

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	05/06/2013
Inspector	Pete Hylton
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Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	02/11/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This children's home is privately operated and provides care and accommodation for up to four young people with 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 **adequate**.

This is the home's first inspection following registration in October 2012.

Young people receive care based on their individual needs and preferences. Choice is promoted and young people feel involved in the running of the home. Relationships between staff and young people are positive and young people report that they enjoy living at the home. They feel safe and know how to raise concerns. Effective support from the staff team ensures young people make progress. Young people develop appropriate skills for adulthood. The Registered Manager ensures that the home has effective working relationships with external services.

The outcomes for young people and the quality of care are good. However, there are some weaknesses in safeguarding and the home's management. These shortfalls have not, to date, had a demonstrable negative impact on the outcomes for young people. Regulation 33 reports are not always sent to Ofsted. The home failed to notify Ofsted of the Registered Manager's absence. Regulation 34 monitoring is not wholly effective. Serious incidents and concerns are not always appropriately notified to the relevant parties. The views of young people are not always sought and recorded following sanctions. Risk assessments are not always updated appropriately. Episodes of missing from the home do not always record all relevant details.

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
4 (2001)	compile in relation to the children's home a written statement (in these regulations referred to as "the statement of purpose") which shall consist of a statement as to the matters listed in Schedule 1 (Regulation 4 (1))	05/07/2013
16 (2001)	ensure that the procedure under paragraph (1) (b) shall in particular provide for the prompt referral to the local authority in whose area the children's home is situated, of any allegation of abuse or neglect affecting any child accommodated in the children's home (Regulation 16 (2) (c))	05/07/2013
17 (2001)	ensure that subject to paragraph (3), the following shall not be used as disciplinary measures on children accommodated in a children's home – 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 (Regulation 17 (2) (g))	05/07/2013
26 (2001)	ensure that where the following conditions apply, the registered person may permit a person to start work at a children's home notwithstanding paragraph (5)(b) – the registered person considers that the circumstances are exceptional (Regulation 26 (6) (c))	05/07/2013
30 (2001)	ensure that if any of the events listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 5 takes place, the registered person shall without delay notify the persons indicated in respect of the event in column 2 of the table (Regulation 30 (1))	05/07/2013
33 (2001)	supply a copy of the report required to be made under paragraph (4)(C) to HMCI (Regulation 33 (5) (a))	05/07/2013
34 (2001)	establish and maintain a system for improving the quality of care provided in the children's home (Regulation 34 (1) (b))	05/07/2013
34 (2001)	ensure that the system referred to in paragraph (1) shall provide for consultation with children accommodated in the home, their parents and placing authorities (Regulation 34 (3))	05/07/2013
37 (2001)	ensure that where the registered manager has been absent from the children's home for a continuous period of 28 days or more, and HMCI has not been given notice of the absence, the registered person shall without delay give notice in writing to HMCI specifying the matters mentioned in sub-paragraphs (a) to (e) of paragraph (2). (Regulation 37 (5))	05/07/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure that where any sanctions, disciplinary measures of restraint are used, children are encouraged to have their views recorded in records kept by the home (NMS 3.18)
- ensure that the home implements a proportionate approach to any risk assessment (NMS 4.5)
- ensure that written records kept by the home when a child goes missing detail action taken by staff, the circumstances of the child's return, any reasons given by the child for running away from the home, and any action taken in light of those reasons. This information is shared with the responsible authority and where appropriate, their parents. (NMS 5.10)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people make good progress as a result of being at the home. In some cases, there has been excellent progress. For example, young people with disrupted educational histories are now regularly attending a provision and achieving in line with their peers. An education worker commented that a young person, 'Regularly attends and is making good progress.'

All young people speak favourably of the home and are able to identify the impact that the home has had on their lives. Comments from young people include; 'I'm settled, I go to education and I am happy here,' 'I have calmed down, I am more mature' and 'My behaviour has improved since I have been here.'

Young people develop and maintain, where it is appropriate to do so, relationships with their families. As a result, they make improvements with their emotional resilience and security. Young people are supported in maintaining their health and make good progress in this regard. Where young people choose to smoke, they are aware of the associated health risks. Young people are developing an awareness of how to keep themselves safe. Episodes of missing from the home are reducing and incidents of anti-social behaviour infrequently occur. The harm-taking behaviour of young people is also reducing. Young people feel safe and secure at the home and make good progress with reducing their challenging behaviour. They feel settled because they form purposeful and trusting relationships with the staff team.

Young people are developing age-appropriate skills with their independence. They are encouraged to plan and prepare meals and complete other domestic tasks. This ensures that young people are equipped with the relevant skills for adulthood. This is further underpinned through improvements in young people's skills in group living. All young people attend regular group meetings in the home and have their say. As a result, young people are developing tolerance, respect and understanding. An

educational worker commented that a young person has, 'Made improvements with their communication.' A social worker commented, 'I have seen positive changes in the young person since they have been at the home.'

Quality of care

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

Regular key work sessions enable young people to discuss their views, feelings and concerns. The young person's guide contains all required information and young people are encouraged to contact support services if they so wish. This enables young people to raise their concerns and further promotes their safety. Complaints from young people are rare and where they do occur, are appropriately managed and resolved.

The staff team ensure that the needs of young people are promoted. Where young people face uncertainty about their futures, advocacy is arranged and young people are effectively supported in having their views heard. This results in a home where relationships between staff and young people are built on trust and respect. A social worker commented that there is, 'Good relationships between staff and young people.' Key working sessions further support young people with seeking their views, wishes, opinions and feelings. Detailed care plans ensure that the individual needs of young people are identified and acted upon. The staff team are cohesive and provide effective support for young people. A social worker commented, 'The quality of life for the young people and the way staff engage with young people is good.'

Medication is carefully administered and all staff are appropriately trained in medication procedures. The use of separate cabinets for each young person further ensures that the potential for medication errors are minimised. The health needs of young people are clearly addressed and met. All young people are encouraged and supported to attend all medical appointments. The staff team encourage young people to follow healthy lifestyles and diets. A range of outdoor activities are provided and young people lead active lifestyles. Food provided to young people is varied, balanced and safely prepared.

Young people are encouraged to develop their interests in and outside of the home. High staffing ratios ensure that young people are supported in accessing activities and regular trips out are enjoyed by young people. Young people enjoy living at the home and their views are positive. Comments from young people include; 'It's good because the staff listen to me and know me. It builds trust and I respect the staff for that' and 'I am able to talk to the staff, it's really good here, they have really helped me.'

All young people are supported in accessing their educational placements. Progress is celebrated and this encourages young people to achieve their potential. Where there are concerns about the educational progress of young people, the staff team have effective links with providers to identify and resolve difficulties. An education support worker commented, 'We work well with the home, we support each other and

manage the progress well.' As a result, young people engage with education and make good progress in relation to their starting points.

Young people build trust with the staff team and receive care based on their expressed preferences. A social worker commented, 'Staff provide appropriate support around cultural and personal needs.' Choice is actively respected in the home and young people are able to influence their care. For example, young people choose meals, activities and feel involved in decisions made in the home.

Young people benefit from a home that is extremely well-presented. Photographs of young people are on display and young people are involved in choosing décor and furnishings. Young people are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms. This enables young people to develop and maintain their individual tastes and identities. An education worker commented that the home is like, 'A home away from home.' Relationships between young people are positive.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people say that they feel safe at the home. Incidents of restraint are clearly recorded and all staff are appropriately trained in the home's chosen method of restraint. Young people are able to share their views and concerns following restraint and all young people know how to complain if they so wish. However, where concerns arise over incidents of restraint, the Registered Manager does not always notify the appropriate bodies. A previous incident was immediately notified to the local authority designated officer as a result of this inspection. There is no demonstrable impact on the safety or wellbeing of the young people as a result of this shortfall.

Serious incidents occur infrequently at the home. Where they do occur, the staff team ensure that the safety of young people is promoted and immediate support is put in place. However, these incidents are not always notified to Ofsted. Since the last inspection, there have been two incidents that have not been appropriately notified to Ofsted. The Registered Manager ensured that the safety of young people was promoted and young people's social workers were appropriately updated. However, as a result of the home's failure to notify, the regulator is unable to fully review behaviour management practice in the home. This shortfall has not impacted negatively on the outcomes for young people.

Sanctions, where used, are not always compliant with regulations. For example, a small fine was given to a young person to discourage continued negative behaviour. Although this shortfall has not led to a negative impact on the outcomes for young people, a requirement has been made. Furthermore, where young people receive sanctions, their views are not always sought or recorded. This means that the Registered Manager is unable to review the effectiveness of these measures.

The frequency of young people going missing is reducing. Where young people do

go missing, staff ensure that all appropriate parties are alerted and the safety of young people is promoted. However, records of these events are not always fully completed. For example, information about the reasons for going missing and circumstances of the young person's return are not always documented. This shortfall has not negatively impacted on the outcomes for young people.

The Registered Manager ensures that references are sought and verified for persons wishing to work at the home. This ensures that a person's work history is appropriately vetted and any gaps in employment are identified and explored. However, the home's recruitment process is not wholly effective. Where staff have recently completed criminal records checks with other organisations, they have been allowed to start work at the home. The home have not checked with previous counter signatories or sought the permission of the applicant to verify this information. Therefore, guidance from the Disclosure and Barring Service has not been appropriately followed. The organisation has applied for new criminal records checks. However, there has been one occasion where staff have started at the home without full and satisfactory information being in place. To date, there has been no demonstrable impact on the safety, welfare or outcomes for young people.

The home is safely maintained and all required checks are in place. Fire safety is promoted through regular drills and all young people and staff know how to safely evacuate the home. Risk assessments are in place for all activities with young people. However, some young people's risk assessments have not been updated for several months. This means that the staff may not be following proportionate or relevant information relating to the safety of young people. A recommendation has been made to improve this area of practice. Young people do not state bullying as a problem in the home and relationships between young people and staff are positive.

Leadership and management

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

The home was registered in October 2012 and this is the home's first inspection.

The Registered Manager has returned to work following a period of absence of over 28 days. Ofsted were not notified of the Registered Manager's absence. The organisation took steps to provide some management cover in the home. However, the failure to notify Ofsted means that the regulator has not been able to review the effectiveness of the interim management arrangements.

The organisation ensures that monthly monitoring visits to the home are conducted by an appropriate individual. The resulting reports from these visits robustly identify weaknesses and support the organisation in making appropriate improvements. However, these reports have not been sent to Ofsted in the required timescales. As a result, the regulator has been unable to fully review the running of the home. The manager's own monitoring of the home is not wholly effective. Monitoring reports lack evaluation and demonstrable impact on the quality of care provided in the home. Furthermore, consultation with young people is not adequately explored in

these reports.

The staff team are appropriately supported and receive regular structured supervision. This ensures that staff are able to discuss their practice and ideas of improvement. The progress of young people is similarly discussed. As a result, the staff team confirm that they are well supported by the management in the home. All staff are appropriately trained and their training needs identified and met.

The Registered Manager has a development plan in place for the home. This ensures that the home has clear goals and targets for the next year. The home is well resourced and maintained. The home's Statement of Purpose clearly defines the aims and objectives of the service. However, the document is not fully up to date as the staff list is incomplete. This shortfall does not negatively impact on the outcomes for young people.

The Registered Manager ensures that all records are securely held in the home. This ensures that personal information about young people is safeguarded and appropriately stored. The home has positive working relationships with external services. A social worker commented, 'Communication is good between us and the home keep me fully updated.' Young people's progress is appropriately shared and discussed. For example, where concerns arise over education, the home work closely with providers to help young people overcome any difficulties. An education worker commented, 'The home work well with us and share ideas and strategies for behaviour management.'

The home is well maintained and appropriately resourced. Staffing levels are appropriate to the needs of the young people and they are able to take part in a range of activities. This is further enhanced by the availability of a well-maintained and checked home vehicle. The Registered Manager ensures that the physical environment is safely maintained to ensure the health and safety 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.