

Inspection report for children's home

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| Inspection date | 21/06/2012 |
| Inspector | Debbie Foster |
| Type of inspection | Full |
| Provision subtype | Residential special school (>295 days/year) |

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| Date of last inspection | 03/11/2011 |
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This is a voluntary run children's home. It is registered to accommodate up to three young people. The home provides respite care and 52 week placements to young people with learning disabilities and emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service of high quality 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**.

The children's home is starting to make a difference to young people's lives. This is after recently registering and young people only being in residence for a very short space of time prior to the home's first inspection. Staff are committed; child focused and are establishing sound quality of care practices, which assist in enabling young people to make progress in their lives. Young people are positive about the care they receive at the home and have settled in to the home well. This has been supported by a well thought out introduction and admission to the home by the staff.

Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the young people they care for. This is reinforced by access to good training opportunities. This benefits young people in receiving positive care, which meets their diverse needs.

Staff actively promote the value of education and encourage young people to attend. They are frequently liaising with schools and colleges and contribute to young people's education planning meetings. Young people are at the start of their journey in attendance at their new education placements and there is initial evidence that attendance levels have improved. However, their progress cannot yet be evaluated so early in their placements. Individual care plans are in place, they do cover all essential areas of the young people's care, but do not detail specifically how staff will meet their needs in full. The manager has not ensured that the looked after children's documentation and placement plan from the placing authority have been received prior or on admission to the home. As a result, this does not ensure placements made at the home meet all legal requirements. Risk assessments are in place some are in sufficient detail, whilst others do not set out clearly how risks will

be reduced or eliminated in full.

The leadership and management of the children's home is built on sound foundations. Staff say they are well supported by the management team and they have built good communication systems and receive regular supervision to aid working consistently as a team. The manager places a strong emphasis on a holistic approach to caring for young people. Gaps have been identified in the management team's knowledge of the Children's Home Regulations 2001 and supporting guidance. As a result, this has impacted on the monitoring of the service not being fully effective. This includes deficiencies and omissions not being detected. For example, ensuring all records are kept in line with legal requirements to assist in maintaining and improving the quality of care being provided to 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 |
|--------------|--|------------|
| 28 (2001) | ensure that the registered person maintains in respect of each child who is accommodated in a children's home a record in permanent form which includes the information, documents and records specified in Schedule 3 to that child. In particular, a copy of any plan of care of the child prepared by his placing authority, and of the placement plan (Regulation 28 (1) (a) Schedule 3) | 21/07/2012 |
| 33 (2001) | ensure that the responsible individual, partner or employee of the organisation who is not directly concerned with the conduct of the home visits under paragraph (1) OR (2) at least once a month and this may be unannounced. These reports must be supplied to Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (Regulation 33(1) (2)(3) (5) (a)) | 28/07/2012 |
| 34 (2001) | ensure that the registered person establishes and maintains a system for monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 at appropriate intervals and improve the quality of care provided in the children's home. (Regulation 34 (1) (a) & (b)) | 28/07/2012 |

Recommendations

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

- build further on the home's proportionate approach to risk assessments. In

particular that they all have specific detail on how the risk will be reduced or eliminated (NMS 4.5)

- 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 particular by recording how, on a day-to-day basis, he will be cared for, and his welfare safeguarded and promoted by the home. (NMS 25.2)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people are at the starting point in developing emotional resilience and forming positive relationships with staff due to only living at the home a very short length of time. They said staff are kind and named a particular person they felt already able to speak to if they were worried about anything. Young people have settled in very quickly into a new environment, which has been achieved through well thought out introductions to their new home, with visits and meeting the staff who will care for them prior to their admission. This has reduced anxieties for young people and equipped them better to face significant changes and challenges in their lives. As a result, young people are beginning to plan for their future, relative to their age and understanding.

Staff have commenced the process of involving and encouraging young people to take responsibility for their own health. As a result, young people have started to make healthy food choices and routine healthcare appointments have been arranged. It is recognised that young people may be involved in some risk taking behaviour such as smoking. Staff are making every effort to manage this problem using discouragement and raising young people's awareness about the associated risks. This work is in its infancy and the impact of its success will be assessed in the future.

Young people have been reintroduced back into full-time education. Staff are committed to ensure regular attendance to educational placements. Good prior planning has ensured that full-time programmes and courses have been arranged to enable them to start at the earliest opportunity after the admission of young people to the home. Young people are well supported to maintain daily routines that benefit their education. For example, this includes having suitable bedtimes to enable them to be refreshed and ready to go to school the following day. Progress in education is adequate with young people just commencing their new education provision and attending well after a period of non-attendance. Progress cannot be measured at this point, due to the short period of time since the young people have commenced their attendance in education courses.

Young people are supported to have appropriate contact with their family, friends and significant others. Staff understand the benefits of contact and where supervision is required. This ensures contact is appropriately and safely planned and supported to make sure it is as positive an experience as possible for young people.

Young people have just commenced building on their independence skills and they confirm that they had discussed with staff, being involved in tasks around the home, such as buying food, learning how to cook, self-travelling and keeping their rooms tidy. Staff spoke clearly about enabling young people to make a successful transition to independent and semi-independent living. This will provide young people with practical and emotional support to help them deal with the challenges and prepare them for adult life.

Quality of care

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

Young people are getting to know staff and starting to build warm relationships with them. A good rapport between them is noted. Staff speak about their work with young people with commitment and a child-centred approach saying, 'Building good relationships with the young people is essential and this will help us to engage so much better with young people'. Young people saying, 'I am getting on with the staff, they are kind and I can talk to them.'

Young people confirm that their views are genuinely sought and acted upon. They say they have chosen their preferred bedroom in the house, made suggestions for the menu and started to discuss what activities they would like to do in the evenings and weekends. Staff provide opportunities for daily chats and key worker sessions. Regular young people's meetings are planned to take place. Young people say that they are confident to tell staff about any worries and have been told about how to make a complaint. There have been no complaints made about the service. Staff are aware of the procedures to follow in the event of any complaint being made.

Verbally, staff demonstrate a good awareness of young people's needs. However, the young people's needs are not embedded in consistently well written placement plans. It is not always clear how the needs of young people will be met. This impacts upon the quality of care and support around young people's health, welfare, behaviour, safety and preparation for independence. Regular focused one-to-one work is planned for young people where additional guidance, advice and support will be given. However, this work has not yet commenced due to young people only recently being admitted to the home. Therefore, the care support to date and the records do not yet demonstrate the difference that the home is making towards improved outcomes for young people.

Young people's needs and development are to be reviewed regularly in the light of their care and progress at the home. Staff are clear on the processes for reviewing young people's care and they say that statutory case reviews will take place within the required timescales to inform those working at the home and others of progress made by young people.

The staff fully recognise and appreciate that the individual young people will have needs arising from diversity. Where necessary, staff have commissioned support

services involved in the health, care and education of the young people. The home has started to build links with other helping agencies to enable them to support and meet the needs of all young people further. Good policies and practice around the storage, handling and administration of medication safeguards young people's welfare.

The staff work in a determined manner to ensure that appropriate education placements are sourced quickly and as a result, young people's education is disrupted as little as possible in order that they can continue to attend and achieve. Contact between the home and college is frequent and effective. A notable area of strength is the staff's close communication and support of other professionals working in education to sustain and increase the young people's time and achievement in the provision. Full college timetables and educational targets are on file to inform the staff of the support required at the home to help young people achieve their personal education goals. There are resources, facilities and space at the home to enable the completion of homework. Staff have actively promoted and supported young people with college based activities. This has resulted in young people being very well supported with their education attendance.

Young people are at the starting point of establishing their particular hobbies, interests and activities since coming to live in their new home. A young person said 'Staff have asked me what I want to do in the evenings, we have played Monopoly and I won,' and 'Staff have been helping me with my weaving.' Staff demonstrate awareness of the importance for young people to engage in leisure activities. They recognise that this will enable young people to socialise and to build their esteem and confidence by supporting their individual choices.

The young people live in a home that is very well located near to shops, leisure and education facilities. It is on the main bus route to the nearby town centre. The interior and exterior of the home are in a suitable state of structural and decorative repair. There is a good maintenance and repair programme for the building. A young person proudly gave a tour of their home. They said 'I like my bedroom and the lounge the best.' Bedrooms are personalised, reflecting the young people's personality, interests and own choices have been made. The garden is maintained and safe. The home is clean and there are homely touches throughout.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people say they feel safe and that there is no bullying taking place in their new home. Young people are protected from harm by staff that are trained in safeguarding young people. Robust implementation of safeguarding procedures is evident. Staff awareness of safeguarding matters and the general safety ensure that young people's welfare is promoted well at all times. They have a good understanding of the risks young people may present both in the home and in the community. These are identified in young people's plans. However, the detail of what staff are to do in risk assessments is not always specific enough to give staff clear

and concise instructions. As a result, some identified risk areas are not ensuring a consistent approach by staff to ensure risks are reduced or eliminated.

Staff clearly understand young people's history, the reasons why young people may go missing and take appropriate steps to minimise and manage this safely. The staff have established links with the local police to ensure young people's safety is given the highest priority. As a result, young people have not gone missing from the home.

Staff take a non-confrontational approach to behaviour management and look to divert and distract negative behaviour. They are suitably trained in behaviour management techniques and express they intend to use this creatively to manage young people's behaviour. There have been no sanctions or physical interventions used in the home since the time of registration.

The recruitment and selection of people working at the home is robust to make sure young people are protected. Visitors are appropriately monitored to ensure young people are not exposed to people who may present a risk to them in their home.

Young people are protected from hazards by a comprehensive range of health and safety procedures. Staff demonstrate good awareness and carry out routine health and safety checks to ensure the premises are safe and secure. Staff have undertaken fire instruction and fire awareness training to ensure they know how to safely evacuate the building in the event of a fire. Young people have been involved in a fire induction to fire procedures in the home on their admission. This means that the safety and well-being of young people is given importance and keeps them safe.

Leadership and management

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

A Statement of Purpose is available to inform professionals and members of the public about how care is provided at the home. There is a good children's guide and this is available in a variety of formats to meet young people's diverse needs. Young people receive a copy of it before they come to live at the home so that they know what to expect if they go to live there.

The manager is registered with Ofsted and is supporting staff in a new service to provide a safe environment with sound care outcomes for young people. The manager and head of care have appropriate qualifications, skills and experience. Young people benefit from care delivered by a suitably managed, stable and permanent staff team. This supports the service in providing consistency of care to young people. However, the management team did have some gaps in their knowledge and understanding of the Children's Home Regulations 2001 and supporting guidance for the inspection of children's homes. As a result, this has impacted on the monitoring of the service and the omissions found in the case file requirements for young people, which impacts on the quality of care for young people and future improvement for the service.

The young people are receiving care from staff that are experienced and appropriately trained to meet their needs. All staff are trained in a wide variety of safety and childcare subjects. An on-going programme of regular refresher training is provided in a range of subjects to enhance the staff team's competency to meet the needs of the young people. Staff who have completed their probationary period are registered to undertake the level 3 Children and Young People's Workforce Diploma qualification. Staff feel well supported, supervised, appraised and are encouraged to develop and improve their performance through practice and on-going training. Staff spoke about their high regard for the management team and feel valued and listened to. This improves team morale; staff are motivated and have a common goal to improve young people's lives.

The home has good policies and procedures, which inform staff of expected conduct and relevant work practices in caring and keeping young people safe. However, these have not been fully implemented and embedded in practice. Monthly monitoring visits from the provider and the manager's regular monitoring of the service to evaluate and improve the quality of care at the home have not routinely been taking place. This has meant that arrangements have not been effective to identify all weaknesses and secure further improvement. For example in the reviewing of care planning detail, deficiencies in case file requirements and risk assessments.

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.