

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Maureen Hamer
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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

This home is an independent residential home that meets the needs of up to six young people who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties between the ages of nine to 17 years. It operates within the

This home is an independent residential home that meets the needs of up to six young people who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties between the ages of nine to 17 years. It operates within the Priory Coxlease School Children's Homes which is part of the Priory Group Education Services. It provides accommodation for young people who attend the local associated residential special school.

The home aims to provide a homely caring environment. Its focus is on providing young people with emotional and or behavioural difficulties with a stable environment in which positive behaviour is promoted. It aims to provide each young person the opportunity to develop their maximum potential through the delivery of an extended curriculum that is based on education and care.

There were six young people accommodated at the time of inspection.

Overall effectiveness

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

Young people make satisfactory progress. There is a stable staff team with a commitment to improving care for young people; this culture has led to supporting young people's placement stability, promotion of their welfare and some improvement in their outcomes. Young people's challenging behaviour is reduced and they all have good attendance at school with some young people positively engaging in education.

The needs of young people are diverse and challenging. The Statement of Purpose does not reflect the diversity of issues of the young people accommodated in the home nor the range of services needed to improve outcomes of young people. Specific actions and recommendations are identified in the following section.

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
4 (2001)	ensure that the Statement of Purpose includes matters listed in particular the number, relevant qualifications and experience of persons working at the home Regulation 4 (Schedule (1) (4))	26/08/2011
16 (2001)	prepare and implement a written policy which sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of any allegation of abuse or neglect (Regulation 16) (b)	04/08/2011
17 (2001)	ensure that the following shall not be used as disciplinary measures on children accommodated in a children's home; the imposition of any financial penalty, other than a requirement for the repayment of a reasonable sum by way of reparation (Regulation 17 (g))	04/08/2011
22 (2001)	ensure that electronic monitoring is not used in children's home except for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, or other children accommodated (Regulation 22)	04/08/2011
25 (2001)	ensure that there is, at all times, regard paid to the size of the children's home, the Statement of Purpose, and the number and needs (including any needs arising from disability) of the children accommodated and the need to safeguard and promote the health and welfare of the children accommodated in the home. (Regulation 25 (1) (a) (b))	26/08/2011

Recommendations

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

- make provision in staff rotas for handover time (NMS 17.6)
- support children to take appropriate risks as part of normal part of growing up. (NMS 4.4)
- make provision for all staff to 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)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make satisfactory progress in relation to their starting point. They benefit from living in a home where there is a stable staff team that provide an environment that encourages young people to engage in the home and feel listened to. Within this environment, in which trusting relationships are formed, young people's placements are stable and this is conducive to them developing knowledge about themselves and showing some improvement in their self-confidence.

The assessment of health needs is thorough and use of local national health services promotes young people's access to universal services. This collaboration with partners provides additional support to enable the home to understand and address young people's physical and emotional issues. Some young people receive complex medication regimes, including use of control drugs. The manager has developed effective links with local a GP and pharmacist to ensure that there is safe practice with regard to administration of medication at all times.

Attendance at school is good and for some young people there has been a significant improvement in engagement in their education. Education plans are comprehensive and young people's review meetings are attended by the home's staff.

Young people are given some opportunities to take part in appropriate activities outside of the home. All young people are accompanied to such activities with only one of the six young people allowed free time, another young person is seeking to have free time;

Pathway planning for young people reaching 16 is in place to secure placement stability and plans to develop independence skills appropriate to the functioning of the young person.

The home communicates with young people's parents to maintain good contact and continuity of support when the young people go home.

Quality of care

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

The quality of the service available to young people is satisfactory. They enjoy appropriate and positive relationships with staff members and when spoken to young people said they: 'Like all the staff' and 'it is good here.' Some young people have communication difficulties and staff use a number of methods to enable them to express themselves and to engage in the home. To encourage young people to raise concerns and issues the home has a range of communication methods which are diverse and capture young people's concerns and influence their care plans. Young people know how to make a complaint and have access to an independent advocate. The advocate visits the home and talks to the young people to identify any issues that are of concern to the young person. Staff work with partners to advocate on behalf of young people to ensure that their views influence the running of the home.

At the time of inspection the home had a homely atmosphere and one young person offered to show me around the home. Young people's bedrooms are spacious and personalised to their individual tastes. All bedrooms have the same level of privacy, all have locks and the staff are considering providing young people with their own keys to enhance their privacy. The home's wireless landline telephone is used by young people to enable them to maintain contact with their family.

Risk and behaviour assessments are completed on arrival at the home. Those assessments help staff to identify factors that escalate negative behaviour and there are some individualised motivating actions that promote positive behaviour. The staff also use a range of sanctions and rewards to motivate young people, though the use of pocket money should only be deducted for reparation reasons. Applying this planned approach has demonstrated some improvement in positive behaviour and a reduction in the incidence of physical restraints.

Risk assessments identify safety issues that restrict young people's free time. The impact of this restriction and actions to promote young people's independence are not considered in the care plans; this does not promote independence appropriate for age and ability.

Placement plans do demonstrate an individualised approach to the needs assessment. However, there is not always a sufficient number of suitably qualified staff available to improve young people's care and outcomes. The home operates a system of having one key worker for all the young people living in the home so there is some vulnerability to continuity if the key worker is not available. Due to the good assessment and communication skills of the key worker other members of staff do demonstrate a good understanding of the young people's needs.

Safe recording of medication is in place including safe use of controlled drugs. Staff have been provided with safe administration of medication training and will receive further training in the near future to enhance the safety of provision of medication.

Young people are encouraged to develop leisure interests including accessing internet cafes, youth clubs and going to the cinema. These activities broaden their outlook; however, not all areas of independent living are addressed such as road safety.

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 and that they trust staff. Risk assessments are good and staff demonstrate a good knowledge of potential risk for each individual young person. There are occasions when young people are concerned by the challenging behaviour of other young people, at such times they are able to access a member of staff; this makes them feel safe.

There have been no incidents of young people going missing without authority. The manager plans to communicate with local police to ensure their protocols are compliant with the new guidance on children going missing. Issues related to incidents of bullying are addressed by staff who are clear on the home's policy and procedures to follow; this enhances the young people's sense of security.

At inspection staff demonstrated appropriate action and referral to protect young people from harm. The home has a safeguarding policy which is not comprehensive and the home's procedures do not clearly show the contact details of the local children services in the event of an allegation or disclosure to ensure young people's welfare is promoted.

Care plans include behaviour plans that identify individual trigger factors and de-escalation techniques. Staff work with young people to identify rewards to promote positive behaviour. As young people come to live in the home the staff work with young people to assert firm boundaries. The home encourages young people to take responsibility for their own actions and has had some success in working with young people to develop positive behaviour. Young people access therapy in the school setting and there is communication between the therapy and home; these measures have contributed to a reduction in the use of physical restraints. However, there is scope for further enhancement of capacity of staff to improve their effectiveness of response.

Fire safety checks are up to date. Regular fire drills are carried out. Risk assessments are in place for the building. Electrical and gas appliances are regularly checked and maintained. Young people safety is enhanced by living in a home that provides a good level of physical safety and security.

Leadership and management

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

There is a consistent staff group that successfully provide a stable environment in which young people generally feel safe. The staff and the young people have a strong and trusted relationship with the manager.

A collaborative culture is nurtured and supports the staff team to work well with each other and provide effective support to each other. Supervision is carried out regularly and performance is monitored and staff feel supported. However, appraisals are not up to date. The staff communicate with each using a written communication log but there is no handover period; this would enhance access to up-to-date knowledge about the young people.

The home's Statement of Purpose does not reflect the range of needs that young people in the home have nor the range of services required to meet those needs. It also does not include the capacity, including the knowledge and experience that the whole staff need to meet young people's diverse needs.

At the last inspection there were five actions, four have been met: information required under Schedule 3 for each young person is in place; there is a complaints recording book; the general home environment has been made safe and homely; systems have been put in place for the safe administration and storage of medication to meet Royal Pharmaceutical Society guidelines; however, while the home has developed a policy for the use of CCTV and sought permission for its use, the justification for its use is not congruent with statutory guidance.

Regulation 33 visits and Regulation 34 reports are regularly completed to a good level, they are used to identify trends such as incidence of physical restraints. This information is used to inform future actions and demonstrate an ambition to continually improve. The manager works to develop good relationships with partners to the benefit of young people. Due to capacity issues individualised support is not always in place and consequently the promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory.

Equality and diversity practice is **satisfactory**.