

## Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	SC431803
<b>Inspection date</b>	19/07/2012
<b>Inspector</b>	Anna Williams
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Full
<b>Provision subtype</b>	Children's home

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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	14/12/2011
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## Service information

### Brief description of the service

The service is a four-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.

### 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**.

This children's home provides young people with an adequate quality of care. Strengths of the service include a safe and homely environment, good attendance at school and positive engagement from all young people in independent living skills. Young people's emotional needs are well-met and they receive regular therapeutic input from individual workers. This supports young people to understand their backgrounds and current circumstances. Diversity and learning about other cultures is celebrated within the home.

Young people are positive about the care they receive. Young people feel safe living in the home. Young people and staff enjoy warm and constructive relationships.

Areas of shortfall identified within this inspection include young people's risk assessments which are inconsistent in quality and do not have clear action points for staff to follow; the Statement of Purpose does not have specific reference to the theoretical and therapeutic approaches used within the home; the Regulation 34 system in place does not include consultation with young people and placing authorities about the quality of care; staff do not currently have specific training in behaviour management techniques; and following significant events internal investigations are considerably delayed.

The Registered Manager has a development plan in place and this focuses on improving the quality of care within the home.

## 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
4 (2001)	ensure the Statement of Purpose contains a description of the children's home's underlying ethos and philosophy, and where this is based on any theoretical or therapeutic model, a description of that model (Regulation 4 (1))	01/09/2012
34 (2001)	ensure the system in place to monitor and improve the quality of care contains robust and comprehensive evaluation, and includes consultation with children accommodated in the home, their parents and placing authorities. (Regulation 34 (1) and (3))	01/09/2012

### Recommendations

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

- ensure children's safety and welfare is promoted in the home, through the use of robust individual assessments of identified risks (NMS 4.1)
- ensure staff are equipped with the skills required to meet the needs of the children and purpose of the setting, with specific reference to behaviour management training (NMS 18.1)
- ensure that a written record is kept which includes details of the action taken, and the outcome of any action or investigation, following a notifiable event. (NMS 24.2)

### Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people understand their backgrounds and unique circumstances through being fully engaged in individual therapeutic work sessions. Young people say that the direct work helps them to understand what is happening in their life. Comments from young people include 'I talk to staff, they are all lovely here'. Young people

build self-esteem through the therapeutic support strategies in place. This ensures young people build a positive self-view and fully understand their individual circumstances.

Young people's attachments to staff have been challenged over recent months due to staff sickness and changes to the overall staff team. The organisation addressed this by providing staff to back-fill who were known to the young people. This ensured a level of consistency for young people through a period of change and sickness.

Young people's health needs are met. Young people attend regular health appointments. Young people say staff care for them if they feel unwell or have an accident. Young people receive appropriate support from therapists and clinical psychologist who are linked to the home. Young people eat a healthy balanced diet. Some young people are overweight and require on-going support to address this. Young people take part in appropriate physical activities such as football and bike riding. This promotes their physical development and well-being. This sound practice ensures all young people's individual health needs are identified and met.

All young people within the home attend the organisation's school. Attendance at school is good. Young people make adequate progress educationally from their starting points. This promotes young people's educational progress and achievement.

Young people take part in an adequate range of activities. These include trips to a historic dockyard, motor museum and hawk conservation trust. This provides young people opportunities to experience new places and to be involved within the local area.

Young people benefit from appropriate contact with family members and those who are significant to them. Young people's contact arrangements are appropriately supervised and supported by staff. Some young people have benefited from contact which has taken place outside of the United Kingdom and has been fully facilitated by home staff. This supports young people to maintain attachments to those who are important to them.

Young people share daily tasks around the home, including cooking and cleaning tasks. Young people receive appropriate personal allowances to buy clothes, toiletries and other individual items. Young people say they are supported to learn independence skills. Comments from young people include, 'we all share chores around the home', and 'it helps us learn how a house is run, like Hoovering and tidying up'. This practice ensures young people are prepared appropriately for their transition into adult life.

## Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy positive and warm relationships with staff. Comments from young people include 'I think the staff are good. They listen, they are there if you

want to talk. They help me'.

Young people are fully involved in the running of their home. All young people are supported to share their views and feelings about their home. House meetings take place regularly. Comments from young people include 'I have a voice at house meetings. We get asked about stuff to do with the house like activities and food'. Following these meetings, young people have seen changes in menu choices, activities planned and the redecoration of the home. This practice demonstrates to young people that their views are valued and they are listened to.

Young people know how to make a complaint. Complaints raised by young people since the last inspection have been appropriately investigated and actions taken. This demonstrates to young people that their feedback is important and taken seriously.

Young people are adequately cared for in line with their placement plan. Young people are supported appropriately to put their views forward before and during their review meetings. This ensures young people are engaged in their own care planning process.

Medication systems within the home are safe and effective. Young people are suitably supported to take part in a reasonable range of purposeful activities both inside the home and within the local area.

Staff work well with the organisation's school. This ensures good attendance and sound communication around educational targets. This supports the educational achievement of young people within the home.

Staff knowledge of young people's individual needs and cultural identity is strong. Themed food nights help young people learn about different cultures. Diversity is celebrated through a positive approach from staff to value difference and promote a 'respect all' ethos.

The home is well-maintained and provides a bright and homely environment. The home has benefited from new carpets and a programme of redecoration. Young people's bedrooms have appropriate furniture, and desk space to study. Young people are involved in choosing their bedroom colours and personalise their space with posters and photos.

### **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 living in the home. Young people do not identify bullying as an issue. Staff are pro-active in addressing any instances of targeted or bullying behaviour. This promotes a cohesive and friendly environment for young people.

There have been a number of significant events relating to the protection of young

people. Appropriate notifications and referrals have been made relating to these incidents. However, internal investigations into significant events have been considerably delayed. This does not ensure that the organisation promptly investigates and acts upon the lessons learnt from any significant event, to further improve the safety of all young people within the home.

Since the last inspection, there have been no instances of young people missing from the home. Staff have a sound awareness of the steps they must take to ensure the safety of young people who are missing. Protocols with the local police are in place and are currently under review.

Young people say they know the rules of the home. The use of sanctions is low. There has been one incident where staff placed hands on a young person. Staff are not trained in restraint techniques. However, the organisation has appropriately reviewed this incident and staff training in behaviour management is booked. This will ensure that young people are cared for by suitably trained staff.

Young people have individual risk assessments for activities and behaviours. However, they are inconsistent in quality and not all assessments contain clear and comprehensive action points for staff to follow in order to minimise risks. This lack of robust risk assessment places young people at risk of unsafe practice.

Young people are pro-actively involved in the recruitment process of new staff to the home. Systems in place to select and vet staff are safe and effective. Visitors to the home have their identity checked and are suitably supervised while on site. This ensures the safety of young people.

Young people know what to do in case of a fire or emergency. Regular health and safety checks of the home are undertaken. Maintenance issues are promptly addressed. This ensures a safe environment for everyone living in and visiting the home.

## **Leadership and management**

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

The home is managed by a permanent Registered Manager. This provides the home with consistent and stable leadership. However, since the last inspection, the Registered Manager and senior staff within the home have had significant sick leave. The overall staff team has changed significantly, due to staff leaving and new staff joining. The organisation has taken appropriate action to ensure sufficient staffing levels at all times and adequate interim leadership. This ensured that the individual needs of young people were consistently met through this period of change.

The Statement of Purpose for the home adequately describes the aims and objectives of the service. However, it does not describe the specific theoretical approach and therapeutic techniques which are used within the home. This does not ensure that placing authorities understand how the preferred therapeutic approach

supports young people to achieve objectives set out in their care plan. On admission, young people receive a child-friendly guide to the home which appropriately describes what living in the home will be like.

Regulation 33 visits take place and fully involve young people. Regulation 34 reporting systems include monitoring of the matters listed within Schedule 6. However, the system does not contain robust evaluation of these matters, nor does it include consultation with young people and placing authorities. This does not ensure internal quality assurance systems are challenging and reflect on feedback, in order to improve the quality of care.

Staff receive supervision on a regular basis and feel well-supported by the Registered Manager. Staff training needs are identified and met. Recent training includes child protection, health and safety and first aid. The organisation recognises a shortfall in training around behaviour management, and has training booked to address this. This ensures young people are cared for by staff who are appropriately supported and suitably trained.

Young people's records are kept securely and are appropriately up-to-date. These records contain information which supports young people to have an understanding of their life within the home.

A previous requirement and recommendation relating to complaint records and outcomes has been fully addressed. Complaints received since the last inspection have been fully addressed and adequately recorded. Young people's case records now contain all the required information as set out in regulation. This ensures staff can now refer to all relevant statutory paperwork. Communication between the home and the organisation's school has improved. This promotes the educational achievement of young people. Restrictions relating to communication and contact are now regularly reviewed with the local authority and the young person's views are taken into account. This promotes the young person's voice around any contact restrictions, while also keeping them safe. Placement plans have been revised to contain more detailed information on the day-to-day care of young people. This ensures that young people's individual needs are identified and met.

The Statement of Purpose has been revised to include emergency admissions. However, a further requirement has been set relating to therapeutic approaches. A requirement to ensure that significant events relating to the protection of children are notified has been fully met. However, a recommendation relating to ensuring that a written record is made of investigations and actions taken following a significant event is repeated. Risk assessments now contain more individualised assessments. However, a previous recommendation is repeated as some risk assessments do not contain clear action points for staff to follow in order to keep young people safe.

The Registered Manager has a sound understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. There is a comprehensive development plan in place to address the areas identified as needing development. This ensures a clear focus on

driving forward improvement within the home.

## 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.