

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Stephen Graham
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The children's home is run by a private company and provides care and accommodation for up to four young people who may have emotional and/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**.

The overall effectiveness of the service in meeting the needs of young people living at the home is good. Young people receive good support from the staff team to discuss their individual care needs and are encouraged to be involved in planning how these needs can be met. They receive good support and advice regarding their personal health care needs. Young people participate regularly in a broad range of healthy leisure activities in their local community. They receive good encouragement and support to help them attend their education regularly. Although some areas of the home require some re-decoration, the building overall is decorated and furnished to a good standard. It provides a safe environment for the young people who live there.

The staff team give young people regular advice and support to help keep them safe. The home is generally well led and managed. There are some shortfalls within the monitoring records in use at the home. However, these shortfalls have had only a limited impact on the overall good quality of care that young people receive from the staff team and manager.

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
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any restraint within the home, a full written record is made in the volume kept for that purpose. (Regulation 17B (4) (a))	30/06/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the home is well maintained and decorated (NMS 10.3)
- ensure that recruitment records demonstrate clearly how the registered provider has followed good recruitment practice (NMS 16.2)
- ensure that visits to the home carried out under regulation 33 report clearly on the attempts made to consult with the parents of young people living at the home. (NMS 21.7)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

The outcomes achieved by the young people living at the home are good. They regularly discuss their personal care plans with the staff team. One social care professional with links to the home describes how in their experience the staff team have a 'person centred approach'. They also comment 'the care plan is tailor made to meet the individual needs of the young person.' The staff team talk regularly with placing social workers to ensure that the outcomes agreed in the care plans of each young person are achieved. One placing social worker says 'the staff team keep me fully informed.' Young people interact well with staff and enjoy the care they receive. The staff team ensure that the individual achievements of young people are documented clearly and are celebrated. Social care professionals linked to the home believe strongly that 'equality and diversity' is central to everything the children's home does. One young person describes how in their experience the staff team at the home 'treat everyone equal'.

Young people enjoy a healthy and active lifestyle. They participate in a good range of activities within the local community and enjoy a healthy diet. The staff team encourage young people to achieve and maintain good healthy outcomes. Young people agree that staff look after them if they are ever unwell. Social care professionals agree that young people living at the home enjoy access to appropriate health care services.

Young people enjoy good outcomes in their education. The staff team have good links with local education services and work effectively to support and further improve educational outcomes for young people living at the home. Social care professionals with links to the home believe that the learning of young people is supported by the care they receive. One describes very positively that the home has provided the young person with 'intensive support with their education'. The staff team provide young people with good support and practical advice to help them practise and develop good self-care skills.

Quality of care

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

Young people living at the home describe the care and support they receive from the manager and staff team as 'good' or 'very good'. Care plans are closely monitored to help ensure that the individual needs of each young person are known and addressed positively in their individual care arrangements. Social care professionals linked to the home describe how the staff team work well with them. They also believe that improving outcomes for young people is the clear priority of the manager and staff team. One describes the service provided as being 'child centred'.

The staff team work with young people and encourage them to be directly involved in their own care planning. Social care professionals describe the service provided at the home as 'good' or 'excellent'. Regular meetings are organised to review the effectiveness of care plans. Young people are encouraged to attend these meetings and to give their views. The manager and staff team members also attend and provide the meetings with good information regarding the progress being made by young people.

The home has detailed admission procedures in place. These are used effectively by staff to help young people coming to live at the home to settle in quickly. One social care professional describes how the staff team had 'quickly developed a good understanding of the young person's needs during their admission to the home. Detailed individual risk assessments are completed by the manager and staff team in partnership with placing social workers. These arrangements help to ensure that young people are admitted safely.

The home is appropriately furnished and decorated to meet the needs of the young people who live there. However, some communal areas of the home require re-decoration following some recent necessary repairs and refurbishment. The location of the home provides young people with access to a range of local community facilities and recreational opportunities.

Young people are involved directly in menu planning and food preparation. They are encouraged to eat well and to enjoy a healthy diet. The food they enjoy includes healthy choices and examples of food from a variety of cultures. The staff team receive training in safe food hygiene. To further ensure that the health needs of young people are met, the staff team are also trained in first aid and the safe

administration of medication. The manager closely monitors the arrangements in place to administer medication to young people.

The staff team work hard to promote and sustain very positive and constructive relationships with young people who live at the home. There are a range of agreed sanctions available to staff. However, their use is only occasionally necessary. The staff team are also trained in the appropriate use of physical restraint with young people. Again, very positively, there have been very few occasions where the use of restraint has been necessary. Young people are encouraged and supported to give their views and to be involved in the overall running of the home. Social care professionals, as well as some parents and carers are also asked what they think about the service and how it might improve. Young people are also supported to maintain contact with family and friends as agreed in their care plans. One social care professional describes how in their experience staff facilitate and are involved in contact planning. They have been excellent with communication with the parent.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

The home has good arrangements in place to help safeguard young people. The staff team receive training to help them protect young people from abuse and have access to agreed safeguarding procedures and guidance. Young people receive good advice to help them understand how they can protect themselves. Social care professionals with links to the home believe that the staff team understand how to protect children and safeguard their welfare. One describes how in their experience, staff have a good understanding of crisis intervention and de-escalation techniques. Care plans are completed by the manager and staff team in partnership with placing social workers and young people themselves. These plans identify risks and protective factors for each young person clearly. They are monitored and reviewed regularly to ensure that they remain effective in helping to keep young people safe.

The staff team use the agreed procedures in place to help ensure that where young people have gone missing from the home, they have been found and kept safe, as quickly as possible. One social care professional describes how absences from care were a huge concern when the young person was first placed at the home. They go on to describe how this has improved and add that the staff have stabilised and safeguarded this young person.

The staff team are trained to use physical restraint where this is necessary to keep young people safe. Positively, the use of restraint at the home has rarely been necessary. However, where it has occurred, the records of these events do not always provide clearly all of the information required. There are a range of agreed sanctions and incentives in place which the staff team can use to promote and support the positive behaviour of young people. Again, the use of sanctions has only occasionally been necessary. Overall, the relationships between the staff team and young people who live at the home are very positive.

The manager and staff team work to ensure that the home provides a safe and comfortable environment to the young people who live there. Regular health and safety checks are completed to help minimise any risks to young people. The staff team know what to do in any emergency and they practice this very regularly with young people. Arrangements are in place to complete checks on new staff team members to ensure they are suitable to work with children. However, the records maintained of checks completed do not always clearly demonstrate that good recruitment practice has been consistently followed. Any visitors to the home are supervised by staff to help ensure that children are kept safe when they are present.

Leadership and management

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

The arrangements in place to lead, manage and monitor the quality of the service provided at the home are good. The manager creates reports regarding the quality of care provided to young people. They work effectively with the staff team and young people themselves to plan and implement further improvements to the service.

Social care professionals with links to the home believe that improving outcomes for children is the clear priority of the manager and staff team. The home has a written procedure for considering and responding to complaints. Positively, no complaints have been received at the home. There is a Statement of Purpose in place which accurately describes the service provided. Young people receive their own summary guide to the home which is well presented and contains some good information.

The staff team includes some very experienced staff team members. Additional training opportunities are arranged by the manager. This helps the staff team to further develop and maintain the knowledge and skills they require to care for young people successfully. The manager ensures that the staff team receive appropriate supervision. They also monitor the daily staffing levels at the home to further ensure that young people receive the care and support they need.

Independent monitoring visits to the home are completed regularly on behalf of the registered provider. However, the reports from these visits do not always report in sufficient detail on all of the matters required, for example, the steps they have taken each month to consult with the parents of the children living at the home.

There was one recommendation made at the previous inspection visit. Although the manager has taken steps to address this recommendation, these steps have not yet been fully implemented. Therefore, the recommendation is restated in this report.

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* and the evaluation schedule for the inspection of children's homes.