

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	11/11/2013
Inspector	Wendy Anderson
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Service information

Brief description of the service

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**.

Young people receive a good standard of care from a committed, well trained staff team. The staff team provide them with very good individualised consistent care which meets the identified needs of the young people they care for. This work is supported by comprehensive care planning which is frequently reviewed and amended.

Young people make excellent progress in all aspects of their care from their starting point upon admission. For some, this means they make excellent good progress in education following re-integration after a period of absence. An excellent activity programme develops young people's social skills and networks.

The relationships between the staff and the young people are exceptional. These are based on trust, openness and respect.

Young people and professionals speak very highly of the home, the staff team and the work they undertake. They feel the team's communication skills are exceptional.

Young people feel very safe at the home and there are clear policies and procedures in place to support this. However, the recruitment and vetting procedure although robust is not consistently adhered to in practice.

There are some shortfalls in the quality of some of the records maintained; vetting and recruitment checks of staff, risk assessment and some policies do not include information and guidance on child sexual exploitation. The Registered Manager is aware of these and is committed to addressing these.

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
26 (2001)	ensure a registered person shall not employ a person to work at the home unless full and satisfactory information is available in relation to him in respect of each of the matters specified in Schedule 2(Regulation 26(1(a) 2(d)).	31/01/2014
25 (2001)	ensure that there is at all time a sufficient number of suitability qualified, competent and experienced persons working at the home. In particular the staff rota must demonstrate who actually worked each shift (Regulation 25)	31/01/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure methods to de-escalate confrontations or potential violent behaviour are used wherever appropriate to avoid the use of physical restraint. In particular the risk assessment relating to positive handling should include what strategies will be used to minimise the identified risk (NMS 3.13)
- ensure a written or electronic record is kept by the home detailing the time and date and length of each supervision held for each member of staff. In particular ensure these notes are of a good quality, are detailed and reflect the discussion and topics covered in the supervision (NMS19.5)
- ensure that children's safety and welfare are protected, in particular that the home's policies' and procedures include guidance for staff in respect of child sexual exploitation. (NMS 4.1)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **outstanding**.

Young people benefit from a comprehensive assessment and introduction process to the home. This ensures that young people receive the care and support they required to address their individual needs from the outset of their placement. This view is supported by the external professions who work with the home. Young people have been enabled and supported by staff to understand what has brought

them into care while developing emotional resilience and positive self-worth.

Young people love living at the home. They think the staff are 'fantastic, great, fun and look after them really well'. They really enjoy all the activities they get to do both in and outside of the home. They spoke excitedly about holidays and trips they had been able to do, some of which were completely new experiences for them.

Young people are helped by staff to lead a healthy lifestyle. Staff work with the young people on understanding the importance of a balanced diet, exercise and a good sleep pattern. This will provide them with skills in their later life.

Young people develop and extend their social skills and social networks while maintaining contact with those people important to them. Young people develop skills in conflict resolution. Such as understanding other people's points of view and showing them respect. These skills are designed to enable the young people become good members of the community they live in after leaving the home.

Young people really like their schools and have settled in well. Staff support them in all aspects of their education including homework and attending parent events.

Since admission to the home, all young people have reduced their risk-taking behaviours and are developing skills to self-manage their own behaviours.

Young people are involved in all aspect of their care and the day-to-day life at the home.

Quality of care

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

Young people receive an outstanding quality of care from a committed, child-centred and well-trained staff team. Exceptional relationships exist between the staff and young people which are based on respect, trust and openness. These strong relationships are the foundation on which the staff's work with the young people is based.

The home has a stable, consistent staff team who have high expectations for the young people they care for. Young people are very positive about the staff who care for them. They said the staff are 'great'; that they listen to them and they also have lots of fun with them. This view is supported by the external professionals who work with the home. They commented that nothing was too much trouble for the staff and that they are always willing to 'go above and beyond' to ensure the young people's needs are met.

Young people benefit from the excellent quality of the individualised plans which are developed by the staff and which are adhered to in practice. These plans are frequently reviewed and updated so that the work the staff are doing reflects current need. They clearly identify strategies which address individualised behaviour traits.

As well as enabling the young people to manage conflict and develop positive relationships these plans address the reasons that brought the young people into care. Through having their personal identity needs successfully addressed; young people make exceptional progress in which their self-esteem and self-worth improves significantly. Key worker sessions are clearly linked to these plans and provide evidence of the progress young people in these areas. The key worker relationship is very important to the young people. However, the staff team manage this relationship well to ensure the young people don't become over dependant on one person.

Consultation with and the involvement of young people in their care and the day-to-day running of the home is seen by staff as very important and is highly valued. It is a key ethos of the home. Daily meetings are held where each young person gives their views on the past 24 hours. This gathering promotes open discussion and provides a forum for through which young people develop their problem-solving and conflict resolution skills. It also enables them to reflect on how their behaviours impact on others.

There have been no complaints since this home was registered and this can be attributed to the high emphasis placed on young people's rights; the very positive relationships between staff and young people and the transparent way in which the home operates. Information on how to make a complaint is transparent; contained within the young person's guide and regularly discussed at keyworkers sessions and house meetings. This ensures young people are understand and are well-informed about the complaints process. Young people said they would 'just talk to staff and they would sort things out for us because they look after us really well'.

Staff are proactive in supporting young people in their education. Because of this, young people regularly access and maintain high attendance in their educational placements. Staff support young people with their homework and attend all parental and social events. Staff stress to young people the importance of education for their future. Since the point of admission, young people are making excellent progress. Young people's education providers complimented the staff on their work. They said 'we have been consistently delighted by the communication and efforts of all the staff who work with the young people. Young people appear happy, settled and content both in their new placements and at school.'

The staff team have exceptionally effective partnerships with external agencies. These agencies speak very highly of the staff team; particularly of their commitment to the young people; their excellent communication skills, the emotional warmth they give the young people and the excellent progress made by young people during their placement.

Staff ensure young people maintain contact with their families and those important to them. This includes supervising visits where a need has been identified. This support has enabled young people to improve their relationship with significant adults in their lives.

Young people access a very wide range of activities both in house and in the local community. Staff encourage young people to try new activities as well as meeting young people's individual interests and wishes. This broadens their experiences; opens up new areas for their personal development and helps them develop confidence in social situations.

Of particular note is the access that young people have to the company's stables which provides them with the opportunity to ride and care for the horses. This enables them to take on responsibilities for caring for another being which has improved young people's feelings of self-worth and improved their self-confidence. Linked to this is the equine therapy the home offers which again aids the young people development and growth.

Young people's medical and health issues are very well managed. There are robust systems in place for the storage, administration and recording of all medication at the home. Staff handle young people's health needs with sensitivity. Social workers commented on the excellent way health issues are managed and the improved health of the young people.

The accommodation provided is of a very high standard and provide young people with ample social and personal space. The young people love their home and especially their bedrooms. The home is furnished to a very high standard and provides young people with a warm nurturing environment in which to live and grow.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people feel safe at the home and outside of it. They named a large number of staff who they would speak to if they had any concerns, including the service manager, with whom they have a strong bond.

Robust safeguarding policies and procedure are in place and adhered to in practice. Staff interviewed demonstrated a clear understanding of these which ensure young people's welfare is protected. The staff team receive regular safeguarding training which ensures their practice is current and safeguards young people. The manager has a good working relationship with the Local Safeguarding Officer (LADO) and the home's safeguarding policy and procedures have been shared with them.

The home has the appropriate policies and procedures in place regarding behaviour management and behaviour in the home is well managed. The main focus of behaviour management in the home is positive reinforcement. Young people have very detailed individualised behaviour and placement plans which are frequently reviewed and updated to reflect not only changes in the young person's life and behaviour but also developments in social care practice. These plans clearly identify young people's vulnerabilities, triggers and strategies for both address these and improving behaviours. Link with these plans are very detailed risk assessments

however these do not include information on how the team will minimise the identified risks. This could lead to inconsistency of practice.

Staff are trained in the homes preferred method of restraint and this is frequently updated to ensure staffs practice is in line with the policy. The use of restraint is minimal. Where it does take place comprehensive records are maintained which includes the views of the young people.

Young people are very well protected from bullying. They say there is no bullying as staff would not allow it. They also said if it did happen they would go straight to staff who would 'sort things out as they look after us really well'. The home has robust policies and procedures in place for anti-bullying work which is adhered too in practice. Staff give bullying a high profile and continually raises the awareness of this with young people. This is promoted through open discussions at house meetings and in key working sessions.

The home has a clear policy and procedure for the recruitment and vetting of staff. However, this is not always consistently implemented in practice. Therefore, this could potentially place young people at risk. Staff have commenced work at the home prior to their Criminal Records Bureau check being returned. However the home ensured a comprehensive risk assessment was in place.

The home has the appropriate policies and procedures in place should young people go missing. Since the last inspection no young person has gone missing because the home provides young people with a safe and secure environment in which to live.

Environmental risk assessments ensure any hazards at the home are minimised, well managed and protect young people. Fire safety is robustly managed at the home to safeguard the young people and the staff. Young people and staff are given training and briefings on fire safety and what to do in the event of a fire. This includes drills for both day and night time.

Leadership and management

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

This is the home's first inspection since it was registered. There were three requirements made at the registration visit. These concerned adjusting a fire door so that it shut tightly, installing emergency lighting throughout the home and to update the Statement of purpose to include all the relevant information about the Registered Manager. All of these requirements have now been met.

The homes Statement of Purpose covers all the required points and is a good representation of the work the home undertakes.

The Registered Manager and the senior management of the organisation have a clear understanding of the homes strengths and areas for improvement. Quality assurance monitoring and reporting systems, systems, operate in line with

Regulations 33 and 34 and identify areas for improvement and plans have been developed to address these.

Staffing at the home is adequate to meet the needs of the young people. The home has recruited five new staff but are currently awaiting the return of the disclosure and barring checks before they can commence their induction. The staff team are very committed to the young people they care for and place their well-being at the heart of all their work. Staff take on extra duties to cover existing shortfalls in the staffing arrangements and this provides consistency and continuity of care. Staff rotas do not currently accurately reflect the deployment of staff at the home. Therefore, young people may not be aware of who will be providing them with care and support.

Staff receive a good standard of training which enables them to deliver a high quality of care which meets young people's identified needs. Training records show the training staff undertaken by staff and ensures that refresher training and updates take place at the required intervals. This approach ensures staff practice is in line with current practice and legislation.

Within the home staff receive good quality informal support from their peers and the home's management. They also receive formal supervision but this is not in line with the frequency as stated in the homes supervision policy and the records of these sessions vary in quality. This shortfall could potentially lead to issues not being formally addressed with staff. Staff receive an annual appraisal which looks at their work over the past year and identifies any developmental needs. Staff meetings are held on a regular basis and the young people are a standing agenda item at these meeting. This enables the team to develop a consistent, whole team approach to the young people's care. The team also meet regularly with the organisation's consultant psychologist and trainer to discuss their work and develop their practice for the benefit the young people.

The home has the required policies and procedure for reporting significant events to the appropriate authorities. There have been no significant events since the home opened in April 2013. This demonstrates how well young people have settled and the in depth understanding the staff have of young peoples identified needs. Records at the home are securely stored and appropriate. However, a small minority of these are not appropriately signed or dated. This could lead to difficulties in identifying when events happened and who witnessed or recorded this event.

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.