

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Anna Williams
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The service is a four-bedded children's home registered for boys 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 an adequate quality of care to young people. Each young person has individualised plans which outline their unique needs and how they will be met. Staff are successful at working with young people and young people achieve good outcomes. Young people are positive about the care they receive. They feel safe living in the home. A stable staff team has built warm and constructive relationships with young people.

Shortfalls identified within this inspection relate to young people not receiving prompt feedback on concerns raised. This does not support young people speaking out. The Statement of Purpose does not refer to the adult outreach support service which is facilitated from the children's home. Records, such as the visitor's log and sanctions records, are not kept in line with regulation, and adult outreach support records are mixed with young people's documents. This compromises the Registered Manager's oversight of such records. There is not a risk assessment to inform staff of actions to take to ensure the safety of young people when visitors enter the home.

The Registered Manager has a development plan in place which focuses on improving the quality of care. Seven previous requirements have been fully met. One requirement has only been partially met, so is repeated. This relates to Regulation 34

reports. Four previous recommendations have been fully met. The quality of care has been maintained since the last inspection.

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
5 (2001)	revise the Statement of Purpose to include how the new outreach service will operate so as not to impact on children living in the home (Regulation 5 (a))	15/10/2012
17B (2001)	ensure that a written record of sanctions includes the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure (Regulation 17B (3) (f))	15/10/2012
29 (2001)	maintain an accurate record of all visitors to the home and to children accommodated in the home, including the names of visitors and the reasons for the visit (Regulation 29 (1))	17/09/2012
34 (2001)	ensure the system to review the quality of care includes robust evaluation of visitors to the home and to children in the home (Regulation 34 (1) (a))	15/10/2012
34 (2001)	ensure the system to review the quality of care includes consultation with children accommodated in the home, their parents and social workers. (Regulation 34 (3))	15/10/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure children receive prompt feedback on any concerns or complaints raised and are kept informed of progress (NMS 1.6)
- ensure children's safety and welfare is promoted in the home, with particular reference to risk assessing visitors to the children's home (NMS 4.1)
- ensure records kept within the children's home are clear, with particular reference to ensuring outreach support records are documented separately from children's home records (NMS 22)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people receive good support which helps them understand their background and current situations. Individual work sessions offer young people regular time with staff to discuss current plans and to talk about anything which is worrying them. Some young people have been sensitively and effectively supported through bereavement. Some young people have made good progress in communicating feelings and thoughts about their past history and personal identity. Young people receive an effective transition into the home. Young people build self-esteem through the therapeutic support strategies in place. This ensures they build a positive self-view and fully understand what is happening within their life.

Young people's health needs are fully met. Young people eat a balanced and varied diet. They have good knowledge about healthy lifestyles and choose to follow it. Young people make good progress with their emotional health needs through regular therapy sessions. They maintain an active lifestyle and this benefits their physical health. Some young people have been referred to specialist health professionals when individual health needs were identified by organisational staff. This good practice ensures young people's individual health needs are pro-actively identified and fully addressed.

Young people living within the home all have full-time educational placements. Attendance at school or college is good. Young people make good progress from their starting points educationally. This supports young people to reach their educational goals.

Young people are actively involved with activities within the home and as part of the wider community. Young people take part in local football clubs, bike rides, trips to the beach, theme parks and cinema visits. Young people have recently returned from a camping trip to the Isle Of Wight. This offers young people opportunities to make new friends, try new skills and be an active part of the local area.

Young people maintain appropriate contact with family members and with those who are significant to them. Contact arrangements are suitably facilitated by the home's staff. Young people understand fully the contact arrangements in place. This supports young people to maintain attachments to those important to them.

Young people learn basic life skills which are appropriate to their age and understanding. They share daily everyday jobs around the house such as cleaning, laundry and cooking. Young people say these tasks help them learn useful skills. Young people make good progress in achieving transition and independent living goals. They receive appropriate individual allowances which they use to buy personal items. This ensures young people learn practical independence skills which helps them in their future.

Quality of care

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

Young people within the home enjoy positive relationships with each other and staff. They share their views on how the house is run through home meetings. Through this forum, young people contribute to the menu and activity plans, and the house redecoration plan. However, within these meetings, young people raised on several occasions, over some months, a concern which was not addressed robustly. Young people did not get prompt feedback on this matter. This does not demonstrate learning from issues that young people bring to staff attention.

Medication systems in place are safe and effective. Staff work closely with organisational psychologists and therapists to ensure that young people's needs are identified and fully met. Psychologists and other professionals attend weekly care planning meetings. This approach ensures that young people's individual needs are fully addressed and all parties are kept up-to-date with any significant information. Young people are adequately cared for in line with their statutory placement plan.

Staff support young people to take part in a range of purposeful activities. Staff work effectively with all educational establishments to promote attendance and achievement. Staff knowledge of young people's ethnicity and identity needs is strong, and individual needs are fully addressed. Young people are supported to continue practising their chosen religion. This sound practice ensures young people's cultural background and personal identity is recognised and celebrated.

The home is well-maintained and provides a homely and comfortable environment. The home is located near to local shops, public transport and leisure facilities. This supports young people's community access. Young people's bedrooms have appropriate furniture, and desk space to study. Young people help decorate their bedrooms 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 feel safe in the home. They do not identify bullying as an issue within the house. Young people receive appropriate support if they have an accident or injury. Staff demonstrate sound knowledge of safeguarding policy and procedures. Investigations into allegations or suspicions of harm are investigated promptly and include referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer as appropriate. This ensures the safety of young people.

Recruitment procedures are safe and effective. Young people are actively involved in the interview process of new staff. This demonstrates to young people that their views and opinions are valued. The home has a visitor log. However, this log book is not completed accurately, including the reason for a person's visit to the home or young people within the home. This means that the Registered Manager does not have full and accurate records of visitors to the home to evaluate and monitor.

Young people have individual and up to date risk assessments. These inform staff of appropriate actions to take to keep young people safe. Household risk assessments

cover a range of topics. However, there is not a risk assessment in place for staff to follow regarding visitors to the home. Consequently, staff do not have clear action points to follow with regard to visitors accessing the home and the appropriate supervision required. Although, no incidents of concern regarding the supervision of young people have occurred.

Since the last inspection, there have been no young people reported as missing from the home. Missing procedures are in place, and are currently under review with the local police.

The home follows a non-restraint policy. The use of sanctions is low. Records of sanctions demonstrate they are fair and appropriate. However, the sanction log does not contain evaluation of the effectiveness of sanctions in line with regulation. This does not support the Registered Manager in their monitoring of sanctions to evaluate if they are successful.

The home environment is physically safe. Regular drills ensure young people know what to do in case of a fire. Health and safety checks take place at required intervals. This ensures the safety of all within the building.

Leadership and management

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

The home has a permanent Registered Manager in post. This provides the home with consistent and stable leadership. The Statement of Purpose has been updated and now includes suitable procedures for emergency admissions. This means that the impact of short-notice admissions on the current group of young people is now appropriately considered. Young people receive a child-friendly guide to the home on admission. This helps young people understand the aims and objectives of the home they are moving into.

However, since the last inspection the home has started to provide outreach support to individuals who previously lived within the home and who have recently transitioned to adult care. While positive in maintaining attachments with care leavers, the staff do not have specific guidance and procedures to follow regarding this outreach work. The Statement of Purpose does not refer to the outreach support as a service facilitated from the children's home. Adult records are mixed with children's documents. This compromises the Registered Manager's ability to look for patterns and trends, and makes some records unclear.

Staff are sufficient in number to meet the needs of the young people living within the home. Revised rota recording systems now clearly demonstrate the number and grade of staff on shift. This supports the Registered Manager in monitoring staffing levels within the home to ensure they meet the Statement of Purpose. Staff who lead shifts are now only staff who have successfully passed their probationary period. This benefits young people as only competent and fully inducted staff are left in charge of

the home. Staff receive regular supervision. Staff training needs are identified and fully met. This means young people are cared for by skilled and well-supported staff.

There have been no formal complaints recorded within the home records. However, concerns raised by young people through home meetings were not identified through internal monitoring systems. Regulation 33 visits take place within required timescales and involve young people. The format for internal quality assurance reports has been revised since the last inspection. These reports are more comprehensive and challenging than previous arrangements. However, they are still not fully effective. For example, the six monthly Regulation 34 report, while improved, still does not effectively monitor visitors to the home, nor does it contain consultation with young people, placing authorities or parents. This does not demonstrate a fully effective system to drive forward improvement within the home.

Young people's files now contain all documentation as required by regulation. This ensures that staff can now refer to all the relevant information relating to individual young people. Positively, young people add personal statements to their individual files. This supports young people's involvement in their own records and life history. Outstanding electrical works have now been completed and the fire risk assessment has been appropriately updated. This ensures the safety of all accessing the house.

Since the last inspection, staff have undertaken medication training and medication administration systems are now regularly and effectively audited. This ensures that young people's medical needs are now fully met. A previous requirement to ensure that notifications of significant events are appropriately completed has been fully met. This ensures that all relevant parties are informed of events relating to the protection of young people.

Overall, the Registered Manager has taken appropriate action to address shortfalls identified at the last inspection. The on-going development plan in place focuses on improving the quality of care 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.