

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC424280
Inspection date	30/08/2012
Inspector	Katarina Djordjevic
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	01/02/2012
--------------------------------	------------

© 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.

Service information

Brief description of the service

This is a local authority managed children's home which provides care and accommodation for two 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**.

This is a good home where young people are very happy and feel safe. This is because they have very good relationships with staff that are committed to improving young people's life chances and opportunities. Young people receive care based on their individualised needs and make good progress during their time at the home. One young person commented, 'this is the best place I've been since I came into care' and that it 'feels like home.' Empowering young people and supporting them to maintain contact with their families are real strengths of the home and these help young people to feel valued.

Since the last inspection a new Registered Manager has been appointed. The Registered Manager is committed to continually improving the quality of care for young people; this is evident in the number of new developments he has implemented in the home and for other children's homes run by the local authority. The staff team who are very experienced, feel well supported by the Registered Manager and really appreciate his democratic management style.

Young people's health is actively promoted and staff work closely with other health professionals to ensure young people's health needs are met. However, poor medication practices potentially place young people at risk of harm and illness. A requirement has been made to address these shortfalls. Two further requirements, which do not impact on the safety of young people, have been made in relation to the use of sanctions; and ensuring Ofsted are always notified of all significant events as detailed in the Children's Homes Regulations 2001.

Good practice recommendations have been made in relation to the updating and signing of documents and improving the home's development plan.

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
21 (2001)	make suitable arrangements for the recording, handling, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of any medicines received (Regulation 21 (1))	30/09/2012
17 (2001)	ensure the imposition of any financial penalty, other than a requirement for the payment of a reasonable sum (which may be by instalments) by way of reparation, is not used (Regulation 17 (2) (g))	30/09/2012
30 (2001)	notify without delay the persons indicated in respect of the event in column 2 of the table with specific reference to notifying Ofsted of any serious incident necessitating calling the police to the home. (Regulation 30 (1))	30/09/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure young people's care plans are updated when there is a change in health needs; ensure all records are signed and dated by the author (NMS 22)
- record in the home's development plan when it is reviewed, any new objectives and any identified barriers to meeting objectives. (NMS 15.2)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people become more confident and their self-esteem improves during their time at the home. This is because their views and opinions are listened to and valued. Young people receive excellent practical and emotional support in exercising their individual rights which not only helps them to have better outcomes for them and their families, but improves their advocacy skills. Young people successfully learn how to interact socially with, and care for their peers and adults which helps them prepare for adulthood. One young person commented that staff have helped them

change their view of the future; they never felt they had anything to look forward to, but now they realise they do and take an active part in planning for their future.

Children and young people feel safe and secure at the home due to the supportive and nurturing positive relationships that exist with staff. This enables them to raise any concerns they may have. Furthermore, this helps young people feel valued and respected by staff. One young person reported that they 'love living here.'

Young people make good progress in changing their socially unacceptable and, in some cases, risk taking behaviours. This helps to protect them from the risk of harm and abuse while at the same time increasing their social skills and confidence. Young people also are able to successfully move into independent living because of the progress they have made during their time at the home.

Young people receive excellent practical and emotional support to maintain contact and develop relationships with their families. This has enabled young people to maintain good relationships that are important to them. Young people's families are encouraged to visit the home and have meals with them. This is also the case for young people's friends. The efforts of staff are really appreciated by young people.

Young people make significant progress in re-engaging in education and receive education based on their individual needs. Prior to admission to the home, many young people have not been in education for substantial periods of time. Young people attend educational provisions that meet their individual needs and wishes at the time of admission to the home. However, where young people make progress in alternative provisions, staff regularly discuss with young people about moving back to mainstream school. This ensures young people are able to have every opportunity of achieving their academic potential and access mainstream provisions. One young person has recently passed the course they have been attending and received the certificate for this.

Quality of care

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

Young people receive a good quality of care which takes into account their cultural background and personal identity including their age, gender, religion, ethnicity, communication needs and their sexual orientation. Each young person has a care plan (known as a residential action plan), risk assessments and associated records which give details of the needs young people and how to meet their needs. However, there are occasions where care plans are not updated with new information. Although there is no evidence to suggest that this has affected the delivery of care to young people, the potential exists to hinder meeting young people's needs.

Staff are totally committed to empowering young people to make decisions about the day-to-day running of the home and decisions which affect their future lives. Young people's views are central to the running of the home and this is demonstrated by the influence young people have in the decoration of the home; the menus; the

development of the garden, as well as activities. This helps young people to feel valued and take ownership and responsibility for keeping the home well-maintained and decorated. Furthermore, young people learn practical skills in preparation for adulthood such as decorating and gardening.

Young people fully understand the complaints' procedure although they rarely use it in relation to the running of the home. This can be attributed to the open and positive relationships they have with staff which further protects them from the risk of harm and abuse. Staff are proactive in supporting young people to access the local authority's complaints procedure. Where young people have used the procedure and are unhappy with the outcome of the investigation, staff have supported young people in accessing an independent advocate.

Young people live in an environment where their physical, emotional, sexual and psychological health is promoted. On admission all young people are promptly registered with the local health professionals as well as specialist health services. This helps to ensure their individual health needs are being met. Staff work very closely with other health professionals including therapeutic services which help young people understand their backgrounds, histories and significant events such as the loss of a family member. This therapeutic support helps young people to make progress in their emotional development; work through the loss and mourning process and it helps them change their unacceptable behaviours.

However, young people's health is potentially put at risk by poor medication practices; and a lack of follow up with health professionals when young people have not taken prescribed medication. Medication records are not completed as required and are confusing. This makes it difficult to ascertain if staff are offering young people their prescribed medicines at the appropriate time; and the reason why young people have not taken their medication.

Young people live in a home which is decorated, furnished and maintained to a very good standard. Young people are instrumental in choosing the decor and making it 'their home.' Young people said that the house 'feels like their home'; and they take great care and pride in keeping it clean, tidy and homely. The home reflects young people's personalities and interests with various photographs and pictures chosen by them. Each young person is actively encouraged to personalise their bedrooms with items that are important to them. Young people have also taken an active part in re-developing the rear garden, including the growing of vegetables.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people feel safe and well supported living at the home. This can be attributed to the effective implementation by staff of a range of safeguarding policies and procedures including child protection; behaviour management and missing from care. Young people are able to take controlled risks based on their previous experiences, abilities and understanding in a safe and nurturing environment. The existence of

open and trusting relationships between staff and young people helps to further protect and promote young people's well-being. Staff work very closely with other agencies such as the police, to minimise the risk of harm to young people. Comments received from the local children in care police officer are very positive and confirm that staff at the home work very closely with the police and other agencies to help minimise the risk of harm to young people.

Staff work hard to enable young people to develop more socially acceptable behaviours and as a result young people make real progress during their time at the home. This prepares them for adulthood and helps them to become accepted members of the wider community. Emphasis is placed on recognising and rewarding positive behaviour which helps young people feel valued and learn how to change their behaviours. Restraint has never been used since the home was registered. This is testament to the skills of the staff team. Sanctions are not used often. However, financial penalties are sometimes imposed where young people's pocket money is taken from them for reasons other than reparation. Although this does not present any risk to young people, it is a breach of the regulation.

The management of health and safety is good and helps keep young people and staff safe.

No new staff have been recruited since the last inspection and there have been no changes to recruitment practices which were judged as safe at the last full inspection.

Leadership and management

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

The home has a detailed Statement of Purpose which informs young people parents, carers and placing authorities about what to expect. Practice in the home is in line with the Statement of Purpose.

Young people receive a good level of care from a staff team who have high hopes and aspirations for young people. Staff are very experienced, well-trained and committed to improving the quality of lives of young people to enable them to reach their full potential socially and academically. Young people are supported by a staff team which is comprised of a good mix of gender, race, age, and experience. As a result, young people learn about differences and they benefit from shared experiences such as different cultures and foods. Staffing levels meet the needs of young people and are flexible.

Since the last inspection a new Registered Manager has been appointed. He has quickly demonstrated his commitment to continual improvement. This is evident in the number of systems he has introduced which has made accessing information easier; and the monitoring of systems and practices more effective. Staff and young people speak very highly of the Registered Manager who they find approachable and

very caring. Staff receive regular supervision from the Registered Manager and appreciate his style of inclusive management. This helps staff to feel valued and keeps them well-motivated.

The home has a clear development/business plan which sets out the home's objectives for the year and demonstrates the commitment to improving the care provided. Although staff have read the plan and are committed to achieving the targets, they have not contributed to the plan. The Registered Manager regularly reviews the plan but does not record this monitoring; include any new developments or any barriers to achieving the objectives.

There is a system in place to notify appropriate authorities of all significant events relating to the protection of young people living at the home. This helps to further promote young people's well-being and protect them from harm. However, Ofsted is not always notified of significant events as required.

There is a range internal quality assurance systems which help to ensure young people receive care and support based on their individual needs and that care is being provided in a safe manner. Quality assurance questionnaires are also given to young people about the home and regarding individual staff. These questionnaires are valuable tools for reviewing the quality of care provided, monitoring staff practice and informing future developments at the home. These systems are further complemented by the monthly visits carried out by a representative from the local authority.

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.