

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC423442
Inspection date	11/01/2012
Inspector	Debbie Foster
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	05/10/2011
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2012

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

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

The privately owned home provides care for five young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties of either sex from 12 years to 17 years at any one time.

Overall effectiveness

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

This home has been registered and operating since 2011. Young people living in this home benefit from a newly formed staff team with a variety of experience in working with young people. The team enthusiastically demonstrates their commitment to supporting the welfare issues of young people. Young people confirm that their views are genuinely sought and acted upon within reviews and their day-to-day care. Young people enjoy good health. The facilitating of family contact is good.

The staff have good links with other services to meet the range of young people's needs. The education of young people is recognised as an area of importance. However, placement plans do not set out how care is to be provided on a day-to-day basis. This impacts upon the staff's ability to provide continuity of care, evaluate and monitor the progress being made by young people.

Young people have been living at the home for only a short period of time. The staff, however, show a good understanding and are committed to building strong relationships with the young people to support them in settling into the home. The staff are aware of the needs of the young people. However, individualised written risk assessments are not in place to support consistent safe practices and highlight to all staff how risks for each young people are to be reduced or eliminated. Staff manage behaviour well and young people said that staff are fair. However, some restraint and sanction records do not contain all the required information. This does not comply with the requirements of the relevant regulations, to assist in effective monitoring of this area.

The Statement of Purpose is not up to date to reflect the full aims and objectives of the home provided to young people. All staff are employed through formal interview and recruitment procedures. However, not all gaps in employment history have been explained to ensure all staff are safe and suitable to work with children.

Most staff are trained in the National Vocational Qualification in Caring for Children and Young People at Level 3. However not all staff have up-to-date first aid training to further secure the welfare and safety of young people. There is only satisfactory monitoring and, with the lack of a development plan, this does not assist in identifying how the home is to build and improve further the quality of care for young people.

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
20 (2001)	ensure that at all times, at least one person on duty at the children's home has a suitable first aid qualification (Regulation 20(e))	28/02/2012
11 (2001)	ensure that the registered person makes proper provision for the care, education, supervision and, where appropriate, treatment of children accommodated there. In particular, that all areas of the placement plan are up to date and clearly set out how, on a day-to-day basis, the young person will be cared for and their welfare safeguarded and promoted by the home (Regulation 11 (b))	23/02/2012
11 (2001)	ensure the registered person promotes and make proper provision for the welfare of children accommodated, in particular, clearly recording identified risks to young people to reduce or eliminate these (Regulation 11 (a))	23/02/2012
17 (2001)	ensure that the written record of the measure of control or discipline (specifically the restraint and sanctions records) includes all the specified areas as set out in the regulation (Regulation 17 (3) (a-i))	28/02/2012
26 (2001)	ensure that any person employed to work-in at the children's home is suitable and a fit person to do so. That steps have been taken to obtain in relation to the matters specified in Schedule 2; in particular, any gaps in employment history are satisfactorily explained.(Regulation 26 (1) (6) (a))	23/02/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure that each young person's care plan is monitored by the 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)
- ensure young people are given the opportunity to discuss incidents of restraint they have been involved in, witnessed or been affected by, with a relevant adult (NMS 3.17)

- ensure that there are clear and effective procedures for monitoring and controlling the activities of the home. This should include the quality of the provision. Children in the home should be regularly involved in contributing to the monitoring the operation of the home and their views and any concerns are seriously taken into account (NMS 21.1)
- ensure the home has a development plan, reviewed annually for the future of the home, either identifying any planned changes in the operation or resources of the service, or confirming the continuation of the home's current operation and resources (NMS 15.2)
- ensure all staff attain Children and Young People Workforce Diploma at Level 3 (NMS 18)
- ensure the Statement of Purpose sets out the aims and objectives and shows how the service will meet the outcomes for children, in particular, details of any outreach service and detail how this will not impact on the care of the young people living in the home. (NMS 13.1)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people are given individualised support from staff to assist them in making progress in their life. For example, young people have undertaken routine health care check ups and these are supporting improved health. Staff encourage young people to eat healthily. Young people have been reluctant to engage in activities and physical exercise on a routine basis. Staff recognise the importance of exercise and are committed and persevering to bring better outcomes for young people in this area.

Social workers, parents and young people confirm that staff are very helpful in facilitating and supporting family contact. Parents say staff keep them well informed and the staff are approachable. Young people say staff have listened to and act upon their requests for family contact. This helps young people to maintain a good sense of their identity.

Although young people have only been living in the home for a short time, the staff show a good understanding and are committed to building strong relationships with young people. This supports young people in settling into the home. Staff are keen to encourage young people to make friendships with other young people in the community; this supports young people's emotional development and promotes their self-esteem.

Staff recognise the importance of young people's education. Young people have been recently admitted to the home with no accessible education in place. Staff have taken sufficient action to pursue education for young people and have made links with the placing authority to try to meet the individual needs of young people. However, this has not resulted in an immediate, identified education placement. This

situation has not, therefore, enabled positive attendance at education for young people.

Staff help young people to learn about their immediate community and the wider world and encourage them to take an interest in the cultures of other people with which they come into contact. For example, staff are happy to talk about their own cultural backgrounds and those of others in response to identifying young people's lack of understanding. Young people are also encouraged to respect the rights of others both inside and out of the home.

Medication is recorded and stored securely to support young people's health. Some staff have received training in basic first aid, although some staff have not undertaken refresher first aid training for some considerable time. This does not ensure that there is always a staff member with up-to-date first aid training on duty or that they can respond appropriately to minor medical occurrences.

Staff help young people to develop practical skills that will help them in adult life, appropriate to their age and individual needs. Young people are encouraged to keep their own rooms clean and tidy. They are supported to choose their meals, which helps them to understand about healthy eating. They are also encouraged to help staff to prepare meals so that they can learn how to cook.

Quality of care

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

A young person said, although they have only lived at the home a short time, they get on with all staff, and named individual staff with who they got on particular well. Staff demonstrate that they are concerned about the welfare and safety of young people and are working to build constructive relationships. As a result, young people are responding well to building positive relationships and their behaviour has improved.

There is a satisfactory understanding of equality and diversity issues and staff challenge prejudices and negative attitudes. This educates young people by helping them become more self-aware and knowledgeable.

Young people are aware of the complaints procedure and say staff have explained this to them. The staff support young people to make complaints when required. Records demonstrate that complaints have been acted upon and concluded.

Individual Looked After Children placement plans include the historical information and assessment of the current needs of the young person. However, there is little evidence of specifically how the young people's care is to be delivered on a day-to-day basis by the staff. There are no individual direct work sessions recorded and the daily recordings do not reflect all areas of the placement plan. Therefore, these records do not clearly report on the progress the young person has made. Staff are aware of the areas where the young person needs support, relating to basic care,

contact and the risks identified. An initial review shortly after the commencement of a young person's placement has taken place. The young person said they have been able to give their views on their placement and circumstances to influence the decisions being made about their lives.

Young people live in a large, detached property in a residential neighbourhood close to local amenities. Overall, young people are provided with an environment of a good standard, which is safe, clean and in good working order. Young people have their own lockable bedroom and the shared use of three bathrooms. There is a lounge, dining room and kitchen. A young person said they liked the home and found it comfortable.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people confirm that they feel safe living at the home. They say there are no issues with bullying and they know staff will address any such behaviour immediately if it was to occur. Information on bullying is given to young people on their admission to ensure they understand that any bullying will be stopped straightaway and support given to those involved. There are good staffing levels to assist in monitoring young people closely.

Young people have rarely gone missing from the home. Staff are clear and aware of the measures to search, report and how to support young people on their return to the home. The home has liaised with the local police, and agreed protocols for missing children have been established.

Young people reside in a home which is physically safe and appropriately secure. Health and safety certificates verify the safety of the environment. The home carries out regular fire evacuation drills, alarm tests and fire safety training. Staff are aware of the risks identified for individual young person. There are high staffing ratios to support and supervise young people closely and assist in keeping them safe. However, there are no formally written risk assessments in place for individual young people, to detail how to reduce all the risks identified or eliminate them. Therefore, this is not upholding fully the welfare and safety of young people.

Young people said that the, 'Staff are fair.' The ethos of the home is to de-escalate any challenging behaviour. Staff have undertaken behaviour management and physical intervention training. Sanctions have been given to manage some young people's behaviour where appropriate; these are few in number. However, deficiencies have been identified in the recording systems. Some restraint and sanctions have not recorded all the required information including the time, effectiveness and the young person's comments. This does not comply with the requirements of the regulations or assist in the effective monitoring of this area to ensure young people's continued safety.

All visitors to the building are strictly monitored and they must identify themselves and sign in and out of the home. All staff are employed through formal interview and recruitment procedures. These include Criminal Record Bureau disclosures and past employers references. However, not all gaps in employment history have been explained to ensure that staff are safe and suitable to work with children.

Leadership and management

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

The previous requirements set at the last inspection have been implemented. Two references, including from the person's most recent employer, are obtained as part of the recruitment process for all staff. All staff receive training in induction, behaviour management and physical intervention before commencing working with young people.

Young people's files are stored securely. The monthly monitoring by the provider manager is undertaken, covering the required areas set out in Regulation 34. However, this is brief and is not picking up on all omissions and deficiencies. In addition, young people are not routinely consulted in assessing the quality of care provided. The home does not have a development plan. Therefore, this is not supporting and ensuring that the quality of care is continuing to improve.

A suitable Statement of Purpose outlines the aims and objectives of the home in the main. However, it does not detail the outreach service currently being provided and how the home will ensure this does not impact on the young people living at the home. The young people's guide provides young people with details about the home's routines and the care they will receive.

The staff team has a variety of experience in caring for young people which equips them well to undertake their work. The staff express confidence in the manager to oversee the care of young people. The rota ensures that there is always a balance of experienced staff on duty supporting those who are fairly new to caring for young people in a residential setting. Formal supervision and staff meetings take place. These assist in providing suitable care to young people. Staff say that when they approach the manager with ideas and concerns these are listened to. A staff member said, 'We're a new staff team here who are committed to looking after young people well, we are currently working hard to gel as a new team.'

A written record of training for all staff working at the home is in place. Ten staff out of 13 staff have completed the National Vocational Qualification in Caring for Children and Young People at Level 3. New staff are registered to commence the Children and Young People's Workforce Diploma at Level 3.

Equality and diversity practice is **satisfactory**.

