

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC431804
Inspection date	24/01/2012
Inspector	Anna Williams / Maire Atherton
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	28/07/2011
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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.

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**.

Since the last inspection the home has been placed under new ownership, the transfer took place at the beginning of September 2011. Young people speak positively about living in the home and say they feel safe. The home provides a satisfactory quality of care, with individualised plans for each young person. The Registered Manager and staff team are committed to supporting young people to achieve and to provide an environment with clear and consistent boundaries. Positive feedback has been received from placing authorities in relation to the support which the home offers young people.

Areas for improvement identified include: conducting the home in line with the Statement of Purpose at all times; ensuring that Schedule 5 notifications are completed when required; maintaining an accurate record of rotas actually worked; reviewing the fire risk assessment; ensuring the home is free from any health and safety hazards; reviewing medication administration and recording procedures; ensuring staff have access to medication training; ensuring probationary staff are not left in charge of shifts; maintaining young people's files with all the relevant paperwork as required; ensuring young people transitioning out of the home have a clear support plan in place; and reviewing the systems in place to monitor the quality of care within the 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
4 (2001)	ensure the children's home is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its Statement of Purpose (Regulation 4 (6))	16/04/2012
21 (2001)	ensure suitable arrangements are in place for the recording, handling, safekeeping, and safe administration of any medicines received into the children's home (Regulation 21 (1))	16/04/2012
23 (2001)	ensure that all parts of the home to which children have access are so far as reasonably practicable free from hazards to their health and safety (Regulation 23 (1))	16/04/2012
28 (2001)	maintain in respect of each child who is accommodated in a children's home a record in permanent form which includes all the information, documents and records specified in Schedule 3 relating to that child and is kept up to date (Regulation 28 (1) (a) and (b))	16/04/2012
29 (2001)	maintain in the children's home the records specified in Schedule 4 and ensure they are kept up to date, with specific reference to a copy of the staff duty roster of persons working at the children's home, and a record of the actual rosters worked (Regulation 29 (1))	16/04/2012
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))	16/04/2012
32 (2001)	ensure that the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and any regulations made under it are complied with in respect of the home, with specific reference to reviewing the fire risk assessment (Regulation 32 (1A) (b))	16/04/2012
34 (2001)	review the system in place to monitor the matters set out in Schedule 6 to ensure that it is effective and it focuses on improving the quality of care provided in the children's home. (Regulation 34 (1))	16/04/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure children are supported during their transition to their new placement, to

independent living or to their parental home (NMS 11.8)

- ensure that staff members who are placed in charge of the home and other staff at particular times, for example, as leaders of staff shifts have substantial relevant experience of working in the home and have successfully completed their induction and probationary periods (NMS 17.5)
- ensure that staff are equipped with the skills required to meet the needs of the children and purpose of the setting, and training keeps them up-to-date with professional, legal and practice developments, with particular reference to medication training (NMS 18.1)
- ensure that emergency placements must not be made unless the Statement of Purpose explicitly specifies that the home has the capacity to support children admitted at very short notice. (Volume 5, statutory guidance, paragraph 2.3)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people benefit from individualised support which helps them grow in confidence. Young people take part in a variety of meetings and forums which provide young people opportunities for discussion and learning. Young people develop emotional resilience and a more positive view because they receive sound emotional support and are actively engaged in the therapeutic programmes offered.

Young people are encouraged and supported in adopting healthy lifestyles. Young people have a range of services available to them to support their individual physical and emotional health needs. Young people are supported to attend appropriate health care and medical appointments. Young people enjoy taking an active part in the planning and preparation of menus.

Young people attend college, school, work and training courses of their choice. Young people talk positively of their education or work placements. The home provides space for the young people to work on educational projects at home, and staff support attendance and achievement. This approach to work and education ensures young people are provided with opportunities and guidance to reach their individual goals.

Young people benefit from appropriate contact with family members and significant people in their lives. Individual contact arrangements are suitably supported and facilitated by the home's staff team. This practice supports the young people to maintain relationships with the significant people in their life.

Young people are encouraged to make a positive contribution to the wider community. Young people are involved in volunteering for a local charitable organisation and take part in weekly sporting activities. Structured activities are available for young people to explore individual interests such as learning a musical instrument. This means young people have the opportunity to make friends, learn

new skills and try new activities.

Young people are encouraged to assist with tasks around the home to develop their independence according to their age. Young people receive appropriate allowances. Some young people who are approaching transition are encouraged to budget for daily living items and to plan ahead and save for specific purchases. This means young people are being encouraged to learn appropriate independence skills. However, not all young people moving into independent living accommodation have an appropriate written support plan for the period of transition.

Quality of care

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

Young people and staff enjoy positive relationships with each other, which is demonstrated through comments from young people and observations of interactions. Comments from young people include, 'I like living here, the staff are supportive and friendly', and 'I feel the staff treat us all fairly and staff really listen to me'.

Young people know how to complain, and have confidence that the staff will respond appropriately to any issues they raise. Comments from young people include, 'I know how to make a complaint, and I think staff would take it seriously'. Records demonstrate that complaints which have been raised have been investigated appropriately and outcomes are recorded.

Medication recording systems are not effective. Records demonstrate inconsistencies in recording and missed doses of prescribed medication. This means young people are not being supported appropriately with their medication needs. Further to this, staff do not receive medication training as part of their induction or their ongoing professional development within the home. This means staff are not provided with basic medication administration skills and are not kept up-to-date with any relevant practice developments.

Young people are involved in the creation and review of placement plans, and this ensures that the young person can contribute and make their views known about their own plans. Staff are knowledgeable about the specific needs and vulnerabilities of the young people living in the home.

The home is located in a residential area and within easy access to all local resources and facilities. The home has a large rear garden with lawn, pond and barbeque area. This allows the young people space to spend time outside to play sports and relax. Young people personalise their bedrooms and the home has photographs on the walls of the young people undertaking home and individual activities. The home is maintained to a satisfactory standard and there is an on-going maintenance programme in place to address areas within the home which are identified as requiring redecoration and minor repairs. This ensures 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 feel safe and well cared for. Comments from young people include, 'I feel comfortable and safe here, it's a nice home'. Staff demonstrate a sound awareness of the safeguarding procedures and a knowledge and understanding of the implementation of these procedures in their day-to-day work.

Staff are clear in their expectations of behaviour in the home and young people understand the rules, consequences and reward systems in place. 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. There have been no incidents of young people going missing from the home since August 2011.

The home has in place established systems and checks to maintain safe practice and fulfil health and safety obligations, such as fire alarm tests. However, records demonstrate that these checks are not always completed in line with organisational timescales. A recent electrical test of the building had an unsatisfactory result, and the required works have not been completed. This compromises the safety of the young people and all within the building.

Young people say they know what actions to take in case of a fire and that drills take place to practise emergency plans. The home has a fire risk assessment in place. However, it has not been comprehensively reviewed since 2007. Further to this, the fire risk assessment does not consider the safe storage of camping gas bottles which are within the house grounds, nor the safe keeping of young people's smoking materials.

The home has a sound recruitment process which ensures all necessary checks are completed prior to a member of staff starting work.

Leadership and management

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

The home has a Statement of Purpose which outlines the service it provides. However, it does not have emergency admissions as an explicit function of the home and the home has admitted young people in an emergency. 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.

Staff receive regular supervision and say they feel well supported by the Registered Manager. Young people and staff say that recent staff shortages across the wider

organisation has resulted in staffing within the home has being affected. Young people and staff report that fewer staff than normal have been on shift at times as staff have been assisting in other homes. The recording of staff hours worked within house logs is inaccurate and inconsistent. There is no central record of actual rotas worked in the home to evaluate the recent staffing levels. Consequently, it is unclear if the home is providing staff cover in line with its Statement of Purpose to ensure the individual needs of young people are met.

Further to this, staff who have not passed their probationary period, or finished their induction training are leading shifts within the home. This means that staff who are given the responsibility to be in charge of a shift are still in the process of completing their induction training and have not been signed off as competent members of staff.

Young people's files are stored in a secure manner. However, they do not contain all the relevant statutory paperwork and other information which is to be included in the case records of young people living in a children's home, for staff to refer to when appropriate.

A number of significant events have been notified to Ofsted and to other relevant parties without delay. However, records within the home show that other significant events involving young people 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.

There are regular visits under Regulation 33 of the Children's Homes Regulations and evidence that young people are consulted during these visits. The Registered Manager has a checklist system in place to review the matters in Schedule 6. However, the system in place to monitor the quality of care has been ineffective at identifying areas of shortfall as raised through this inspection.

Equality and diversity practice is **satisfactory**.