

## Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	SC428599
<b>Inspection date</b>	07/11/2012
<b>Inspector</b>	Angela Whiteley
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Full
<b>Provision subtype</b>	Children's home

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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	28/03/2012
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## Service information

### Brief description of the service

The home is run by a privately owned company and is registered for up to four children or young people who have a learning disability.

### 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 is a new service, which opened in May 2012. They provide both permanent and short break placements. The management and organisation have two other children's homes and they place a strong emphasis on the promotion of positive childcare practices. They are working creatively to establish and develop the new service provision. However, the appointed Registered Manager no longer has day-to-day control of the home; this change has not been notified to Ofsted. The provider has appointed a new manager who is still to submit an application to Ofsted.

The home provides suitable and well-planned care in a safe environment. There are strong safeguarding practices in place to protect children and young people from significant harm. Children and young people receive individualised care packages, which take account of their complex needs. They make steady progress in aspects of their welfare and development and seem happy with the quality of care and support they receive from staff. They benefit from sound relationships with staff where trust is developing as placements become more settled.

There is a strong commitment to supporting children and young people with their education. Staff work in a coordinated way with family, social workers and specialist health professionals to ensure children and young people's complex needs are met. The staff are committed to supporting and enabling children and young people to develop new skills and socially acceptable behaviours. Some young people have no verbal communication and limited understanding; staff seek their views and wishes about aspects of their care, which is taken into account in the running of the home. Children and young people access specialist health services, community activities and have regular contact with people who are significant to them this improves their self-

esteem.

The home is adequately managed and has good monitoring and oversight of the standard of care. However, there are some inconsistencies in practice in relation to the regulation 33 visitor who is directly concerned with the conduct of the home, that the quality assurance reports are sent to Ofsted at the required intervals and that there is Registered Manager in place. Further areas to improve practice and outcomes for children and young people relate to the review of the development plan, a review of the children's guide format, regular supervision with written records, staff training and the dirty carpet in the office, which means the environment is not as homely and pleasant as other areas within the home. The breaches in regulation mainly relate to administrative procedures and systems, which the manager is currently addressing. These have minimal impact on the outcomes for children and young people and do not adversely affect 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)	ensure the person visiting the home under this regulation is not directly concerned with the conduct of the home (Regulation 33 (c))	05/12/2012
34 (2001)	ensure a report in respect of any review conducted for the purpose of paragraph (1) of this regulation, is provided to Ofsted (Regulation 34 (2) and Volume 5, statutory guidance paragraph 3.14)	19/12/2012
38 (2001)	ensure the registered person notifies Ofsted in writing when a person other than the registered person carries on or manages the children's home. (Regulation 38 (a))	21/11/2012

### Recommendations

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

- ensure the home provides a comfortable and homely environment; in particular that the office carpet is clean (NMS 10.3)
- ensure where a child requires it the children's guide is available in a suitable format (NMS 13.6 and Volume 5, statutory guidance paragraph 2.18)
- ensure there is a written development plan in place, reviewed annually (NMS

15.2)

- ensure all staff have access to appropriate training that keeps them up-to-date with professional, legal and practice developments, with particular regard to self-harming behaviour, child protection and Autism. (NMS 18.1)
- ensure staff are provided with regular supervision, in particular new staff and that written records are kept. (NMS 19.4 and NMS 19.5)

## **Outcomes for children and young people**

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

Children and young people enjoy good health and learn to understand the importance of healthy eating and exercise. They attend all their health appointments and meetings with specialist health professionals. The home has forged strong links with a child and adolescent mental health service, which enables complex individual health needs to be fully assessed and met. Staff make sure children and young people get appropriate support and help them develop their personal care skills, to promote healthy lifestyles. They enjoy various healthy nutritious meals, reflecting a range of different cultural tastes. Children and young people help to choose the menu identifying their likes and dislikes, which enhances their health and physical well-being.

Children and young people are making steady progress. They have been at the home only a short while and require time to settle. Staff help children and young people to understand and address the impact their life experiences have on the behaviours they exhibit and help them bring about positive change. Some continue to display the same behaviours they were presenting prior to their admission but staff take appropriate action to any incidents and are committed to helping children and young people achieve stability especially during short break visits.

Children and young people are well supported with their education. They have excellent attendance and make noticeable progress, receiving awards for improved behaviour. A school report comments on the good academic progress of one young person.

Children and young people engage in a range of social and sporting activities with the support of staff, for example swimming, laser quest, cinema, and holidays and playing at the park. This provides opportunities for them to have some positive engagement within the wider community and promotes self-esteem.

Children and young people have a strong sense of identity, reinforced by regular contact with their families to help maintain positive relationships. Staff provide support for contact arrangements to promote and safeguard children and young people's welfare

## **Quality of care**

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

Children and young people enjoy sound relationships with staff and continue to get to know each other. A young person wrote, 'they liked their keyworker as she listens'. The placing social worker comments that she, 'is very impressed with the standard of service offered' and, 'the placement is very positive'. The staff team although newly formed are experienced and knowledgeable, they place emphasis on building positive relationships with children and young people and understanding their behaviours. They are prepared to work hard to help children and young people develop their potential and are persistent when faced with setbacks continuing to support and guide children and young people helping them make positive choices in their lives.

The provider and staff seek children and young people's views about all aspects of their care. Children and young people are supported and encouraged to express their views, which are taken into account in the running of the home. They are told when things might not be possible to do or might take longer to implement.

The service has a complaints procedure, which deals with all complaints promptly. Children and young people are aware of the procedures through a child friendly children's guide, which staff go through with them prior to admission. However, support is required if there are any worries or concerns and the guide is not available in other formats, which will assist some children and young people's understanding where they are non-verbal communicators.

Children and young people have well written placement and care plans, which clearly identify their individual and personal needs and show how these will be met. Staff implement the plans and keep records about children and young people's time at the home. These plans are reviewed regularly, which provides stability and permanence.

The quality of service that children and young people experience is enhanced by effective inter-agency working with education and health providers, which means children and young people can successfully access the resources they require to address their needs.

Children and young people are supported to learn and practise self-care and independence skills, for example, learning basic kitchen skills. The opportunity to develop skills that are more complex is limited due to the requirement for high levels of supervision and the young age and understanding of the children and young people in placement.

Children and young people live in a comfortable home that is appropriately located, designed and maintained to a good standard. However, the staff office carpet is dirty, which is not consistent with the cleanliness of the rest of the home. The home has its own transport, which allows access to local facilities and allows them to visit relatives who are also warmly welcomed into the home. Children and young people appear to be relaxed and comfortable within their surroundings and as a result, are settling in well.

## Safeguarding children and young people

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

Effective systems are in place to support and safeguard children and young people. The staff team is confident in implementing the policies and procedures if they have concerns or allegations are made about children and young people's welfare. However, not all staff have received up-to-date child protection training. Children and young people appear safe in the home and can talk to any member of staff if they have a concern. There are no child protection referrals or allegations of harm from this service.

Individual and comprehensive risk assessments are in place, which are reviewed regularly, this helps to protect children and young people. Records show they do not go missing from home and have no incidents of bullying as children and young people are appropriately supervised. The staffing levels at the home ensure children and young people are safe when in a crisis with two-to-one support to promote their welfare and safety. The deployment of staff on each shift ensures this good practice. Children and young people are protected by the home's robust and thorough recruitment procedures that assess the suitability of new staff to work with young people.

Positive behaviour is encouraged through detailed individual behaviour management plans, which focus on rewards to help young people self-regulate their behaviours. There is an indication that strategies are effective as incidents of physical restraint begin to reduce and sanctions imposed are fair and effective. Staff are confident in their use of de-escalation techniques and are creative in their use of a relaxation room, which is used to good effect to help children and young people manage their own behaviours.

Children and young people enjoy a safe and secure environment. There are good health and safety systems in place. Children and young people are involved in fire evacuation practices so they know how to leave the home safely in the event of an emergency.

## Leadership and management

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

The home does not have a Registered Manager in place. The provider has taken action by appointing a manager but Ofsted has yet to receive an application. The manager is enthusiastic and motivated, has appropriate experience and qualifications in childcare. The home is being adequately managed to ensure children and young people are safe and secure. The manager is addressing the need to implement systems to effectively monitor and evaluate the standard of care young people receive as this information is not consistently forwarded to Ofsted. Additionally the regulation 33 visitor is involved in the day-to-day conduct of the home. Although

representing a breach in regulations, these actions have not had a negative impact on children and young people as issues are appropriately identified and addressed. A review of these systems intends to make the processes more effective and will assist with the smooth running of the home and identify areas for improvement. Similarly, a review of the development plan intends to drive forward improvements for the benefit of children and young people. Most requirements from the last interim inspection have been acted upon; those that have not have been addressed in this inspection.

The management of the service demonstrates a commitment to delivering good childcare practice tailored to the individual and personal needs of the children and young people placed. The placing social worker comments that the staff offer, 'great levels of communication' and speaks positively of the provision, which the independent reviewing officer confirms. The training programme is unclear, although some training has been undertaken. However, not all staff receive appropriate training to meet the needs of the children and young people in placement, in particular in respect of self-harming behaviour and Autism.

The home is well resourced with a high staff ratio with a good balance of gender, age and ethnicity. Two-to-one staffing ensures children and young people are safe, fully supported and supervised. This meets the aims and objectives of the home's Statement of Purpose. The staff team are very experienced and qualified. Not all staff receive regular supervision and support, to ensure they have the opportunity to develop their practice. Supervision is not consistently recorded, particularly for new staff.

Children and young people's records are well structured and are stored securely. As a result, they can be confident that their information is confidential. There have been no notifications, but the management are well aware of the process and requirements to report significant events.



## 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.