed care planning and proactive relationships with partner agencies contribute to the quality of care received by young people.

Young people enjoy healthy lifestyles; they engage in positive activities such as going swimming and horse riding. This encourages them to engage in positive social interaction in the community. Young people have access to a range of health promotion information in the home and access support from other agencies, such as sexual health professionals. They benefit from attending all regular health appointments.

Young people live in a home that is clean and well maintained. Communal areas continue to be well used and are respected by young people. They are encouraged to personalise their individual bedrooms.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people say that they feel safe in the home and can talk to an adult when they are concerned. One young person commented, 'I do feel safe here, when I came the staff told me the rules and I like it here, I'd score it 20 out of 10.'

Young people live in a calm and nurturing environment. Young people rarely feel the need to go missing from the home. When they do, the staff actively search for them and escalate this to the police when necessary.

Behaviour is generally managed well and there is rarely any need for physical intervention. However, not all imposed sanctions are recorded in the appropriate records, this means that young people and the manager are not able to reflect on the consequence and record their views nor monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the consequence.

Young people are protected through robust recruitment procedures and by the arrangements that are in place to meet health and safety requirements. Regular checking of equipment enables maintenance issues to be addressed.

Young people are familiar with evacuation procedures and know the action to take to keep them safe in the event of a fire. However, a shortfall was identified in that risk assessments for individual activities are not routinely applied for all activities, they engage in.

Leadership and management

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

A manager is in post and a completed application to register has been received by Ofsted. The process to register the manager is currently at an advanced stage. The staff team say they are well supported by the manager in the home.

The staff team benefit from a comprehensive training package and are either appropriately qualified or enrolled on the necessary course and working towards qualification. Staff attend regular team meetings and say these are supportive and productive to the development of the home. They receive supervision regularly. However, the manager is yet to undertake formal supervision training. Furthermore systems are yet to be implemented to ensure that individual staff members have an annual appraisal, which takes into account the views of young people placed at the home.

The home meets the aims and objectives of its Statement of Purpose, which is regularly reviewed. However, the updated statement has not yet been received by the HMCI. Families speak positively of the home. One parent said, 'the home is right for my child, I like the staff and they are putting in clear boundaries, which is helping X to settle down.' The young person's guide accurately represents the specific service of the home. However, there is a minor shortfall in the young people's guide because it does not detail the individual young people's independent reviewing officers or the Children's Rights Director. There is no current impact on the young people as they all attend their reviews and the home has the details held in their files.

Monitoring tools are in place to consider the quality of care in the home. However, not all shortfalls are identified. For example, case files do not include all information as required by the regulations, and the need for these documents is not pursued with the placing authority. Also, current monitoring tools do not identify any patterns or trends currently in the home or provide for consultation with parents, young people or placing authorities. These shortfalls constitute missed opportunities to drive forward the quality of care and make improvements in the home.

The manager ensures that the home is well resourced and structured to endorse stability and consistency for young people. The previous recommendation has been actioned, physical interventions are now detailed and well recorded.

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.