

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Diana Waters
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The service is operated by a private company and is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four young people who have emotional and 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 home provides young people with a good standard of care. Management provides effective leadership which benefits both young people and staff.

Young people continue to make significant progress in various aspects of their lives. The personal care and support they receive meets their physical, social, emotional and educational needs well. This is reflected in the good relationships established between the staff and young people which have a positive impact. The staff team are motivated and committed to achieving the best outcomes for young people.

Young people usually feel safe and enjoy living at the home. They also appreciate the support they receive and benefit from a caring and supportive environment.

Four requirements identified in this inspection are: specifically ensure the kitchen garden is reasonably maintained and the second sitting room is suitably furnished; ensure when electronic devices are used there is a consistent written policy and that the restrictions in place for one person do not impose similar restrictions on others; ensure the reports written after the monitoring visits by the regulation 33 visitor are sent to Ofsted and ensure when recruiting new staff who have previously cared for vulnerable adults or children, verification is sought as to why they have left that employment.

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
31 (2001)	ensure that all parts of the home are kept reasonably maintained and suitably furnished, specifically the kitchen garden and the second sitting room(Regulation 31(1)(e) and 31(4))	30/04/2014
22 (2001)	ensure when electronic devices are used to monitor young people's movements, there is a consistent written policy and restrictions for one young person does not impose similar restrictions on other young people (Regulation 22(1))	30/04/2014
33 (2001)	ensure the reports of the Regulation 33 visits are regularly submitted to HMCI (Regulation 33(5)(a))	30/04/2014
26 (2001)	ensure where a person has previously worked in a position whose duties involved work with children and vulnerable adults, so far as reasonably practicable verification of the reason why the employment or position ended.(Regulation 26Schedule 2.4)	30/04/2014

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people make positive progress in several aspects of their lives and good progress overall with some continuing reduction of high risk behaviours.

Young people have an understanding of the reasons they are living in the home and the aims of their placement because they meet with staff regularly and participate in their reviews. The work undertaken by young people with the support of the staff team and external professionals helps them talk about a wide range of topics and issues. However, some young people choose not to consistently work positively to meet the aims of their placement plan.

Young people are helped to keep healthy. There are systems and services in place to address young people's health including their physical, emotional, and psychological well-being. The staff team support them to attend medical appointments and take any prescribed medication on a regular basis. Young people are encouraged to lead healthy lifestyles and to take an interest in looking after their own physical and emotional needs. Young people are involved in planning, shopping, preparing and eating a healthy diet and are encouraged to take part in physical exercise. Young people understand the concept of healthy living but do not always take on board the

implications for themselves. For example, some continue to smoke even though they know smoking is not good for them and some young people struggle with high risk behaviours that potentially put their health at risk.

Young people benefit from appropriate contact with family and other people who are important to them. Staff support young people to maintain contact with their family with transport and support, they understand the importance of these links and the emotional impact of contact for young people.

Overall young people are making educational progress. Those who have previously had a chequered school history are encouraged to re-engage in learning and achieve vocational and academic qualifications. The staff team promote education and encourage regular attendance and educational progress. They facilitate those attending their own registered school with transport and support. Some young people do have good attendance in full-time education and this is improving; educational progress is also monitored.

Young people experience and participate in new hobbies, which enhance their social development and self-esteem, for example attendance at cadets and the local gym. Staff have excellent knowledge of the local area, activities and resources. They encourage young people to develop existing interests or to find new ones. Resources around the home are utilised by the young people and they are encouraged to research and organise relevant equipment, for example the request for a gym within an existing shed. This creates an ownership of projects and involvement in developing the home.

Quality of care

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

Young people benefit from living in a supportive environment. They are well cared for by a committed and stable staff team who wish to provide young people with a good standard of care. Positive relationships are established between young people and staff. Young people feel supported and spoke well about the care and services provided and their experience of living at the home.

Key working and young peoples' meetings are well established to gain the views of young people. These contribute to the development and delivery of care and services provided by the home. Young people feel they are able to talk to some staff and that their views are listened to. Young people are aware of the process of how to complain and are supported to raise any concerns or worries they may have. One complaint received since the last inspection was investigated well and the young person felt satisfied with the outcome.

The health care needs of young people are met. They are registered with the local health care services and staff support them to attend appointments. Suitable records are maintained which detail their outcomes. Young people are also supported to access a range of services to meet their individual emotional and psychological

needs.

Appropriate systems are well established for the safe storage, administration and disposal of medication. These practices help to ensure the well-being and safety of young people.

Young people are encouraged to eat a healthy diet. They are also encouraged to cook and participate in selecting suitable dishes. Young people commented that they enjoy the meals provided. As part of developing their life and social skills young people are provided with the opportunity to participate in the shopping and cooking of meals, with the support of staff, as well as helping with other household chores.

Placement plans are well established for the young people. These detail both the strengths of young people and the action required to meet their specific needs. These provide staff with clear guidance on how to meet the individual needs of young people on a daily basis.

Young peoples' review reports, produced by the home, supplement their placement plans and reflect the progress achieved. The statutory reviews of young people are held at the required frequency and offer them the opportunity to fully contribute to this process.

Young people live in a warm, welcoming and relaxed environment which is maintained to a good standard. It is clean, tidy and comfortable in most communal areas; however the second sitting room and the garden are in need of attention. Generally however, the home is well furnished and in good decorative order. Young people are provided with their own bedrooms which are decorated and personalised to their individual tastes; one bedroom enjoys an ensuite, and for others there are sufficient bathrooms to meet their individual and collective needs. Young people are actively involved in the selection of colours and soft furnishings for their own bedrooms and take responsibility for reorganising furniture in living areas to create a homely environment.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people feel safe living in the home. Staff take appropriate measures to keep them safe. Staff have a clear understanding and respond appropriately to the various needs and vulnerabilities of the young people accommodated and this promotes and protects their welfare.

Staff receive regular safeguarding training which contributes to their understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to responding appropriately to any safeguarding matters. Safeguarding concerns are promptly referred to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board and a proactive response to safeguarding concerns is acted upon by the agencies concerned. An external professional reported 'There are clear boundaries at this home and young people understand the staff care and want

to keep them safe and help them to learn to keep themselves safe.'

The system for staff recruitment is not consistently robust, so that where a person has previously worked in a position with children and vulnerable adults, there is insufficient exploration of why the employment or position ended. However, new staff do not start working with young people at the home until the required checks are carried out and are deemed satisfactory. Visitors to the home are also checked prior to entry into the home. These practices contribute to the protection of young people and prevent the employment of unsuitable adults.

Since the last inspection there have been many incidents where young people have gone missing. Staff take effective action when young people go missing which contributes to their safe return at the earliest opportunity. Young people, on their return, are provided with every opportunity to discuss and reflect on their actions and consider the impact their behaviour potentially places on their own safety and well-being. This practice assists young people to develop an awareness of their own safety and in some cases this has contributed to a reduction in their risk-taking behaviours.

Young people and staff do not see bullying as a problem. They acknowledge that there are times where some young people fall out with each other. However, staff take appropriate action to deal with any matters of conflict and concern between young people. Staff are mindful of the dynamics of young people, and respond appropriately to deflect potential conflicts and unhelpful scenarios.

Young people make good progress in developing and maintaining appropriate levels of behaviour, taking into account their starting point on admission to the home. This is achieved through positive relationships formed between staff and young people. The use of positive behaviour incentives contribute to these achievements. Staff are suitably trained in positive handling and de-escalation techniques. Restraint is seldom used with the current group of young people. Any sanctions imposed are regularly monitored for their effectiveness. The regular monitoring of all measures of control ensures that the welfare of the young people is fully promoted.

Young people live in an environment which promotes their safety. Young people are aware of what action to take in the event of an emergency. Various checks, tests and servicing arrangements are well embedded in practice in relation to all fire and health and safety matters.

Leadership and management

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

Young people live in a home which is well managed. The Registered Manager is suitably qualified and experienced. The management structure within the home provides effective leadership. The staff team is also committed to ensuring that young people receive a high level of care.

The home demonstrates the capacity to improve and has addressed the recommendations identified at the last inspection. Improvements to the drive way and gates have been undertaken; the checking of medication is now safely handled and information on young people is recorded clearly.

The aims and objectives of the home are embedded in practice and are set out in its Statement of Purpose. This document is readily available to all interested individuals. A young person's guide is also produced which provides young people with useful information they need to know about the care and services they can expect to receive at the home. The information contained within these documents is not always consistent with current practice, for example, electronic monitoring policies and practice are inconsistent.

Young people are cared for by a stable staff team. Management ensures that sufficient staff are on duty throughout the day and night to meet the individual and collective needs of young people. These arrangements ensure that young people receive stability, continuity and consistency of care.

Handovers and regular team meetings are well established and support staff in providing a quality service. Individual formal staff supervision and annual appraisals also support staff in performing their role. Staff feel supported and report open door policies throughout the service to discuss informal concerns, in addition to the formal systems and speak positively about the arrangements in place. Regular visits to the home by the independent visitor monitor their practice and progress but these reports are not always forwarded to Ofsted.

Staff are supported to obtain the required qualification once they have successfully completed an induction programme. Most staff have achieved or are undertaking the desired qualification. A range of training is provided to enhance practice, improve skills, knowledge and competence. These opportunities enable staff to effectively work with and meet the challenging needs of young people.

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.