

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Rebecca Sharp
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home offers long term care for up to seven children and young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. A private company operates this home alongside its other home.

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**.

The overall effectiveness of the provision is rated as good. Young people receive well planned and individualised care by a child focussed and experienced staff team. Young people are involved in the care planning process and therefore have a sound understanding of their needs and how to work with the home to meet them. There are many strategies in place to keep young people safe and young people report that they feel safe living at the home.

There is a new manager in post who has a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the home; and the desire to secure future improvement. Unfortunately, the manager is not yet registered with Ofsted which is reflected in the judgement of leadership and management. Although this is a significant shortfall, the impact on young people is reduced due to the robust recruitment procedures of the service in ensuring the suitability of adults caring for young people.

Young people are cared for as individuals and their plans reflect their needs well. The home supports the young people to achieve positive outcomes and challenges barriers for young people, including advocating for them where necessary. It is clear that the welfare of the children is the driving force for staff development. There are positive relationships between staff and young people, and peer dynamics have been managed well through thorough risk assessments. Young people are happy and content in their placements and enjoy interacting with staff and each other. They are supported to stay safe, not only through thorough risk assessment but also through direct work completed by key workers.

The views of young people are regularly sought by staff through various forms of consultation. Requirements have been raised as a result of this inspection to ensure consultation is included in the monitoring of the home by management, especially in relation to the review of the quality of care.

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
33 (2001)	establish and maintain a system whereby the person carrying out the visit shall interview, with their consent and in private, the children accommodated, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home in order to form an opinion of the standard of care provided in the home (Regulation 33 (4) (a))	03/09/2012
34 (2001)	ensure monitoring provides consultation with children, their parents and placing authorities. (Regulation 34 (3))	03/09/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure staff are provided with regular supervision (NMS 19.4)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people have made good progress in all areas of their lives since living in the home. Educationally, the stability and structure the service provides has enabled young people to integrate back into a learning environment and has provided creative opportunities for young people to achieve positive academic outcomes. One young person was able to complete mandatory learning and study for GCSEs. This was the first year they had completed in mainstream school. As part of the education package, ASDAN and outdoor education sessions ensure young people are actively involved in the local community in a productive manner. Credits are accrued for ASDAN units in relation to household tasks also. Young people have gained accreditation for developing the garden with staff. This has also enabled young people gain positive skills in preparation for independence. The home supports young people in achieving a successful transition into adulthood.

Young people enjoy good health and maintain a healthy lifestyle through physical activities; this contributes positively to their physical and emotional well-being. Dedication from staff in implementing consistent behaviour management strategies inspires young people to take responsibility for their own behaviour and to develop alternative approaches in times of emotional crisis. In depth keyworking sessions take place regularly which further strengthens young people's ability to develop both their emotional resilience and a positive self-view.

Young people benefit from contact with people significant to them; this is well supported by staff. The benefits to them of this include being able to maintain and develop their sense of belonging and their heritage.

Quality of care

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

Young people have developed constructive relationships and strong attachments to staff. This has been enabled by a consistent staff team who work together in meeting the needs of the young people. Young people who have lived in the home for a long time have seen an improvement in their education, social and practical development. For example, young people are encouraged to join groups in order to promote their social skills, confidence and self-esteem. Clubs include Guides, horse riding and football. This is also beneficial to their physical and emotional health and well-being.

Regular young people's meetings ensure that their views, wishes and feelings are listened to the day-to-day running of the home. Consultation papers are completed prior to reviews in order for individuals to have their voices heard. In particular instances it has been necessary to involve an independent advocate for young people in order to ensure their opinions are considered prior to making important placement decisions. Young people are not routinely consulted with as part of the monitoring of the home. The manager has identified this as an area for development and endeavours to establish a system whereby this can be evidenced alongside monthly monitoring checks. The impact on young people is minimal due to the other forums of support they have to express their views.

Placement plans are thorough and individualised in their content. There are clear objectives set out and plans in place to action these. Placing authorities are positive about the care young people receive and confident they are meeting the needs of young people. One social worker stated 'they (the home) are fantastic'. Internal plans are discussed at reviews and included as part of the home's report on the progress of each young person in order to ensure all parties are working towards to same goals.

The home provides a very healthy environment for young people. There is an in-house psychologist who is available for emotional support for young people and to provide staff consultations for them to discuss dealing with the complex needs of the

residents. The home works closely with a number of services to ensure each young person receives the care they require. For example, working with the child and adolescent mental health service to secure assessments and identify potential therapeutic work to be completed with individuals. Staff ensure all statutory health appointments are up to date and detailed information is recorded by staff to evidence progress made.

Education is promoted well by the home. The young people benefit from on-site education as there is a seamless support system. Care staff support the young people in the classroom, on ASDAN activities and on outdoor education trips. Plans are made in advance to ensure staff and young people are clear about their weekly activities. Strategies are put into place to manage peer relationships in line with risk assessments. Positive behaviour is promoted well and behaviour management plans are tailored to individual's needs. The manager has discussed with the staff team ways in which they can develop behaviour management strategies in particular sanctions. This ensures consistency in the implementation of sanctions allowing for individuals to be treated fairly.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are safe and feel safe living at the home. There are risk assessments in place to ensure dynamic management of risk is applied at all times. Individual risks are considered in the planning of group activities and, where necessary, additional plans are made to ensure all young people have to opportunity to share experiences. Some young people are supported to take age appropriate risks and, in turn, are developing a sense of identity. For those young people who require additional support, the home ensures that there are equal opportunities to experience new things, with added safeguards in place. Positive behaviour is promoted through good role modelling from staff and consistency in the implementation of boundaries and individual strategies.

There have been few incidents of young people being reported as missing from care and appropriate protocols are followed for individuals in line with the police and local authority joint protocol. For some young people, there has been a dramatic decline in episodes of missing which is extremely encouraging for their sense of safety and well-being.

Restraint is only used as a last resort. There have only been two incidents requiring physical intervention since the last inspection, both of which were used within the confines of legislation. Recording of these incidents is thorough and meet regulation.

Recruitment procedures are robust and every precaution is taken to reduce the likelihood of unsuitable adults working with young people. References are checked verbally, and all gaps in employment are investigated as required. As a result, young people are safeguarded by these procedures as only suitable individuals are employed.

The manager is supporting the staff team's awareness and understanding of each individual's particular vulnerabilities and taking steps to ensure strategies to promote positive behaviour are tailored to each individual's needs. There is evidence of this in positive handling plans for young people and consultation work completed with individuals around their wishes and feelings. As a result, young people are treated fairly, as individuals, and equality and diversity is respected.

Leadership and management

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

There is a new permanent manager in post which meets the requirement from the last inspection. However, errors in the completion of the manager's application has delayed the registration process meaning the deadlines set by Ofsted have not been met and has led to the judgement of adequate in this area. However, the new manager has brought stability to the staff team and to the young people. Consistent support from an experienced and supportive assistant manager has meant the introduction of a new manager has been a smooth transition for staff and young people.

The manager has a clear vision for the service and is passionate about improving the quality of care provided. A development plan has been implemented which meets the recommendation from the last inspection. The structure and content of supervision has been improved since the last inspection, however, its impact on staff practice has been limited due to its frequency. Therefore a recommendation has been made at this inspection. Staff appraisals are planned within timescales and the manager is appropriately supported by a senior member of the company. The manager and staff have a sound understanding of the needs of the individuals in their care. Staff are child centred and outcome focussed. Young people's experiences at the home, since their admission, have had a significant impact on many aspects of their lives. This is demonstrated in their academic achievement and the reduction in risk taking and offending behaviours.

The home has recruited a number of new staff including regular bank staff to eliminate the use of agency staff. Recruitment processes are robust and ensure young people are cared for by suitable staff. Training is extensive and all staff are up to date with mandatory learning. There are plans to look at specialist of areas of training, such as attachment and autism, to further strengthen the knowledge base of the staff team in order to develop the quality of care further.

The home is going through a period of transformation and redecoration. Work is being carried out to a high standard and young people have been consulted about the décor. One young person stated, 'It looks really nice.' Care has been taken to minimise disruption during this process which has been thoroughly risk assessed.

The monitoring of the home, although generally regular in its completion, is not robust nor does it contribute to the effective review of the quality of care for young

people. Consultation with parents, carers and placing authorities is not routinely completed and young people's feedback is not sought in order to form an accurate evaluation of the service. Two requirements have been made as a result in order to ensure improvement in this area.

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.