

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Maureen Hamer
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Date of last inspection	09/01/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

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

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service 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 **inadequate**.

The needs of some young people are not being adequately met leading to escalating negative behaviour, tensions between young people and poor outcomes for some young people.

Young people benefit from a staff team who are dedicated to meeting their needs. However not all placements are appropriate and there are shortfalls in staff experience, support and training that impacts negatively on their ability to meet the needs of all young people in their care. This has led to some young people not always being safe.

Monitoring and evaluation of the care being provided in the home has identified these shortfalls. However insufficient action has been taken to ensure young people's needs are met. There are significant failures to meet regulations that are negatively impacting on the effectiveness 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
4 (2001)	update the Statement of Purpose to include all the matters specified in Schedule 1 in particular include the specific therapeutic techniques used in the home. Also ensure any criteria for admission is specified and the services are available to meet admission needs (Regulation 4 (1) Schedule (1) points;2, 9,and 26))	23/07/2012
4 (2001)	include in the children's guide a summary of the complaints procedure and the address and telephone number of the HMCI (Regulation 4 (3) (b) (c))	23/07/2012
11 (2001)	ensure that the children's home is conducted so as to promote and make proper provision for the welfare of children accommodated there and to make proper provision for the care, education, supervision of children accommodated, including ensuring that risk assessments are up-to-date and there is good communication with education staff (Regulation 11 (1) (a-b))	23/07/2012
12 (2001)	prepare a placement plan that sets out the arrangements for the child's education (Regulation 12 (1B) (b))	23/07/2012
13 (2001)	provide food which is suitable or this needs and meets their reasonable preferences: and is sufficiently varied (Regulation 13 (1) (a) (iii and iv))	23/07/2012
18 (2001)	encourage children to develop and pursue appropriate leisure interests and activities (Regulation 18 (2) (a))	23/07/2012
16 (2001)	implement the children's home procedure for dealing with an allegation of bullying (Regulation 16 (4) (a))	23/07/2012
18 (2001)	promote the educational achievement of children accommodated in the home ensuring children are given use to educational facilities (Regulation 18 (1) (a))	23/07/2012
24 (2001)	ensure that the procedure for considering complaints is implemented in practice in particular that the details of the investigation and findings are adequately outlined (Regulation 24 (1) (2) (a-e))	23/07/2012
26 (2001)	employ only persons to work at the children's home that have full and satisfactory information available for each of the matters outlined in Schedule 2, including a reference from the person's most recent employer (Regulation 26 (3) (d) Schedule 2; point 3))	23/07/2012
27 (2001)	ensure that all persons employed receive appropriate supervision and training including in relation to fire safety	23/07/2012

	(Regulation 27 (4) (a))	
28 (2001)	maintain in respect of each child who is accommodated a record in permanent form which includes information and records specified in Schedule 3; that it is kept up-to-date and signed and dated (Regulation 28 (1) (a-c))	23/07/2012
34 (2001)	provide for consultation with children, their parents and placing authority in the quality assurance monitoring of the home. (Regulation 34 (3))	23/07/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure that children's views ,wishes and feelings are acted upon, in the day to day running of the home and important decisions or changes in the child's life, unless this is contrary to their interests (NMS 1.1)
- ensure that sanctions and rewards for behaviour are clear, reasonable and fair and are understood by all staff and children (NMS 3.8)
- contribute to the young person's pathway plan for 'eligible' care leavers and work collaboratively with the young person's social worker to implement the plan (NMS 12.2)
- schedule time into staff rotas to ensure handovers are held and that staff are up-to-date with the care to be provided to children (NMS 17.6)
- ensure that each child's placement plans is monitored by a key worker within the home who ensures that the requirements of the plan are implemented in the day-to-day care of that child. (NMS 25.2)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Some young people show some improvement in gaining an understanding of their past and how this impacts on their behaviour. Some young people are provided with access to specialist mental health services to foster emotional resilience and to promote positive behaviours. However other young people have high levels of sensory needs that are not being met and this has led to escalating anxiety and negative behaviour that has contributed to them not making adequate progress in other areas of their lives.

Young people are being provided with access to appropriate medical supervision. This has enabled them to successfully take responsibility for self-administration of complex medication; this has improved their health outcomes.

Young people are aware of the harm that behaviours such as smoking and use of

illegal substances do to their health. However the service does not provide a personalised or planned approach to support young people to stop smoking and this compromises their health outcomes.

For the majority of young people their education has been compromised due to early negative life experiences. Young people since being accommodated in this home show good progress in their attendance at school. However young people are provided with inadequate support from staff to promote school work, this contributes to hindering young people's educational attainment.

Young people are engaged in some out of school hour's activities such as going to the cinema and visits to the local park. However these are limited and do not provide a range of opportunities to help young people to broaden their life experiences and to help to develop social and life skills for independent living.

Young people have transition plans but actions identified in those plans such as, developing life skills and supporting young people to gain road safety skills are not driven forward. In addition pathway plans are not in place so young people do not have a planned approach to help them make a positive transition to adulthood.

Young people are supported to maintain contact with family and friends and this enables them to maintain important contacts, this promotes their sense of attachment.

Quality of care

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

Staff are not able to adequately manage the level of need of some young people in their care. Young people present with a high level of anxiety that staff are unable to deescalate. As a consequence young people's challenging behaviour escalates and young people and staff are not safe. This leads to poor relationships between young people and damage to the home.

Staff do listen to the views of young people on an informal basis such as when driving young people home from school. However young people are not engaged in key worker sessions or regular house meetings. This is hindering the opportunity to listen to young people to discuss their care and in the running of the home and leads to a lack of engagement in the running of the home. Young people have made complaints and the manager has addressed the concerns raised to the satisfaction of the complainant.

Young people's care plans is not always comprehensive and do not all adequately contain enough information about young people's health and education needs. Consequently staff do not have a planned and agreed plan to work to and to monitor, leading to an inconsistent approach to young people's care and poor monitoring of outcomes.

Staff in the home do not communicate effectively with education staff, this has led to young people's whose needs not being met. Staff in the home are not engaged in young people's educational attainment. Staff do not act proactively to find out information about young people's educational targets and progress and do not use opportunities in the home to encourage young people with their homework. This hinders their educational progress.

Staff work as a team to support young people's emotional needs. However not all young people have adequate access to emotional support services or to occupational therapy to meet their high level of psychological need. Staff are not sufficiently trained to meet the sensory needs of some young people and this leads to young people having increased emotional distress that is not effectively managed.

Some young people have health needs that need the administration of complex medication. Staff have successfully worked with health partners to ensure that this aspect of young people's needs are understood and safely met. Arrangements for dealing with medication is effective.

Staff prepare homemade healthy meals, however young people do make requests for food options to meet their cultural needs that are not met. In addition staff state that the young people would benefit from a broader range of foods but due to budget restrictions the menu planning is limited.

Young people benefit from living in a spacious home that has been redecorated. Young people damage the home and staff have good access to a maintenance team that responds quickly and keeps the home in a good state of repair. However young people do not benefit from a garden as it is overgrown, therefore young people are not able to utilise this space to meet their physical and emotional needs.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Staff act to protect young people from harm and young people do turn to staff that they trust when they feel vulnerable. However staff have not always been able to manage some challenging behaviour and this has left some young people inside and outside the home being unsafe.

Young people report episodes of bullying which are not well recorded; this contributes to hindering young people's sense of feeling safe. In addition staff have been injured and these incidents are not recorded in the home's dedicated book impacting on effective monitoring of such events.

Some young people have a history of going missing. Staff have been successful in reducing young people going missing as they feel an increased sense of security this has reduced their risk of harm.

Young people have behaviour plans but they do not outline all the necessary actions to avoid escalation of negative behaviour. The behaviour management log demonstrates that restraint is only used to protect young people from harm. Staff report that the manager discusses the use of restraint on a one to one basis and at team meetings so that lessons from such incidents can be identified, learnt and used to avoid incidents occurring in the future.

Young people's care and behaviour plans do not adequately identify incentives and sanctions to promote positive behaviour. The sanctions book is not completed and there is insufficient communication between staff to ensure a consistent approach is given to young people to promote positive behaviour.

Staff recruitment is undertaken by the organisation's central human resources team. The manager does not have systems in place to ensure that the selection and vetting process is robust and that all pre-employment checks have been completed prior to starting employment. This has the potential to enable unsuitable people to have access to vulnerable young people.

The manager investigates allegations in a fair manner to protect young people and provides effective protection and support for the children. Staff receive training to promote and to protect young people. Staff know who to refer to in the event that they have concerns about a young person's welfare.

Staff check fire detection equipment regularly however new staff have not had fire evacuation training, impacting on their ability to keep young people safe in the event of a fire.

Leadership and management

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

The home has a Registered Manager that is respected by staff. The staff team report that the manager has a good style of management and is approachable and supportive.

The manager has written a development plan but there has been a delay in progressing the home's priorities due to lack of capacity. Care provided to young people is monitored and has identified many of the concerns identified in this report. However there has been a lack of action to respond to these issues and this has led to a delay in improving services to young people and led to young people not always being safe or secure.

The Statement of Purpose does not provide sufficient information to show the services available to young people. For example it does not provide adequate information about its therapeutic approach nor the criteria for eligibility for this service. The admission procedure is not clearly outlined leading to young people being accommodated whose needs are not being met.

Requirements from the last inspection have not been met. Quality assurance monitoring does not include input from young people, parents and placing authorities. Consequently important input to inform quality of care has not been gained. Staff do not receive regular supervision and therefore are not being given sufficient support to enable them to deliver good quality care to young people. The recommendation to improve the home's internal environment has been acted upon and the home is well decorated.

Newly recruited staff demonstrate a strong commitment to providing good quality care to young people. Staff report that they have regular team meetings that are young people focused that enables them to learn lessons from events. However they feel that they are not able to meet the needs of some young people. The manager is aware of the staff's concerns. At inspection action has been taken to reduce the level of need of young people and consequently the home shows capacity to improve.

The manager does respond to complaints and complainants report that they have been well managed. However documentation is not comprehensive to enable a good understanding that a thorough investigation has taken place to the standards that the home's procedure recommends.

The children's guide has been updated but does not contain information about what to do if the young person has a concern or complaint and it does not contain the necessary contact details of the young person's independent reviewing officer or Ofsted. Consequently young people are not provided with adequate information about who to contact if they have concerns about the care that they receive.

Young people's records have omissions for example, they lack the date of being accommodated, signatures of the young person and review dates. This impacts on the ability to ensure that records are accurate, monitored and up-to-date.

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.