

## Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Inspector</b>	Maire Atherton
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<b>Provision subtype</b>	Children's home

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## Service information

### Brief description of the service

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 men 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.

### 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**.

Young people feel safe in the home and have good relationships with staff. Young people benefit from individualised care which meets their identified needs. Staff engage young people in their own care planning and reviews, ensuring their voices are heard. Young people's behaviour is improving through the development of self-awareness and a consistent approach from staff. Health and education are effectively promoted, despite occasional resistance from young people. Staff help young people to develop independent living skills.

The staff team work well together. They use supervision and team meetings to discuss how best to support the young people in their care. The manager is improving the effectiveness of monitoring and using this to develop the service. Young people are enjoying the improvements made to the accommodation and are taking a pride in their house.

This visit highlighted three shortfalls; deficits in the recording of medication and staff

recruitment checks are the subject of requirements. The third is a recommendation in respect of staffing.

## 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
21 (2001)	ensure that there are suitable arrangements for the recording of medication, with particular reference to ensuring such records are consistent (Regulation 21)	31/07/2012
26 (2001)	ensure that for all staff working in the home full and satisfactory information is available in respect of each of the matters specified in Schedule 2. (Regulation 26(6)(b))	31/07/2012

### Recommendations

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

- develop a formal process for staff moving to senior positions within the home so as to demonstrate their suitability for the role. (NMS 17.4)

### Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people have established attachments with the staff who care for them. This has enabled them to grow in confidence. A social worker observed: 'He has made progress in his time at the home; most significantly he has an increasing awareness of how he presents himself socially and physically.' Young people's needs are very well met by a staff team described by a social worker as 'very tuned in to his needs, which they have grasped well'. The role of the individual therapists is an essential part of the work and contributes to the young people's ability to develop appropriate and safe relationships. For example, one social worker singled out an effective therapeutic intervention that has enabled the positive development of a family relationship for a young person.

Young people have a good understanding of what they need to do to be healthy, for example, they enter into physical activity with a great deal of enthusiasm and demonstrate a good knowledge of healthy eating. Some resist attending health care

appointments but staff persist until a positive outcome is achieved. Therapy is well structured and responsive to the needs of the young people, moving some group work to individual sessions, for example.

Young people's engagement with education is generally good, either in school or in one-to-one tuition in specially sourced school accommodation off site. If there are issues, staff work with the young people to address these to secure regular attendance and positive achievements that reflect the potential of the individual. Young people's interests are included in the education programme and provide a link to further education courses.

Young people say that they are involved in house meetings and their views and opinions count. Young people join groups in the community within a carefully risk-assessed framework, supported initially then moving on to unsupervised attendance. Individual interests are also promoted, for example, music lessons.

Young people are well supported to ensure that contact is a safe, positive experience for them and their family members. Where there are restrictions on contact there is detailed information available about how this is to be managed.

Preparation for transition and independence is an integral part of a young person's placement in the home. Young people acquire personal hygiene, shopping, budgeting and cooking skills gradually. Young people apply for discretionary steps that give them increasing levels of personal freedom, based on a risk assessment and the progress they have made with therapy. Staff are looking at how they can actively encourage some young people to recognise sooner when they are ready for the next step, so that when it is time to move on they have had a range of independent experiences outside the home. A social worker said: 'There has been good preparation for the move, his needs and the risks have been well identified to inform the plan and the practical arrangements have been well supported.'

## Quality of care

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

The staff establish positive and effective working relationships with young people by ensuring that they are central to all that happens in the home. A social worker commented: 'I have seen fantastic interactions between the staff and the young person.' Relationships between the young people themselves can be volatile. These challenges are anticipated and managed well by staff, successfully reducing tensions through open communication. Staff understand why young people may behave inappropriately and work with the young people to help them to channel their emotions constructively; as a result, the use of sanctions is decreasing. A social worker said: 'They handle him very well there.'

The staff team promote a culture of equality where all views are sought and all opinions are listened to. Young people participate in and contribute to a range of meetings that are held both for them as individuals and as part of a group. Weekly

house meetings provide a structured opportunity for young people to express their views on the day-to-day life in the home; young people gave menu planning and activities as examples of this. Young people know they can call a meeting if there is an issue they want to raise and do so. They also know how to complain but there have been no complaints made since the last inspection. Young people say that they 'know what they want can't always be delivered because staff are good at saying why things can't happen'.

Each young person has a current needs, assessment and treatment plan that is reviewed and updated every three months. These plans identify needs relating to personal identity, culture and background and how these needs are to be addressed, with contributions from the young person, the residential, therapy and education teams. The contribution of each is shown in the final version. A social worker said: 'I feel that he was well prepared for his review.' Staff are familiar with the plans and work to them, a social worker confirmed. There are individual targets with a reward structure for each young person that they are involved in setting. Young people and staff daily review the achievements in hitting the targets in a group meeting and determine the reward level gained.

The organisation has its own education provision and staff work hard to support young people to engage. A social worker commented on the high level of change in the education team which has led to some difficulties in communication. Where young people struggle, a range of options is explored, for example, reduced timetables, or one-to-one tuition at home and off site, until a solution is found that enables the young person to re-engage with education. One social worker commented positively on the interests a young person has maintained and developed in his time in the home, for example, cycling, fishing and gardening.

The health and well-being of young people are well promoted. Young people attend routine and specialist appointments as required and there is a clear framework of therapeutic support for each young person through both individual and group programmes. Young people are given the medication they require; however, the recording of this is not always consistent.

There have been significant improvements to the house. While the work was being done the young people enjoyed a fortnight's two-site holiday and spent time at another of the organisation's homes. Young people are enjoying using a remodelled, newly installed kitchen and utility room. This provides a pleasant environment in which to socialise and prepare food and the young people are keen to look after. One of the bedrooms has been extended and an additional shared shower room created. There is a development plan in place to redecorate and refurbish other communal areas in the next year. The garden is well tended and has raised vegetable beds, mature trees and shrubs and a seating area with a barbecue.

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

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

Young people say they feel safe, rating it nine out of ten. They are encouraged to communicate any concerns they have with any member of staff they feel comfortable with. Safeguarding young people and the wider community is a central ethos of the organisation. The Local Authority Designated Officer reports an appropriate level of liaison when required, including the sharing of the organisation's safeguarding policy. Staff are appropriately trained in child protection and apply this knowledge both in keeping young people safe and supporting them to keep themselves safe. Young people are made aware of their own role and responsibilities in not engaging in perceived 'risky' behaviour, such as sharing belongings, and challenging any such behaviour in others within an agreed framework. A social worker said: 'Therapeutic sessions have made him aware of both appropriate and inappropriate feelings and how to keep himself and others safe.'

There is a new individual safeguarding plan in place that highlights the risks for each young person, using information from the therapy team, previous history and current issues. Steps to minimise the risk are outlined for staff to implement in practice, such as how they deploy themselves on shift; it is hoped that this will enable young people to progress safely in line with their individual plans.

Good staffing levels and robust supervision minimise opportunities for bullying. Any behaviour that is seen is bullying is appropriately challenged by staff and/or young people themselves. There have been no instances of young people going missing and just one unauthorised absence of a couple of hours since the last inspection, indicating that young people do not feel the need to leave. Staff maintain a strong emphasis on the promotion of positive behaviour. Young people say that sanctions and rewards are fair. Monitoring by the manager highlighted an instance of an inappropriate sanction and the action taken to address this. There is a policy of no physical intervention in accordance with the personal space boundary applied across the organisation. The organisation is currently investigating alternatives to physical intervention training that will equip staff to manage physical challenges safely.

Young people are actively involved in the recruitment of staff and their views are taken into account in the process. There is a robust recruitment policy in place but this is not fully applied. For example, not all the information required, such as confirmation of gaps in a curriculum vitae or verification of why previous employment ended, has been obtained in every case. Some staff information is now available electronically with access appropriately restricted.

The management of health and safety is good, providing young people with a safe environment. Since the last inspection maintenance issues have been addressed, fence panels have been replaced and refurbishment and redecoration undertaken as previously reported. Routine servicing and maintenance takes place as required and there is a plan for further redecoration to be carried out.

## **Leadership and management**

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

The experienced and appropriately qualified Registered Manager leads the small staff team effectively. Since the last inspection there have been changes to the staff team with two members of staff, including a senior, being redeployed to another home and one member of staff returning. The current shortfall is made up by the use of sessional staff and other staff within the organisation known to the young people. This provides a degree of consistency for the young people while active recruitment is underway. There is not a formal recruitment process for staff transferring to senior roles within the organisation, thus not providing equality of opportunity or a robust assessment of suitability for the role. This has been identified as an area for improvement by senior managers within the organization.

There were four requirements and three recommendations arising from the last inspection report; five have been fully met and two partially met. Two staff are scheduled to attend medication training with a view to improving the management of medication in the home, achieving consistent recording, for example. The programme for refurbishment is well underway, with further work planned. Staff recruitment records, which are managed by head office, do not in each case contain all the required information as previously stated in this report. There have been no complaints but the record has been adapted to prompt staff to record whether or not a complainant is satisfied with the outcome. Young people's contributions to their plans are now well evidenced. Those agencies responsible for the appointment of independent visitors confirm that the required checks have been undertaken. The manager has significantly improved the quality of monitoring and there is evidence that there is action taken in response to identified shortfalls, such as bringing items to the staff meetings for discussion. The impact of this is yet to be seen.

The Statement of Purpose is up to date and accurately reflects what the home hopes to achieve for young people. One social worker commented: 'On the whole they have achieved the objectives set on admission, they have done a good job with him. He has developed empathy and an understanding of his behaviour and so improved his life chances.'

The manager provides and receives regular supervision to ensure that young people are cared for by a team that knows how to meet the diverse needs of the young people. Effective communication through daily handovers and regular team meetings mean that staff are kept up to date so as to provide consistent care. Young people are cared for by a staff team that receives regular training that equips them to do their designated roles.

Regular monitoring takes place through visits made by or on behalf of the provider, and the manager's checks on a monthly basis. The manager has also undertaken a review and completed an annual development plan. Reports arising from these are forwarded to Ofsted as required. Children and young people contribute to the monitoring processes. The manager has taken action in response to identified shortfalls with the aim of improving the quality of care for young people.

Records kept by the home are clear, up to date and provide a good picture of a young person's stay in the home, thus providing them with an accurate history to



look back on should they so wish in the future.

## 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.