

## Inspection report for children's home

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| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC429011        |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 25/04/2012      |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Pippa Greed     |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | Full            |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>       | Children's home |

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| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 22/02/2012 |
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## Service information

### Brief description of the service

The service is run by a national provider. The home is registered to provide medium to long-term care for up to three young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Young people living in the home attend a school also run by the provider and have access to in-house therapeutic support.

The registered provider bases its practices on the integration of home, education and therapeutic services working together to meet the needs of the child.

### 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 **adequate**.

The outcomes for young people are adequate with some progress being made in relation to all aspects of their welfare and development. The home is presently without a registered manager and has experienced some staff changes. This period of instability has impacted on the young people, but a new manager has been recruited promptly.

Not all young people have settled well into the home and this has affected both the dynamics of the group and the relationships between young people and staff. Following these difficulties decisive action has been taken to rectify the situation.

There are placement plans in place to support staff to address any identified need and further improvements are being made to the overall paperwork in the home.

The staff team has not been stable. However they are caring and committed and the management team is experienced which benefits the young people. At this full inspection visit, two requirements and six recommendations were made to improve practice. The requirements are: to improve the provision of activities; and to ensure effective monthly monitoring. The recommendations outlined relate to the following areas; taking into account young people's wishes, feelings and views; the effectiveness of sanctions; analysis of behavioural trends; minimising police

involvement in the home; to ensure medication storage is kept secure; to provide a comfortable and homely environment; and support young people to record their progress.

## 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   |
|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 18<br>(2001) | ensure that children accommodated in the home are provided with appropriate leisure facilities and activities (Regulation 18 (2) (a)) | 01/06/2012 |
| 33<br>(2001) | ensure that regulation 33 visits are of sufficient depth to report purposefully on the conduct of the home. (Regulation 33 (4))       | 01/06/2012 |

### Recommendations

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

- ensure that the wishes, feelings and views of children and those significant to them are taken into account in monitoring staff and in developing the home (NMS 1.7)
- ensure sanctions and rewards for behaviour are clear, reasonable and fair and are understood by all staff and children (NMS 3.8)
- review incidents of challenging behaviour regularly, examining trends or issues emerging from this, to enable staff to reflect and learn to inform future practice (NMS 3.21)
- ensure that the home's approach to care minimises the need for police involvement to deal with challenging behaviour and avoids criminalising children unnecessarily (NMS 3.22)
- store medication safely at all times, so it is only accessible to those for whom it is intended (NMS 6.13)
- ensure that the home provides a comfortable and homely environment and is well maintained and decorated, avoidable hazards are removed as is consistent with a domestic setting, and risk reduction does not lead to an institutional feel (NMS 10.3)
- help young people to reflect on and understand their history and make and retain a record of significant life event. (NMS 22.6)

## Outcomes for children and young people

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

Most young people benefit from care planning which clearly outlines their assessed and agreed needs; however, the care plans do not always sufficiently highlight young people's progress, changing needs, leisure or cultural needs. Although staff are knowledgeable about the young people and their needs, the records of their development are not being maintained or developed to fully reflect their personal progress.

Overall, young people make adequate progress. For some young people good progress has been achieved, developing a positive self-view, growing in self-confidence and learning new life skills. However, young people's emotional development has been adversely affected by the change of staff, and temporary difficult group dynamics which has led to a high level of disengagement.

Most young people's health needs are promoted and some good outcomes have been achieved regarding healthy lifestyle choices. However, some young people are disengaging with staff and has had a detrimental effect on their physical and emotional health.

Young people access the education provision provided; this is either home tutoring or attendance at school or college. Although some of the attendance and time keeping is sporadic the staff continue to look for ways to support and encourage educational attendance.

Where appropriate, staff actively promote and facilitate contact with families and friends. Young people can meet with others in a mutual setting or spend time at their own family home.

## Quality of care

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

Although the organisation has high expectations for all young people and staff, the relationships between them were adversely affected when the previous registered manager left the home. The remaining staff team have worked hard to maintain continuity. Some of the young people do benefit from constructive relationships with staff and there are emerging good relationships with some of the newer staff.

Young people are clear that their views and wishes are taken into account in some of the day-to-day running of the home, for example, around the decoration and use of the activity room. However, house meetings have not been effective in recent months therefore consultation and open discussion about life in the home are not being fully maintained. Information is available on how to make a complaint and on children's rights; this is contained within the young person's guide. Young people are

clear who they could speak to about any concerns. There have been several complaints by young people since the last inspection; these have been dealt with through formal routes and acted upon quickly and treated seriously.

Young people are encouraged to take an active role in meal planning. The staff team encourage mealtimes to be social occasions and organise some themed evenings so that young people learn about food from other cultures. Young people enjoy cooking and preparing snacks. Young people enjoy developing their independence skills; for example through shopping, food budgeting and preparing meals. All young people benefit from registration with a local GP, optician and dentist. The health plans are thorough and identify any needs.

Young people's bedrooms are spacious and personalised to their individual tastes. The two lounge areas offer television viewing and gaming options. The home is awaiting a replacement television and computer which are normally available within the lounge and a quiet room (also used for private telephone calls and internet access). The large dining area means staff and young people can socialise and eat together. There has been a high level of damage within the home which staff are attempting to manage.

### **Safeguarding children and young people**

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

Staff and management changes have impacted on young people feeling safe. These changes have affected young people because guidance and support has not been consistent. This, coupled with the temporarily difficult group dynamics, has led to an increase in the level of young people going missing and young people's behaviour has become more challenging. However, there are good arrangements for safeguarding young people including appropriate reporting processes that are followed. Staff receive ongoing safeguarding training and the induction for new staff covers child protection and safeguarding.

There have been a number of recent incidences where young people have caused damage to property and exhibited challenging behaviour. On occasion police have been used to de-escalate incidents that have potential to criminalise young people unnecessarily. The dynamics of the group of young people have influenced this. When young people have gone missing from the home, staff have used a range of measures to search report and then return the young person to the home. The organisation has consulted formally with the local police and established agreed protocols for missing young people. The organisation has promptly taken proactive steps to review the appropriateness of a young person's placement.

Staff encourage good behaviour and act as role models to support positive behaviour. The home tries to encourage young people to take responsibility for their own actions. They do this through a behaviour reward system and also by ensuring sanctions are reparative if required. However, this is not working effectively at the moment especially with regard to the sanctions linked to the young people's activities

or financial deduction from allowances. The home does not fully examine trends or issues to enable staff to reflect and thereby reduce the levels of challenging behaviours. Young people stated that staff deal effectively with bullying.

Young people reside in a home which is physically safe and appropriately secure. Health and safety checks verify the safety of the environment. The home carries out regular fire evacuation drills, alarm tests and health and safety assessments. The acting manager maintains the health and safety of the young people and the safety of the building with regular review and oversight.

Young people are protected as a result of staff following the procedures in place. For example, all visitors to the building are strictly monitored and they must identify themselves and sign in and out of the home. No general visitor is permitted to have unsupervised access to the young people or the home. All staff are employed through well-managed recruitment processes; these include a formal interview by a recruitment panel. All statutory and reference checks are carried out to ensure that staff do not work with the young people until all appropriate references are gathered.

## **Leadership and management**

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

The leadership and management of the children's home are adequate. The home has undergone a brief period of instability through a change of manager and the need to quickly review an unsuccessful placement. The acting manager and staff at the home are working particularly hard with the young people who have disengaged from the service. Staff at the home take all of the young people's concerns seriously and, on a ground level, attempt to address the shortfalls experienced by the young people. A team of registered managers from other children's homes owned by the organisation have been supporting the acting manager. The organisation has recently appointed a manager

The staff members all undertake mandatory training in key areas of practice. However, the organisation has not been proactive at providing specific guidance for staff when young people have emerging needs that the staff are perhaps not equipped to deal with. Some staff are working towards the necessary care qualifications, with the majority having attained the required levels of qualification. All staff are provided with regular supervision and offered therapeutic guidance if needed. Staff understand their duties, roles and the expectations upon them.

The staff understand the strengths of young people placed. Young people are being encouraged to fulfil their potential and are supported to develop their self-esteem and a positive self-image. There is a commitment to anti-discriminatory practice and most staff have received appropriate training in equality and diversity. Staff meetings are maintained, organised and used by all and provide a good opportunity for staff to look at practice and share views and important topics. The acting manager has been proactive in ensuring the safe storage of medication following previous oversights in

this.

Monthly Regulation 33 visits to look at the functioning of the home takes place. A detailed report is submitted following each visit and the manager and staff take any necessary action if set. However, discussions with all young people are not always evident in the reports and therefore young people have not had the opportunity to contribute their wishes and feelings. The report does not evidence the action of seeking the views of significant others and action points are not always outlined. Monitoring visits to the home are variable in quality and this means that improvements are not always of a consistently high standard.

There were four requirements and one recommendation made at the last interim inspection all of which have been met. This means that: Ofsted are kept informed of any reviews of the service; it is easier to monitor the staff recruitment processes and the restraints carried out; new staff are better equipped to meet the needs of the young people; and staff are provided with regular supervision and team meetings. This means the provider has demonstrated a willingness to address actions from the previous visit.



## 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.