

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC005045
Inspection date	26/06/2012
Inspector	Amanda Ellis
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	02/02/2012
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2012

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is registered to provide care for three young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. It is one of several homes operated by an independent provider.

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 **good**.

Young people living at this home experience an overall good standard of care delivered by effective management and staff teams. The home provides clear, individualised, well-planned care, taking into account the specific needs of young people and promotes positive outcomes.

Young people are valued and develop within this home, making good progress from their starting points. Young people have positive views about their care, the staff and the home. They are able to reflect on how they have benefited from their placement and support at this home.

Young people are encouraged to be involved in planning and reviewing their care. They participate in the running of the home and contributing to their care. Young people receive practical support and encouragement to attend school. They are encouraged to participate in a range of activities. Young people have their health promoted and are taught how to keep themselves healthy. Relationships between young people and staff are excellent.

Managers and staff undertake rigorous monitoring and are motivated for continued improvements. Shortfalls have been identified within this inspection in relation to young people not being able to use a telephone without reference to staff, weaknesses in a structured education provision for young people during gaps in education and a lack of clear procedures in regards to preparation for placements.

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
15 (2001)	ensure that children are provided with a telephone on which to make and receive calls in private. (Regulation 15 (4) (a))	06/08/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure where children no longer receive compulsory full-time education, where appropriate the home supports them to participate in further education, training or employment (NMS 8.9)
- ensure the home has and implements clear procedures for introducing children to the home, the staff and the other children living there, which covers planned and where permitted, emergency/immediate placements, with particular regard to sharing information with placing local authorities. (NMS 11.1)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make positive progress and develop within this home. Young people benefit from improvements in emotional resilience and increased self-esteem. Some young people develop positive attachments and relationships with carers, and their behaviour becomes significantly more positive and productive as a result of this consistency in care and boundaries.

Young people make good progress in education. A teacher for one of the young people said: 'He has excellent school attendance and continues to make good progress in his academic achievements. He has taken his examinations and is making a planned move to further education. He has made progress in managing his behaviour and is now able to make positive friendships.' Staff ensure that attendance is supported and consistent. Young people benefit from staff having effective links with school.

Young people enjoy improved outcomes in health. They benefit from a healthy lifestyle which is promoted by a skilled and knowledgeable staff team. Young people have health care plans as part of their wider placement plan. The individual health

needs of young people are met because there is good and effective consultation with young people, professionals, parents and families. Young people receive routine health care to ensure they have good health outcomes. Young people with specific health issues receive appropriate support to meet their needs.

Young people benefit from contact with family and friends as appropriate. Contact is facilitated by staff who are very aware of individual needs. The staff team work with young people to assist them to understand their family dynamics and relationships.

Young people receive support and encouragement to learn independence skills. They benefit from independence activities forming part of the daily routine of the home. This enables young people to develop appropriate skills in readiness for leaving care. The acquisition of life skills provides young people with improved outcomes to live independently.

Quality of care

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

Young people receive a good quality of care at the home. Staff demonstrate commitment and enthusiasm to their work. The positive relationships and effective day-to-day organisation of the home demonstrates consistent concern with the welfare, education and progress of young people. Young people thrive because of effective relationships with staff. Young people are enthusiastic to express that they feel respected, valued and well cared for. One young person expressed, 'I like all of the staff... they help me with school and activities. They are reasonable and help me work towards getting the things I want.'

The participation of young people in the running of their home is a routine element of its functioning. For example, young people attend weekly house meetings and complete consultation documents at regular intervals. This builds their confidence and increases their participation in their own care.

Young people receive a children's guide which contains information on their care, advocacy, contacts and the details for Ofsted. Young people know how to make a complaint to staff. The complaints procedure is on the notice board in an appropriate format. However, young people do not currently have access to their own telephone to make private calls and this may compromise their ability to express any concerns they may have independently of the staff team.

Care planning, risk assessments and behaviour management plans are detailed and up to date. Written plans reflect the individual needs of young people and routinely include the views of young people. Young people benefit from consistent care because their care planning is clear and comprehensive. This provides staff with clarity to effectively support young people. There is a clear commitment to promoting equality and diversity, which ensures the promotion of young people's individual needs.

Young people receive care which meets their social, emotional and psychological health needs. Staff work with a wide range of professionals to meet the specific needs of young people. They support young people to access a range of services and promote a variety of opportunities for young people. Staffing levels ensure young people have effective transport and support to enjoy a wide variety of new experiences.

Staff actively promote the education of young people and are proactive in securing suitable educational placements for young people. Where young people do attend education provision regularly, staff support ensures young people progress and maintain excellent attendance levels. Staff and teachers regularly communicate about young people. This results in care staff being well informed and supportive regarding educational targets and achievements. However, when young people are placed and do not have an immediate school placement, the home does not ensure that routines offer sufficient educational provision. In these situations the home could be more effective in promoting the education of young people.

Young people are encouraged to identify activities to engage with. Staff participate in activities and also support young people to pursue independent hobbies. Where appropriate, young people are able to invite their friends to the home and are encouraged to develop friendships within the local community and their schools. Young people benefit from exploring their potential in engaging with social and recreational activities.

The maintenance and the décor of the home is a very good standard. There are no areas of improvement identified. The home is comfortable and provides a homely, modern and non-institutionalised environment. Young people's bedrooms are individualised and young people have choice in their decoration preferences. The home offers opportunity for both privacy and social engagement. The home is exceptionally clean and tidy and has a relaxed and pleasant feel to it which is consistent with family living.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are safe and say they feel safe. The staff team are skilled and knowledgeable which ensures that young people are safe. Consistent staffing ratios further ensure that young people's whereabouts are known at all times and that they are supervised and monitored closely.

There have been several reported incidents of young people going missing from the home since the last inspection. Staff have a good understanding of the relevant policies and procedures in place to notify relevant bodies in the event of a young person going missing. A joint protocol for children missing from care is in place and good working relationships with the local police which supports effective action when a young person goes missing.

Staff promote positive behaviour for young people at all times. Young people are encouraged to take responsibility for their behaviour. Individualised reward and incentive schemes reinforce positive behaviours and young people benefit from improvements in their behaviours. The use of physical restraint in the home is minimal. Staff who undertake any restraints are suitably trained. Recording of such incidents is in line with the legislative framework. Young people have the opportunity to express their feelings with staff following the use of any restraint and their views recorded as a significant event on their individual case files.

Young people benefit from clear and appropriate risk assessment, which is individualised and effectively managed. They are able to take age-appropriate risks in line with agreed care plans.

Staff recruited to work in the home experience a rigorous selection process prior to taking up their positions. There have been no staff members leave or commence employment since the last inspection. Stringent recruitment processes and the recording and monitoring of visitors to the home further ensure young people are protected from significant harm.

There has been one referral to a children's social care team since the last inspection. Agencies were notified quickly and consistently and practices implemented to ensure effective protection for young people. Young people received support and guidance during the period of the investigation. However, the procedures for introducing new placements to the home are not clearly implemented and would benefit from improvement. There have been no allegations or complaints since the last inspection. Young people report no incidents of bullying within the home.

The home is physically safe for the young people. Maintenance within the home is of a good standard, with staff implementing consistent monitoring and security to ensure the safety of young people.

Leadership and management

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

Young people benefit from a home that continues to maintain good standards since the last inspection. At the last inspection the home had two recommendations which are met; young people are encouraged to have their views recorded in their records and they are actively encouraged to read their files, and to correct errors and add personal statements.

The home's development plan reflects practical proposals for continued improvement. The strengths and weaknesses of the home are recognised by the Registered Manager and are used to inform future practice.

The home's Statement of Purpose is comprehensive and accurately reflects the aims, ethos and facilities offered to young people. The service provides a young person's guide which is appropriate and accessible, containing relevant information to the

young person's needs.

Young people benefit from effective management and monitoring of the home. The Registered Manager undertakes routine monitoring activities, in addition to the independent monitoring visits by an independent person. These systems promote continual improvement and maintenance of good standards. This ensures that young people receive a consistently good quality of care.

Staffing levels ensure good levels of support according to the needs of the home and the young people in placement. The Registered Manager provides support on shifts and an on-call service. The management and staff team access a range of occupational and vocational training which underpins their practice. Supervision is regular and of good quality covering professional development and the care of young people at the home

Young people receive support and guidance in contributing to their reviews and meeting with professionals. The staff ensure that the review of young people's care is in line with statutory timescales. Staff take a proactive role in contacting and communicating with all agencies.

Young people's records are good, records are clear, up to date and stored securely, therefore ensuring that records contribute to an understanding of young people's lives. Young people will further benefit from planned work to archive and record their time at the home.

All notifications are reported as required and appropriate action is taken to follow procedures and protect young people.

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.