

Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Inspection date</b>	18/05/2012
<b>Inspector</b>	Ann-Marie Born
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Full
<b>Provision subtype</b>	Children's home

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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	09/12/2011
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## Service information

### Brief description of the service

The children's home is provided by a private company and cares for up to five young people of either gender. The home is registered to care for young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

### 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 **adequate**.

This is the first inspection since this home was registered. Young people are in the early stages of forming relationships with the staff team and each other. Therefore this is a period of settling and testing the boundaries for young people. The Registered Manager and staff are working hard to build positive relationships and are successfully getting to know each young person individually while supporting their complex needs.

Individual placement planning and day-to-day care planning ensure young people's needs are identified. However young people do not contribute fully to these plans. Young people report they are safe, feel they live in a good home and enjoy trying new experiences. Feedback from parents and social workers is good. Safeguarding responsibilities are fully understood by staff and good practice safeguards young people.

The Registered Manager understands the strengths and areas for development within the home. There are some areas to improve. These include ensuring there are sufficient numbers of suitably qualified and trained staff working in the home; ensuring young people contribute to their care plans and that those plans are implemented and monitored on a day-to-day basis by their key worker.

## 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
25 (2001)	ensure that there is at all times, having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the health and welfare of the children accommodated in the home, a sufficient number of suitably qualified, competent and experienced persons working at the home (Regulation 25 (1) (b))	07/09/2012
27 (2001)	ensure that all persons employed in the home receive appropriate training and are enabled from time to time to obtain further qualifications appropriate to the work they perform (Regulation 27 (4)(a)(b)).	07/09/2012

## Recommendations

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

- ensure that all children communicate their views on all aspects of their care and support, in particular, the content of their care plans (NMS1.3)
- ensure that there is a good quality learning and development programme for all staff which includes post-qualifying and in-service training to enhance individual skills and to keep staff up-to-date with professional and legal developments (NMS 18.1)
- ensure that all staff have attained a minimum level 3 qualification relevant to caring for children and young people or are working towards the level 3 Children and Young People's Workforce Diploma within 6 months of confirmation of employment (NMS18.5)
- 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 that child (NMS25.2).

## Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people have been resident in the home for less than a month and are in the process of settling in. Young people report they are happy and relate well to the majority of staff. Each young person is cared for and respected as an individual with their own personality and unique traits. Young people are treated with dignity and

respect. All cultural, gender and any religious needs are identified and provided for. As a result, young people are forming a positive self-view and attachments. Staff continually engage with young people. Any achievement is recognised and celebrated, thereby promoting self-esteem and positive feelings of worth and well-being.

Young people's diet and health needs are well met. Young people report that they like the food in the home and that, 'there is lots of choice.' Staff promptly register young people with local health services and advocate for young people, if needed. Young people receive warm, nurturing care if they feel unwell, as they would in a family home. As a result young people feel cared for. Where young people need specialist health assessment and support, assessments take place and plans are drawn and agreed with relevant agencies, such as mental health teams. Young people receive adequate support with emotional and psychological needs as part of their overall plan. However, not all staff members are sufficiently skilled and experienced to meet some identified needs.

Young people benefit from being fully supported and enabled to attend their existing school. Effective daily communication between home and school ensure young people's educational achievements and any concerns are swiftly identified. Positive educational outcomes and young people's well-being and attainments are promoted. A parent stated: 'he's back in school since he's been there and he hasn't done that for a long time'.

Weekly house meetings and targeted key work sessions provide young people with the opportunity to share their views on their care, identify activities they would like to take part in outside of the home and 'make the home their home'. Young people are encouraged and supported to access existing community provision, such as youth clubs and cadet organisations as well as welcoming their friends in to their home. This promotes young people's sense of belonging and well-being while building confidence and social skills. A young person commented how much he had enjoyed going to a local youth club as he 'had never done anything like that before.'

Contact arrangements are fully supported and young people benefit from maintaining important relationships with family members in line with their plans. Important relationships are appropriately sustained promoting young people's sense of belonging.

### **Quality of care**

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

Young people are in the early stages of settling in to the home and forming relationships with the staff team and each other. The staff team are working hard to engage with young people, nurture a sense of belonging and build trusting relationships. The Registered Manager commented that 'the relationship with the young people will come as they feel more secure'. Young people report that they 'really like the home' and feel comfortable to invite their friends home for tea.

However, during these early stages, on occasion, young people have become briefly physical, causing criminal damage in the home and community. Comprehensive support following such incidents enables young people to talk about what happened and reflect on their behaviour which is an improvement from their starting point.

Comprehensive complaint procedures are known to young people promoting their sense of well-being. There have not been any complaints. A young person stated: 'I have no complaints about the home at all, or any of the staff, but would know what to do if there was.'

Local authority placement plans are complemented by individualised in-house care plans which clearly identify how a young person is to be cared for. However, young people have not signed to say they have seen and understood their care plans. Nor is it evident that key workers are implementing these plans in the day-to-day care of young people. These omissions have a potential negative effect on young people's behaviours and their attachment to and investment in the home.

Young people grow in confidence and 'like learning new skills' as they engage in the purposeful, enjoyable activities offered by the home. For example, they grow tomatoes, runner beans and flowers from seed in a poly-tunnel in the garden. In addition, community interaction is encouraged by positive contact with local youth provision, including sports teams, and attendance at the village 'gala'. This builds self-esteem and social and life skills while promoting inclusion, opportunity and well-being.

The home is a detached bungalow in an extensive garden providing a pleasant and spacious environment for young people. Young people benefit from having their own comfortable bedrooms, some with en-suite facilities, and shared use of a large lounge and kitchen/dining room. Young people personalise their bedrooms to their taste promoting their sense of belonging and enhancing well-being. A social worker commented: 'It is a real benefit for her and she has been able to choose a fantastic room which is fantastic for a teenage girl.'

## **Safeguarding children and young people**

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

Young people are safe and feel safe in the home. A social worker commented that 'she is far safer here' and a parent stated 'he's very safe there.' Comprehensive child protection procedures are known by staff and readily accessible to them. Any allegations or disclosures are swiftly and appropriately dealt with and steps taken to safeguard young people. A young person stated that he 'felt safe' and that 'he liked always having somebody he could talk to about anything'.

Good quality behaviour management strategies are informed by individual behaviour management risk assessments, including identifying and addressing any bullying issues, and are effectively applied. Sanctions support young people to understand consequences and young people are given the opportunity to comment on events.

Individual crisis management, including each young person's individual 'trigger points', ensures that staff are aware when young people need further support. Young people feel confident and secure that staff will 'step up and support them', thereby promoting feelings of well-being and self-worth.

Robust restraint procedures are effectively followed ensuring physical intervention is only used within appropriate guidelines. All physical interventions are comprehensively recorded by staff, monitored by the Registered Manager and discussed within staff meetings. Young people record their comments following such interventions and consistently have the opportunity to reflect on their behaviours with staff. Young people learn alternative coping mechanisms and staff develop positive methods of managing their behaviours, thereby preventing further restraints. Young people are effectively safeguarded by these measures.

Young people are protected by comprehensive missing from home procedures, which are linked with locally agreed protocols and complemented by their individual missing risk assessments. Young people appreciate that staff are concerned for their safety and there have not been any episodes of young people going missing.

Young people's welfare is protected by the home's recruitment process. The Registered Manager fully understands and implements appropriate procedures thereby protecting young people from being cared for by people who may cause them harm.

Young people benefit from living in a safe environment. Young people's health and safety needs are high priority and strong health and safety procedures for the building are managed well. Fire safety risk assessments and regular safety checks protect young people from fire. Good evacuation procedures and practices ensure that young people know what to do in the event of an emergency and staff know how to protect them. All utilities are checked and regularly serviced.

## **Leadership and management**

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

Young people benefit from being cared for by an effective, skilled manager who they trust and respect. The manager aims to develop and improve the service and is progressing with a suitable qualification in management to enhance knowledge of recent changes in legislation. Good arrangements exist for monitoring the quality of care. As a result young people's progress is identified as they settle in to the home. This promotes and maintains high standards while contributing to young people's experience of being valued.

A comprehensive Statement of Purpose clearly outlines the aims and objectives of the home including how the specific equality and diversity needs of young people are met. In addition, parents and young people receive personalised information in a format they can understand, in their individual welcome pack. This clearly informs them about the home and the care that is to be provided. As a result young people

are appropriately placed, thereby enhancing their life experience. A social worker reported: 'She had options for placements and she chose here; they were really well prepared for her on her first visit. They gave her a lot of information on that first day to take away and she was really looking forward to coming and staying.'

Regular team meetings focus on young people's needs and current issues to suitably share information. Staff report they feel supported and receive regular supervision. However, the majority of staff do not hold a minimum level 3 qualification relevant to the care of young people and have not completed the company's core training programme. Further, although the Registered Manager has identified external training programmes, staff have not commenced these as yet. Staff are not therefore enhancing their individual skills or keeping up-to-date with professional and legal developments. As a result, young people are not always being cared for by people who are suitably qualified to meet their needs. The Registered Manager, fully supported by the company's area manager, is aware of this concern and taking positive action to address the shortfall. In the interim, staff rotas are managed very carefully to ensure there is a positive balance of qualified and inexperienced staff. This promotes young people's well-being.



## 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.