

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC065684
Inspection date	10/10/2012
Inspector	Janet Hunnam
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	07/02/2012
--------------------------------	------------

© 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 privately run and provides care and accommodation for no more than five children with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Education is provided in an adjacent building.

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**.

Young people are happy living at the home. Professionals and young people's families are complimentary about the service and acknowledge good progress young people are making. Individual support enabling young people to improve their behaviour and the promotion of education are particular strengths. Young people report positively of their experience of living at the home.

The home has many strengths such as providing a wide range of positive activities enjoyed by young people, firm boundaries and close support from staff to protect young people and a focus on listening to young people's views and responding to them. Strong meaningful relationships between young people and staff assist young people to develop trust and make progress to enhance their future life chances.

Areas of weakness include the recording of physical intervention, shortfalls in the recruitment process for staff, staff not completing the Children's Workforce Development council's induction programme within six months and the statement of purpose not covering all the required matters. Also regular systematic internal monitoring of the care provided is not taking place, no development plan is in place, individual supervision for staff is not occurring regularly and notifications of serious events are not being sent to Ofsted in accordance with regulations.

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
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, restraint or discipline, a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose which includes all matters in Regulation 17B(3) and (4) (Regulation 17B (3) & (4))	21/11/2012
26 (2001)	ensure that no person starts work at the home until such time as full and satisfactory information is available in relation to him in respect of each of the matters specified in Schedule 2 (Regulation 26(5)(b))	07/11/2012
4 (2001)	compile a written statement (the statement of purpose) which shall consist of a statement as to the matters listed in Schedule 1 (Regulation 4(1))	21/11/2012
30 (2001)	ensure that if any of the events listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 5 takes place, the registered person shall without delay notify the persons indicated in respect of the event in column 2 of the table. (Regulation 30(1))	07/11/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure that all staff undertake the Children's Workforce Development Council's induction standards, commencing within seven working days of starting their employment and being completed within six months (NMS 18.3)
- ensure the manager regularly monitors, in line with regulations, all records kept by the home to ensure compliance with the home's policies, to identify any concerns about specific incidents and to identify patterns and trends. Immediate action is taken to address any issues raised by this monitoring (NMS 21.2)
- ensure that staff are provided with regular supervision by appropriately qualified and experienced staff (NMS 19.4)
- ensure that there is a written development plan, reviewed annually, for the future of the home. (NMS 15.2)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people receive good levels of care, support and guidance resulting in them making good progress. Child-focused, individualised care supports young people to improve their behaviour and personal development. Young people benefit from being able to make trusting relationships with staff. Through these attachments, young people develop self-confidence and they feel valued and respected. Social workers confirm that young people are doing well at the home. One social worker commented that a young person has progressed in 'leaps and bounds'. Another commented that a young person is much more confident since living at the home and now 'holds their head up'. An independent reviewing officer stated that a young person's 'behaviour has stabilised greatly.'

Young people benefit from close attention to their health needs. They receive excellent support in all aspects of their health care. Staff ensure young people attend regular appointments to review their medication so that they only receive the levels of medication necessary. They have access to information and advice on wider health issues such as sexual health and substance misuse enabling them to make choices and have an awareness of risks attached to some behaviour. Staff promote smoking cessation and young people have ceased smoking. Young people gain from the specialist input from the child and adolescent mental service private therapists to advance their emotional and psychological well-being.

Educationally, young people are making significant improvements. Staff support and encourage young people to engage in their education. Their attendance at school, which is on-site, is excellent and consequently they are making very good progress from their starting point and making up for time lost as a result of non-attendance in previous placements. A social worker commented that a young person had not been to school for two years but 'now attends every day'. Young people benefit from living in an environment where school attendance and the value of education are embedded in the culture of the home.

Young people participate in a range of activities within the home and the local community. They are encouraged to pursue their individual interests and attend youth club, swimming club, street dance, fishing and air cadets in the community. These activities and group activity holidays help young people develop their social skills and confidence. Young people enjoy riding their bikes, playing rugby and football and generally having fun sharing positive, age-appropriate activities.

Staff recognise the importance for young people to keep in touch with their families and significant people. They are proactive in promoting and sustaining contact by liaising closely with young people's families and social workers. A social worker reported that 'the home manages structured, supervised contact very well.' Consequently, young people benefit from improved family relationships.

Young people are acquiring the practical skills they need for the successful transition to adult life. Staff work informally and sensitively with young people to develop their independence and daily living skills.

Quality of care

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

Relationships between staff and young people are good-humoured and caring within a nurturing and supportive environment. Staff are clear in setting boundaries within a structure and routine. A social worker commented 'all staff at the home are strong and keep to the boundaries' and the staff team receive consistent guidance from management.

Daily residents' meetings provide a forum for young people to express their views and opinions on issues that have arisen during the day, plans for the evening's activities and views on the menu. During these meetings, staff are sensitive and empathetic to young people's individual needs while addressing specific issues relating to behaviour calmly and firmly. Staff focus on positive behaviour and give praise and recognition to young people at every opportunity. Young people respond in these meetings appropriately and are able to discuss and respond to the views of other young people and staff sensibly and maturely. Issues affecting the running of the home are also discussed openly during these meetings. Staff take young people's viewpoints seriously and implement change. For example, young people were concerned about the morning routine for showering and bathing and using the hot water equitably. Staff changed the routine so that all young people had sufficient hot water. Key work sessions provide young people with individual opportunities to express their wishes and feelings. A young person commented that 'staff do listen to me' and another stated that he 'can talk to any member of staff' if he is unhappy about something. Young people know how to make a complaint and have a form in their bedroom if they wish to make a formal complaint. A young person reported 'I know how to make a complaint if I need to' but staff 'sort stuff out' without filling in a form. Consequently, young people develop confidence and trust in the adults who care for them knowing their views are important and valued.

Care plans identify each young person's specific needs and the support they need to make progress. Each young person has a key working team ensuring there are staff available for them to go to if necessary. Detailed recording of key work sessions demonstrate close attention to specific concerns and issues as they arise and link to young people's care plans. Staff recognise each young person's vulnerability and plan sensitively to assist them. The routines of the home provide structure although staff are responsive and flexible to each young person's needs.

Young people live in an environment that actively supports their physical and psychological well-being. Staff encourage young people to engage in healthy lifestyles including regular physical exercise. Staff promote young people's emotional and psychological well-being to a high standard. A parent commented that a young person is 'a lot happier in himself and a lot calmer' and another reported the young person 'is controlling his anger much better.' The home actively pursues appointments with health care specialists if needed and will advocate strongly on their behalf to improve access to services, such as child and adolescent mental health services. Managers monitor the system for the administration of medication regularly and medication is stored safely and administered by trained members of

staff.

Education is highly valued and promoted at the home. There is an established culture that all young people attend school. This has led to excellent attendance rates and good progress for young people in relation to their starting point and often turbulent and unsettled educational history. Staff liaise closely with the on-site school staff and support young people in school during the day. This enables staff to support young people consistently within the school and in the home. Consequently, young people have the appropriate support to fulfil their potential.

The home is comfortable and well maintained. Young people personalise their bedrooms to reflect their individuality giving them a sense of identity and belonging. The spacious grounds provide ample outdoor areas for young people to have fun playing ball games and riding their bikes.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people report feeling safe and well looked after at the home. A social worker commented that a young person 'is definitely safe at the home.' A parent reported that the young person 'is safe at the home and is monitored closely.' Staff closely observe young people for any incidence of bullying, deal with any incident immediately, address with the group of young people in the daily residents meeting and make a detailed record of the incident. Staff and young people attend a course on raising their awareness of bullying annually.

Structure and boundaries enable young people to feel safe at the home with strong relationships between young people and staff underpinning their safety. Staff understand the specific vulnerabilities of young people and appropriate measures are in place to protect them. Individual, detailed assessments identify risk-taking behaviour and strategies to minimise potential harm. High staff ratios and close observation of young people help to keep them safe. Incidents of young people leaving the home without permission are infrequent and staff address any incidents swiftly and effectively. From young people's starting point on admission, significant reductions in young people leaving the home without permission are evident. A parent commented that a young person 'was constantly running but now he is not.' A social worker commented that a young person's 'absconding has reduced'. Policies and procedures are in line with local police protocols. This ensures that the home and police can work closely together in the event that a vulnerable young people is missing or absent without permission to take action to ensure a young person's safe return.

The staff team has a positive ethos of protecting young people and promoting positive behaviour. A reward system is in place for young people with individual targets agreed by each young person and their key worker. The reward system motivates and provides incentives for young people to meet their targets. Each young person has a 24-hour behaviour management plan, which includes

appropriate and agreed sanctions, agreed physical intervention and their individual reward scheme. Staff use restraint as a last resort to keep young people and staff safe. Over time, incidents requiring physical intervention have reduced. A social worker stated that a young person 'was very aggressive when they first came to the home and was restrained frequently in the beginning but now restraint is much less frequent.' A young person reported that 'staff help in difficult situations but these situations don't happen much now'. The recording of incidents involving physical intervention is detailed and monitored by management but is not documented according to regulations. Sanctions, though well recorded, are also not logged in accordance with regulations.

Young people are involved in the recruitment of new staff and give their opinions of potential employees when they do a trial shift prior to employment. A clear recruitment process is in place but the process does not meet the requirements of the regulations because new staff commence work under supervision before all the necessary checks are in place.

Health and safety measures protect young people and staff from the risk of harm. Matters of health and safety are routinely checked and a full-time maintenance employee promptly attends to repairs and maintenance. Appropriate fire safety checks and measures are in place. As a result, young people benefit from a safe environment, which has a positive impact on their welfare.

Leadership and management

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

Young people benefit from a Registered Manager, managers and a staff team who are committed and focused on supporting young people to make progress and keep them safe. Fortnightly staff meetings consist of various meetings throughout the day including group supervision and a child focused meeting ensuring that the team is fully meeting the individual needs of young people. An independent reviewing officer stated that one of the strengths of the home is 'the stability of the staff team; key workers stay in post and thus provide stability for young people.'

Managers and staff are keen to continually improve the service and developments include the appointment of a deputy manager, and a focus on improved record keeping. Managers have plans in place for future developments including an activity room for young people in the grounds. However, there is no written development plan in place. The requirements and recommendations from the last inspection have been met though new staff have not completed the Children's Workforce Development Council's induction programme within six months of commencing employment.

The statement of purpose states the aims and objectives of the home but it does not include all the matters required by the regulations.

The external monitoring of the home through Regulation 33 reports is detailed and

comprehensive. Senior managers use these reports as a tool for continuous improvement to identify shortfalls and produce action plans for implementation. Regulation 34 monitoring is not systematic though a previous recommendation to submit a monitoring report to Ofsted has been addressed. This lack of systematic monthly internal monitoring and analysis of patterns and trends impacts on improving the quality of care provided.

The home employs sufficient staff to ensure young people receive the support they need in order to make progress and to feel safe. Staff receive training ensuring they have the skills and knowledge to meet young people's needs and provide a good standard of care. The caring and committed staff team work holistically with young people to understand the reasons for young people's behaviour. Individual staff supervision is not occurring on a consistent basis though staff receive regular group supervision.

Social workers and family members report that communication is good and they are kept informed and updated regarding young people's progress. Records are stored electronically and provide a good history of young people's experience of living at the home.

The manager has not informed Ofsted about all the serious events involving young people, including an allegation made by a young person in relation to a member of staff and an accident involving a young person when an ambulance was called.

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.