

Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Inspection date</b>	14/12/2011
<b>Inspector</b>	Anna Williams / Maire Atherton
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Full
<b>Provision subtype</b>	Children's home

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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* (March 2011) 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

The service is a four-bedded children's home in a residential area of a large town. The home is situated within easy reach of local facilities and is on a public transport route.

The home is owned and operated by a private organisation that specialises in the assessment and treatment of male adolescents who have experienced some form of abuse and have subsequently been involved in perpetrating abusive behaviour themselves. The overall aim of the service is to offer four young people the opportunity to embark on specialised educational and therapeutic training programmes within a safe, supportive and nurturing environment. Most young people remain with the service for a minimum of two years. All young people are expected to be in full-time education or some form of suitable employment, and the organisation has its own school provision which those of school age attend.

There is 24 hour staff cover provided and young people have to comply with strict systems of supervision and monitoring, and take part in a range of individual and group forums as part of a therapeutic environment.

### Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be **satisfactory**.

The home is under new ownership since the last inspection, the transfer took place at the beginning of September 2011. Young people make satisfactory progress in relation to their starting points. Young people feel safe and supported by the staff team. Young people are given opportunities to learn new skills and experience a suitable range of activities, which help to increase young people's self-esteem. Young people's health and development needs are well met. Staff are committed to supporting and enabling young people to develop socially acceptable behaviour.

Areas for improvement identified include: ensuring that each young person's placement plan is on file and is monitored by a key worker; promoting young people's welfare through individual assessments of identified risks, ensuring that there is a written record made of any complaint; ensuring that young people receive prompt feedback on any complaint or concern they raise, reviewing any restriction on communication with the local authority on a regular basis; conducting the home in line with its Statement of Purpose at all times; maintaining regular contact with the young people's school, and ensuring that Schedule 5 notification are completed when required.

### 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)	ensure that the children's home is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its Statement of Purpose (Regulation 4 (6))	27/02/2012
24 (2001)	ensure that a written record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of the investigation (Regulation 24 (5))	27/02/2012
28 (2001)	maintain a record in respect of each child who is accommodated in the children's home which includes the information, documents and records specified in Schedule 3, in particular a copy of the plan for the care of the child prepared by his placing authority, and of the placement plan (Regulation 28 (1))	27/02/2012
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))	27/02/2012

## Recommendations

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

- ensure children receive prompt feedback on any concerns or complaints raised and are kept informed of progress (NMS 1.6)
- ensure that ongoing restriction on communication by the child is agreed by the child's responsible authority, takes the child's wishes and feelings into account and is regularly reviewed in collaboration with the responsible authority (NMS 9.4)
- ensure children's safety and welfare is promoted in the home, through the use of individual assessments of identified risks (NMS 4.1)
- ensure the home maintains regular contact with each child's school, and shares appropriate information with the education setting (NMS 8.6)
- ensure that a written record is kept which includes details of the action taken, and the outcome of any action or investigation, following a notifiable event (NMS 24.2)
- ensure that each child's placement plan is monitored by a key worker within the home who ensures that the requirements of the plan are implemented in the

day-to-day care of the child. (NMS 25.2)

## **Outcomes for children and young people**

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

Young people are encouraged to participate in a range of positive activities that contribute to their physical and emotional well-being and health. Young people talk enthusiastically of the range of activities they take part in on a regular basis such as drumming, football, cinema trips and snooker. Young people recently went away on a caravan holiday together. Comments from young people include 'I loved our holiday in Blackpool, it was great!'

Young people's health needs are identified and met. Medication systems within the home are safe and effective. Young people say they are well looked after if they are feeling unwell. Young people say that they like the food prepared at the home and contribute to creating the menus. Comments from young people include 'we all eat well balanced, healthy meals'. Young people are supported to attend appropriate health care appointments and medicals. This sound practice ensures the health needs of the young people are identified, supported and addressed.

Young people's attendance and progress at school is satisfactory. Individual education and learning plans are on file to inform staff practice and detail educational targets for the young people. Comments from young people include 'staff help me when I need it, like with doing my homework'. Staff encourage the young people to attend school, and receive daily verbal handovers from education staff on achievements and progress made. However, information sharing between residential staff and education staff is not fully effective which means that key information regarding young people is not always being passed on appropriately. This means that essential information regarding the young person may not be shared with education which could lead to confusion.

Young people maintain contact with their families and people in their lives who are significant to them. Young people fully understand the contact arrangements in place, and this includes some contact arrangements which have restrictions on them. However, where there are on-going restrictions on communication there is not a regular system to review this which takes into account the young person's wishes and feelings.

Young people learn independent living skills through undertaking tasks around the home and receiving guidance with money management. Young people receive an allowance which means the young people take responsibility and use their own choice when purchasing their own clothes and toiletries. Young people are supported and encouraged to develop their self image and identity.

## **Quality of care**

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

Young people receive a sound level of support. Young people's needs are set out in in-house placement planning documents which provide an adequate level of general guidance to staff but lack individualisation. Young people's local authority placement plans are not on file to inform staff and guide them in their day-to-day work with young people.

Young people are encouraged to discuss their feelings and views about the running of the home through house meetings and a wide range of groups and forums. Young people confirm that within these meetings their views are heard, and choices can be made about forthcoming activities and menus.

Young people know how to complain. The home maintains a log of complaints and there have been two entries since the last inspection and these have been fully addressed, although records are limited. House records do not show what action was taken in response to young people raising concerns within home meetings and they do not show how young people were kept informed of progress. These concerns were not logged as complaints in the house log.

Further to this, records demonstrate that people significant to the young people in the home have made contact with the home and organisation, raising a number of concerns about the quality of care. However, these contacts were also not logged in the complaints log. Consequently, it is unclear if significant people raising anxieties about the quality of care have been given a clear and appropriate response, and how the home has taken into account and acted upon lessons learnt from any worries raised.

The home is decorated, maintained and furnished to a satisfactory standard. Young people confirm they like their rooms and the living space. An ongoing maintenance programme is in place to address areas of the home which are identified as requiring redecoration and minor repairs. This ensures the young people are provided with a home that is appropriately designed and maintained.

### **Safeguarding children and young people**

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

Young people confirm that they feel safe and comfortable living in the home. Comments from young people include 'staff always make sure that you are safe and happy'. Staff demonstrate a sound understanding of safeguarding procedures. Young people identify adults who they would talk to if they were worried about something. Comments from young people include 'if I was upset or angry, I would go to my individual worker' and 'staff are good at listening and being there if you need to talk'.

Staff are aware of the particular vulnerabilities of the young people in the home, and follow risk assessments to manage and minimise risks. However, some risk assessments do not contain a full assessment of all a young person's identified risks,

and this means staff may refer to incomplete information and guidance.

Young people understand the rules of the home, and the sanctions and reward systems in place. Young people are supported to manage their own feelings and to take responsibility for their actions through staff promoting and rewarding acceptable behaviour. There is a policy of no physical intervention in accordance with the personal space boundary applied across the organisation. Support from the local police is sought should staff determine that physical intervention is necessary.

Young people's safety is supported by sound health and safety routines. Routine testing of fire equipment occurs, and fire drills are undertaken on a regular basis. Young people confirm they know what action to take in a fire or an emergency. Equipment within the home is serviced and checked at appropriate intervals.

There have been no new staff appointments since the last inspection. Visitors are checked upon arrival, sign into the visitors' book and are supervised on site as appropriate.

## **Leadership and management**

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

The Statement of Purpose for the home comprehensively outlines the aims and objectives of the home, and it states that the home does not accept emergency admissions. However, there has been an emergency admission to the home since the last inspection. This means the service is not operating in line with its Statement of Purpose, and the Statement of Purpose does not outline how all young people are supported through unplanned moves into the home. Young people are provided with written and pictorial information about the service, which summarizes the Statement of Purpose and provides them with essential information they can keep and refer to.

There are records of regular visits under Regulation 33 of the Children's Homes Regulations, and clear evidence that young people are consulted during these visits. Staff undertake appropriate training and feel well supported by the Registered Manager.

Records are stored securely in order to protect young people's information, and the records contain relevant information which contributes to an understanding of the young person's life. However, young people's files do not contain relevant statutory paperwork regarding their placement for staff to refer to, such as a local authority placement plan.

A number of significant events have been notified to Ofsted and to other relevant parties without delay. However, records within the home show that incidents in the home requiring police involvement were not notified to Ofsted appropriately. These were serious incidents and notification to Ofsted would have confirmed that all the young people were being supported appropriately. Records of notifications kept by the home contain minimal information which means it is difficult to track the actions

taken and the outcome of any actions or investigation following a notifiable event.

Equality and diversity practice is **satisfactory**.