

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Louisa Bayley
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This home is operated by a private company. It is registered to accommodate up to six young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties and will provide placements for single sex occupancy only.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service 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**.

This home provides a nurturing environment in which young people are supported to develop and progress. A good standard of care is delivered by competent and committed staff who are well-managed. Care arrangements and planning are highly individualised, taking account of the diverse needs of each young person. Young people feel consulted and are fully involved in care planning discussions. A strong feature of the home is the commitment to daily community meetings. This provides a regular opportunity for staff and young people to discuss all aspects of the home and the care provided. Young people feel safe and hold positive views about the service.

Staff are particularly skilled in recognising young people's strengths and helping them to develop. A member of staff said, 'we illuminate the positives.' Consequently, staff are ever mindful of the progress young people make and continually reinforce this.

All young people are engaged in education programmes tailored to meet their needs. Education programmes take account of individual's preferred learning styles, abilities and circumstances. Staff describe the home as, 'a living and learning environment.' This means that education is viewed as being much wider than academic and class room based.

The following shortfalls have been identified: young people do not have access to a phone without reference to staff; Regulation 33 reports have not been submitted to Ofsted; the use of monitoring devices is not accurately reflected in the Statement of Purpose and young people's placement plans; some details are omitted in the

records of staff. It is clear, however, that these shortfalls are having a minimal impact on young people.

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
33 (2001)	ensure that a copy of each Regulation 33 report is provided to HMCI (Regulation 33 (5)(a))	06/04/2012
22 (2001)	ensure that where any electronic or mechanical monitoring device is used in the home: the child's placing authority consents to the use of the measure in question; it is provided for in the child's placement plan; so far as practicable in light of his age and understanding, the child is informed in advance of the intention to use the measure (Regulation 22 (1)(a)(b)(c))	06/04/2012
29 (2001)	ensure that records detail whether each person working in the home is full-time or part-time and if part-time, the average number of hours worked; and whether he resides at the home (Regulation 29 (1) Schedule 2 (f) (g))	06/04/2012
15 (2001)	ensure that children accommodated in the home are provided at all reasonable times with access to a telephone on which to make and receive private calls without reference to persons working in the home (Regulation 15.4a)	06/04/2012
4 (2001)	ensure that the Statement of Purpose contains an accurate description of any electronic or mechanical means of surveillance of children which may be used in the children's home. (Regulation 4 Schedule 1 (19))	06/04/2012

Recommendations

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

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Staff in the home work extremely hard to support young people to develop a positive self view and to build their confidence. Young people learn how to discover and develop their skills, and also to identify and address their vulnerabilities. Key work

sessions promote understanding of each young person's background and circumstances, helping them to deal with the reality of their situations. Staff question why behaviours have occurred rather than using punitive measures as a sanction for poor behaviour. As a result, young people feel supported rather than punished, reducing cycles of defensive actions and responses. The smallest of steps are acknowledged as achievements; learning to make eye contact, developing the ability to face the group during community meetings. This gives young people the confidence to build on their skills and address areas they want to improve.

The structure and dynamics of the staff team means that there is always good awareness of young people's emotional and psychological health and well-being. Issues and frustrations are identified swiftly. Consequently, young people receive the attention they need within a short time frame. Young people are encouraged to take responsibility for their own health. An example of this is self administering of medication, in preparation for becoming more independent.

Young people are meaningfully engaged and making good progress with education. Education programmes reflect the specific needs of individuals, their abilities and stage of development and preferred learning styles. Young people engage with a range of recreational opportunities reflective of their particular interests and skills. Where appropriate, pathway plans are in place and goals are identified within independence programmes. These are reviewed regularly to ensure that goals are realistic and achievable. Additionally, staff ensure that young people are equipped emotionally and psychologically for transition. This means that they are given the best opportunities to succeed when they move on.

Quality of care

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

Young people benefit from supportive and nurturing relationships with staff. A social worker described the support provided by the home as, 'fantastic.' They also said that young people are made to feel welcome and quickly develop positive relationships with staff. The therapeutic approach employed by the home has created an environment of mutual respect and positive challenge. Staff place great importance on their interactions with each other, in order that young people have good role models. Young people are encouraged to question staff regarding any area of the home or the care they receive. Daily meetings between staff and young people provide a regular opportunity to contribute views and opinions. As a result, young people feel valued and listened to. Staff are honest and transparent with young people and relay difficult messages in a supportive manner. This helps them to understand why some of their requests cannot be met. Consequently, trust is developed and young people feel safe.

Individual care plans are comprehensive and young people are encouraged to participate in their reviews and meetings. The diverse needs of individuals are well attended to within care plans and day-to-day care. Young people access a full range of health services. The arrangements in place for recording, storing, administering

and disposal of medication are safe and effective. Staff firmly advocate on behalf of young people, ensuring they receive equality of access to services and education. Young people's rights are promoted and they are encouraged to assert themselves appropriately. Needs relating to cultural background are identified prior to admission. Ongoing work is undertaken to gain an understanding of young people's personal identity and culture. An example of this is ensuring young people have the opportunity to visit their home towns or cities where possible. This is particularly important for those who have experienced a considerable cultural shift as a result of their placement.

The home is presented beautifully and has a feeling of calm and space. Young people are fully involved in decisions about décor and contribute to personalising the home. The games room is well equipped and there are good quality furnishings throughout. The grounds are extensive and there are plans in place to develop different themed areas. As a result, young people live in a comfortable and homely environment.

There is a telephone room however the home is waiting for a new line to be put in. This means that young people do not currently have access to a telephone without reference to staff.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people in this home say that they feel safe. They say that they are able to talk to staff and they also have the opportunity to talk to the independent visitor on a monthly basis. Information is displayed and readily accessible regarding agencies young people may wish to contact. All young people are made aware of the complaints procedure upon admission to the home. A policy is in place regarding children who go missing from home. This has reference to the local safeguarding children and police protocols. On the few occasions that young people have been absent without permission, the appropriate action has been taken. Staff ensure that relevant parties are notified and, where possible, remain in contact with the young person who is absent. When a young person returns, staff are warm and welcoming and use a restorative approach to encourage individuals to consider the impact of their behaviour.

Thorough risk assessments are in place for each young person. These are regularly reviewed to take account of progress or other factors which may affect individual's vulnerability. Comprehensive plans detail the triggers of specific behaviour and staff discuss individual needs on a daily basis. Physical restraint is viewed as an absolute last resort. The home uses a therapeutic approach which focuses on understanding why young people behave in certain ways. Staff support young people to explore the reasons for their behaviour, empowering them to make positive changes for themselves.

Staff working in the home are carefully recruited and vetted to ensure they are

suitable to work with children. All appropriate checks are made and new staff receive a thorough induction and appropriate training.

All health and safety checks are up to date. Young people and staff are all aware of the fire procedures and regular fire evacuation drills take place. The home provides a safe environment for young people without placing unnecessary restrictions on them.

Leadership and management

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

The home benefits from a well-structured management team and a competent and committed staff team. The manager provides clear direction and focus to ensure that young people benefit from consistent boundaries and approaches. The Statement of Purpose clearly sets out the ethos of the home. The manager has received extremely positive feedback from representatives from a placing authority, regarding the quality of care, ethos and culture of the home. A social worker said, 'communication with the home is excellent.'

An independent visitor provides monthly reports to the home, as required by Regulation 33. To date, Ofsted has received no reports. The manager regularly monitors the quality of care. Consultation with young people is a fundamental part of daily practice and contributes to the way in which the home is run.

The managers and staff have clear ideas for the future development of the home. There is no formalised development plan in place, however, the whole team share the same vision. There are plans in place to develop the extensive grounds in order to maximise the benefits for young people.

There is a robust training programme which ensures that staff are well equipped to safely meet the needs of young people. Additionally, a training day is held weekly. Staff say that the home, 'promotes a culture of enquiry.' They say that this creates a positive environment in which managers are open to constructive challenge. As a result, the whole team interrogate and reflect upon the quality of care and their own practice.

Records kept in the home are descriptive and factual. However, records of staff do not currently detail whether they work full time or part time, how many hours they work per week or whether they reside at the home.

Electronic monitoring devices have been used on one occasion, in order to safeguard young people. However, this has not been reflected in young people's files and consent has not been obtained from young people or placing authorities. Additionally, the use of such monitoring devices is not detailed in the Statement of Purpose.

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.