

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC381531
Inspection date	12 January 2011
Inspector	Mark Ryder
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	13/08/2010
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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* (December 2010) and the evaluation schedule for children's homes.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service that exceeds minimum requirements

Satisfactory: a service that only meets minimum requirements

Inadequate: a service that does not meet minimum requirements

Service information

Brief description of the service

This home is a highly specialised children's home that is provided by a private residential childcare provider in partnership with an independent healthcare provider. The service provides residential care for children and young people who have experienced moderate to serious mental health problems. The home offers a therapeutic environment that will facilitate a transition between inpatient treatment and integration into the community.

Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness of the children's home is judged to be **good**.

This was an unannounced full inspection that has assessed all outcome areas as meeting the needs of young people to a good standard. The home provides an effective and resourceful service for young people with complex mental health needs. Outcomes for young people are positive and reflect the specialist support available to them. Young people commented positively about staying at this home and in particular the supportive and friendly approach from the staff team.

Leadership and management of the home promote a culture of high aspirations that positively impact on the young people. Monitoring of the service is of a good standard and contributes towards improving practice. Staff present as motivated and competent. Young people say they feel safe living at this home.

There is one statutory requirement and one recommendation made as a result of this inspection. Fire doors are poorly fitted and considered a possible safety risk to all who live, work and visit this house. The décor and furnishings, while creating a pleasant domestic environment, does not fully reflect the cultural diversity of young people who may be accommodated at this home.

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
32 (2001)	ensure adequate precautions against the risk of fire is maintained with reference to the poorly fitted fire doors. (Regulation 32.1)	11/02/2011

*These requirements are subject to a statutory requirement notice.

Recommendations

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

- ensure the home is decorated and furnished to a standard which creates a pleasant domestic environment, appropriate to the number, gender mix, disability, age, culture and ethnic background of the children being accommodated. (NMS 24.2)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

The home provides young people with positive opportunities to develop and reach their potential. Staff guide and encourage young people in education with good results. Young people actively engage in their chosen college courses. Strong links between colleges, schools and the staff, support young people in maintaining their education. For example, staff stay with young people in the classroom if this is supportive and appropriate. Staff and young people attend education meetings to review and discuss progress. There is a sense of pride from young people in achieving their educational goals.

Preparation for young people to move into adulthood and be independent is an integral part of placements. Young people are supported to gain skills in, for example, cooking, shopping and budgeting. This is successful with young people acknowledging that they have learnt a number of skills during their time at this house. External agencies provide young people with additional support and advice in employment, training and education. Pathway planning meetings involve young people who play a central role in the decisions about their futures. A young person said 'the staff are really pleased that I can cook so well.'

Health needs are met through a staff team trained, skilled and experienced in working with young people who have a mental health diagnoses. Self- injurious behaviour is sensitively and responsibly managed. Young people are able to request to see a same gender General Practitioner if they wish. This means that gender sensitively is acknowledged and respected.

Young people can contact their family and friends whenever they wish. Staff support young people to maintain positive and healthy relationships with family members if appropriate to do so. Young people feel that contact arrangements are made with their interests in mind and fully contribute to the decisions about this. The home is suitable for young people to meet with their family privately.

Quality of care

The quality of care is **good**.

Young people benefit from a competent and able staff team who are able to meet their needs and support them throughout their placement. Relationships between staff and young people are friendly, positive and good natured. Consequences to inappropriate behaviour are fair. There is very minimal need of the use of physical restraint at this home. Young people express positive comments about the quality of care by the staff. They feel valued and listened to.

Care planning is effective at this home. Placement plans reflect current assessment of need in which young people fully contribute to. Plans include the culture, race, religion and gender of young people. This means that the individuality of young people is fully acknowledged. Review of the arrangements for placements take place within timescales and include the wishes and feelings of young people. A young person said 'I attend all my meetings and am able to say what I would like to happen.'

Therapeutic support provides young people with opportunities to talk about their feelings in a safe and secure way. Such support is an integral part of each placement. Young people willingly engage in both individual and group therapy and feel this is an important part of their lives. Improvements to young people's mental health and behaviour are as a result of such support.

Consultation between young people and staff is good. Young people are able to express their personal views about the plans for them. For example, young people choose and plan what meals they would like to eat, activities they want to do and education courses they are interested in. Weekly resident meetings address the views and aspirations of the young people. This also includes discussion on any concerns regarding bullying and complaints.

The accommodation provides a pleasant, warm and comfortable home that young people enjoy living in. Furnishings and décor are to a good standard although they do not reflect the potential diversity of young people from different cultures and faiths who may be accommodated in the future. This is an area for improvement. Young people's bedrooms are personalised to their own tastes with family photographs and posters. Young people were positive about the quality of their bedrooms.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people acknowledge that they feel safe living at this home. Staff receive safeguarding training and are aware of reporting procedures in the event of a child protection incident or disclosure. Placement plans include an assessment of risk of actual or potential areas of concern. Such plans are regularly reviewed by the Registered Manager. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

Staff are clear about the reporting procedures in the event of a young person missing from the home. Individual risk assessments reflect the level of concern that staff follow. Procedures include ensuring young people are provided with an

opportunity to talk about the reasons they left the home when they return. The home works to a local protocol with the police in the event of a young person going missing. However, such incidents are not frequent and young people report that they do not see the point of leaving a home they feel comfortable and safe living in.

Staff actively discourage bullying and are clear about the potential harmful impact such behaviour has on young people. Information is available to young people who further state that presently there are no concerns about bullying. Therefore, young people are protected from bullying and have the support of staff if they have concerns.

Health and safety maintenance and checks on appliances are all up to date. Portable electrical appliances have recently been checked for safety. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Staff, young people and visitors are all aware of the fire safety procedures. Health and safety concerns have been identified with regards to poorly fitted fire doors. This has the potential to undermine the safety of young people and is an area which requires immediate action. However, fire inspectors have judged that the level of risk is manageable in the short term due to the high staffing ratios and the good mobility of the young people living in the home.

There are safe recruitment practices within this setting. New staff are suitably vetted and rigorous checks completed to safeguard young people before they start working at the home. Young people also play an active role in the recruiting process. Young people said they feel valued and their observations respected.

Leadership and management

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

Young people live in a home which is well managed and resourced to meet their needs. The staff provide a good level of care, ensuring they themselves have the necessary training and support to work effectively. Training programmes include all mandatory training with new staff completing a nationally recognised induction during their probationary period. This ensures that all established staff have a base line of essential training before they move on to more specialist areas such as mental health training and supporting young people who self-harm.

There were two recommendations made from the last inspection which have been met. Assessment of risk is now identified with reference to the likelihood or severity of a behaviour or action occurring. This means that staff can safely support young people using a clearly structured risk assessment. Portable appliance testing certification is on file and confirms that checks have been carried out within a 12 month period. Therefore, the risk of electrical malfunction is much reduced.

There is good support for staff within this home. Staff are positive about the management arrangements and feel they are given scope to care for and nurture young people. Formal regular supervisions provide opportunities to discuss professional development, plan actions to meet the needs of the young people and discuss any personal issues that may impact on performance. A record of every

supervision is kept on file and is made available to the staff member. This means that professional development can be reviewed during the annual appraisal. A member of staff said regarding the setting that it was 'one of the most professional teams I've worked in, in a child care setting.'

Staffing levels meet the needs of young people. For each shift there is a shift leader who coordinates the plans for that time period. Handover meetings between shifts are effective in transferring important information. This works well. Senior staff consider the balance of care workers on each shift identifying the experience, age and gender. Such consideration ensures young people are appropriately and sensitively cared for.

The promotion of equality and diversity is **good**. Young people benefit from a home that recognises their complex mental health needs and supports them in all aspects of their life. There is a social model of mental health care within this setting. For example, young people convey that they have responsibility for their own actions, have a level of freedom when compared with a hospital environment and are able to exercise personal choice while living at this home. While the home provides an environment that is suitable for the needs of most young people, diversity of culture and race is not well represented. This may impact on how comfortable young people from different cultures feel when they first arrive at this home.

Monitoring of practice, records and the environment is managed well. During the monthly visits from a senior member of the organisation all aspects of this service are checked. Internal monitoring by the Registered Manager is also completed monthly. The reports are available to staff and outcomes from such visits are discussed during team meetings.