

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	15/02/2012
Inspector	Anna Williams
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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 two-bedded children's home registered for single sex occupancy and young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

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.

Overall effectiveness

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

Day-to-day management of the home is not effective or robust, and as a result there are major weaknesses in a number of systems in the home. Monitoring and evaluation of the care being provided in the home are insufficient, and as a result, the safety of the young people living in the home is not being promoted or protected. There are significant failures in regulation and the home provides an inadequate level of care to the young people living there. The home is not run in line with its Statement of Purpose.

Young people are supported to learn independence skills and take part in a range of activities. Young people maintain contact with those who are significant to them. Young people talk positively about the staff within the home.

There are significant weaknesses in the quality of care provided. These include poor medication administration, staff working excessive hours, incomplete accident records and shortfalls in staff training. The current staff do not have the skills or strategies to effectively manage young people's challenging behaviour. Staff are restraining young people without receiving appropriate physical intervention training. Monitoring of staff practice is weak. This places young people at risk. As a result of this inspection 14 requirements have been made.

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
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4 (2001)	ensure the Statement of Purpose in relation to the children's home consists of a statement as to all the matters listed in Schedule 1, with particular reference to up to date information relating to the number, relevant qualifications and experience of persons working at the children's home and the arrangements for the control, restraint and discipline of children (Regulation 4 (1))	16/04/2012
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))	16/04/2012
16 (2001)	ensure that the written policy which is intended to safeguard children accommodated in the children's home from abuse and neglect and sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of any allegation of abuse or neglect is implemented (Regulation 16 (1) (a and b))	16/04/2012
17A (2001)	ensure that a measure of restraint may only be used on a child accommodated in a children's home for the purpose of preventing injury to any person or preventing serious damage to the property of any person and then only where no alternative method of preventing the event is available (Regulation 17A (1))	16/04/2012
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, restraint or discipline in a children's home, a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose of which includes all the requirements of regulation (Regulation 17B (3) (a-i) (4) (a) (b))	16/04/2012
20 (2001)	ensure that each child has access to such medical, nursing, treatment and other services, as he may require (Regulation 20 (2) (a))	16/04/2012
21 (2001)	ensure that there are suitable arrangements for the recording, handling, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of any medicines received into the children's home (Regulation 21 (1))	16/04/2012
25 (2001)	ensure that there is at all times, a sufficient number of suitably qualified, competent and experienced persons working at the children's home (Regulation 25 (1) (a) (b))	16/04/2012
27 (2001)	ensure that all staff receive appropriate training, with particular reference to behaviour management training and medication training (Regulation 27 (4) (a))	16/04/2012
27 (2001)	ensure that all staff receive appropriate and robust supervision and appraisal (Regulation 27 (4) (a))	16/04/2012
28 (2001)	ensure that in respect of each child who is accommodated in a children's home a record is maintained in a permanent form which includes the information, documents and records specified in Schedule 3 relating to that child, and is kept up to date (Regulation 28 (1) (a) (b))	16/04/2012
29 (2001)	ensure that the records specified in Schedule 4 are maintained and ensure that they are kept up to date, with particular reference to a record of all accidents occurring in the children's	16/04/2012

	home (Regulation 29 (1))	
33 (2001)	review the system in place for monitoring the quality of care in the children's home to ensure it is effective and it focuses on improving the quality of care provided (Regulation 33)	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):

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people build confidence through the wide range of forums and meetings available to them as part of the therapeutic programme. These groups and individual sessions offer opportunities for young people to reflect on their past, and to discuss their future goals and objectives.

Young people's individual health needs are partially met. Young people are supported to attend routine dental and optician appointments, but as a result of disagreements between health professionals over funding, health assessments as requested through local authority reviews have been significantly delayed or not taken place. Young people who are injured during incidents of challenging behaviour are not routinely offered medical support. This compromises the personal health outcomes for young people in the home.

Young people have access to a suitable range of activities, both in the home and within the local area. These include a football club, trips to the local town, cinema trips, meals out and woodland walks. This gives young people opportunities to socialise and be an active part of their local community.

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

Young people attend the school which is run by the organisation. Staff support and encourage young people to attend and to achieve their educational goals, however individual progress varies. Young people's attendance at school is satisfactory. Due to challenging behaviours displayed within the school by young people they are, on occasions, educated within the home on an individual basis by education staff.

Young people assist with tasks around the house, and develop their levels of independence according to their age and ability. Young people receive allowances and are supported to save for larger items and their future. Young people receive appropriate supervision while choosing and buying their own clothing and personal items in the community. This supports young people to build confidence around daily living skills, which helps young people prepare for adulthood.

Quality of care

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

Young people say that house meetings take place on a regular basis, and that these meetings allow them the chance to have their say about the running of the home. Young people say that they have choices with regards to the menu planning and also which leisure activities they want to undertake.

Young people's needs are set out in in-house placement plans. Young people's individual views on developing positive behaviour strategies are sought through a variety of meetings. However, young people's views are not sought on management of any physically challenging situations. Young people are involved in the setting of their personal goals and targets which focus on preparing young people for independence.

Young people have specific individual health requirements which are managed through prescribed medication. However, these personal health needs are not met due to the significant number of missed doses. Consequently, this has a detrimental effect on the young people's diverse health and medical needs. Internal monitoring systems are ineffective at highlighting the shortfalls in medication administration. Some staff who administer medication have not received any formal medication training. Other staff received formal training seven years ago and have not undertaken a refresher since. This means some staff do not hold up-to-date knowledge on medication systems, including the manager.

Young people do not have a complete record of their unique time in the home as accident records are inaccurate and inconsistently completed within individual young people's files. This does not enable each young person to have access to clear records, which are up to date and contribute to an understanding of their life. This also means the manager does not have full and complete records to monitor and records do not show what actions are taken to safeguard the health and welfare of young people following these injuries.

Staff receive daily verbal handovers from educational staff, and individual young people's 'day notes' books record achievements and any progress made.

The children's home provides adequate accommodation which is subject to an on-going maintenance programme. The garden areas to the front and rear of the house are well-maintained and offer opportunities to play and relax. The home provides

space for young people to spend time alone, or remain part of a group in the open-plan kitchen and dining area. Although during recent incidents of challenging behaviour young people have spent time at a nearby home, run by the same organisation, while behaviour is managed. Such a strategy makes it difficult to build a cohesive community together, where all young people can live and thrive together.

The home is located near to local leisure facilities and within walking distance of the town centre. Young people can access local transport routes easily to assist them in their planning for independence.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

The home operates a policy of non restraint; however, incident reports show that staff have used physical interventions on young people, including restraint. Full incident records kept by the home are not kept in a non tamper-proof form and do not capture all the required information as stated in regulation. This makes it difficult for the manager to evaluate whether the restraint was necessary, and if staff are applying fair, proportionate and consistent boundaries to all young people within the home. This places young people at risk of inappropriate restraint. Incidents of restraint are not sensitively and appropriately followed up with individual children. This does not support each young person to have structured time to discuss and reflect on each incident.

Staff are not trained in an appropriate practical behaviour management strategy which would give them the skills to de-escalate a situation, learn breakaway techniques and safe methods of restraint. This means young people are being restrained by untrained staff, who could cause injury or use unauthorised restraint methods.

Incidents involving challenging behaviour over recent months have included injuries to both young people and staff. Monitoring systems within the home do not identify the poor or inappropriate management of challenging behaviour. Incidents of concern regarding poor practice are not shared with the Local Authority Designated Officer in line with the home's child protection policy, to ensure an independent view is sought. Consequently, unsatisfactory practices are not addressed and young people are not protected from the risk of harm or abuse. Incidents of young people missing from the home are low and staff take appropriate prompt action to ensure their safety.

Young people are cared for in a physically safe environment. Equipment is tested and checked at regular intervals. 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 **inadequate**.

The Statement of Purpose sets out the aims and objectives for the home and a children's guide reflects these in a child-friendly format. However, the Statement of Purpose is out of date with regard to the management of the home and the current staff team. Further to this, the home is not run in a manner which is consistent with the Statement of Purpose, as it states the home operates a 'non restraint policy'; however, restraint is being used. As a result, young people and placing authorities are not given accurate information about the aims and objectives of the home and what services it provides.

Staff training needs identified during the inspection include medication and behaviour management training. This means that young people are being cared for by staff who do not have the knowledge and skills to meet their individual care needs safely.

Staff receive regular supervision and an annual appraisal. However, some staff do not have the necessary skills to care for young people safely and appropriately, and this has not been identified within staff supervision and appraisal systems. This demonstrates that there is not sufficient, effective and robust supervision in place to ensure young people are cared for by competent staff.

Staff who are contracted to the home also work shifts at other children's homes within the organisation. Staff timesheets demonstrate that some staff are frequently working excessively long hours, sometimes up to 70 hours per week. Consequently, staff may become tired and this could compromise the strict levels of supervision which the young people are subject to in accordance with the home's Statement of Purpose.

Significant events are reported to Ofsted and placing authorities. Although reports shared contain inadequate information regarding the event and appropriate action was not taken with regard to poor staff practice. Records are stored securely and contribute to a history of the young person's life at the home. However, the latest local authority review minutes are not on young people's files to inform staff and to ensure that action points are appropriately completed.

Internal quality assurance systems are ineffective and fail to address staff practice issues. As a result, young people are not adequately protected from harm and injury, and this also prevents each young person from achieving their full potential. The manager has completed a Regulation 34 report and submitted it to Ofsted in line with statutory guidance. However, it does not contain robust evaluation and does not have clear future aims to improve the quality of care within the home. This indicates that the home is not being effectively monitored or efficiently managed. Young people's unique and diverse needs are not met within the home due to significant failures in providing adequate care.

Equality and diversity practice is **inadequate**.

