

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Valerie Shephard
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This home is privately owned and provides care and accommodation for up to five young males. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. There is a small school on site which acquired DfE registration in July 2012.

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 home re-opened in 2012 following a complete programme of refurbishment and began to admit young people in June 2012.

Young people make good progress, in all areas of their development, in relation to their starting points in the home. The home provides effective, high quality support with well-planned care, tailored to the needs of each young person. Young people receive support to address their previous offending behaviour. They learn strategies to enable them to form and maintain safe relationships so that they may return to the community with appropriate social skills.

Young people are happy about the care they receive and engage fully in the therapeutic process. Trusting relationships between young people and staff develop over time. This enhances the therapeutic process. Young people are safe and say they feel safe.

Management within the home is strong and effective and the staff team are fully supported to provide good quality care to young people. Effective monitoring systems ensure that weak practice is challenged and targets for improvement are set.

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 that the Statement of Purpose is amended to include the procedure for dealing with any incident where a young person goes missing from the children's home. (Regulation 4 (1) Schedule 1)	25/01/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure that supervision records detail the duration of each supervision held for each member of staff (NMS 19.5)
- ensure staff follow the home's policy for managing confidential information with particular reference to secure filing of records. (NMS 22.1)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

The outcomes for young people are satisfactory considering their starting points at the time of admission and the short length of time they have lived at this home. Young people are starting to make progress in all areas of their development. Staff said: 'Young people are beginning to settle and blossom.'

Young people benefit from attending school or college regularly. Their educational progress is commensurate with the time they have lived in the home. The provision of education on the premises ensures that young people engage in learning from the outset of their placement. Consistent support is given to young people who attend education off site. This ensures they are able to sustain their learning, mix with their peers and take advantage of extra-curricular activities. For example, some young people have begun a new course of study and have taken up after-school hobbies such as sport, music or design.

Young people enjoy good physical health and have opportunities to take regular exercise. They benefit from healthy and nutritious meals and have an input into their food choices. These measures promote an awareness of good nutrition and healthy lifestyles. They help to promote young people's good health in the longer term. Staff ensure that young people are registered with primary health services and that their

health needs are fully met. The provision of therapeutic intervention on site helps to ensure that young people's emotional and psychological health needs are met.

Young people develop independence skills appropriate to their age and stage of development. The allocation of chores ensures that younger residents learn some independence skills. Examples include keeping bedrooms tidy, shopping and helping to prepare meals. Those on independence plans make steady progress in developing the skills they need for future independent living, such as cooking and doing their laundry.

Commitment to working with families to support positive outcomes for young people is an integral part of the therapeutic plan. This ensures young people maintain contact with significant others, as appropriate. Through contact with family and friends, young people maintain their identity and a sense of belonging, and sustain important relationships. Staff facilitate arrangements for contact and ensure young people are supported, both before and after contact takes place.

A social worker said, 'I couldn't believe how happy and settled the young person was last week when I visited. The change in him is great and lovely to see.'

Quality of care

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

Young people benefit from a nurturing and structured environment. This enables them to address their offending behaviour with effective and consistent support from staff and therapists. The residential care team, teaching staff and therapists work closely together to provide a holistic and therapeutic environment to young people. An assessment of young people's individual therapeutic needs is undertaken and subject to frequent review. The development of positive and strong relationships between young people and staff assists the development of young people's self-esteem. This serves to enhance the therapeutic process.

Staff consult young people about all aspects of their daily lives. Young people feel confident that they can speak out and staff will listen to them. Young people's meetings are held weekly and a range of topics discussed. Young people know how to complain; they said, 'you can write it down, or tell someone if you are not happy.'

Staff fully support young people to engage in their education. Those attending the on-site provision are well prepared and ready for learning.

Staff encourage young people to keep themselves healthy by assisting them to make good choices in relation to their diets. Young people choose their menus each week and take turns to help with the preparation of the evening meal. Young people say they like the food and if it is something they do not like, they can choose something else. Physical exercise is promoted and staff are creative in thinking up new activities to inspire young people to maintain their fitness. For those educated on site, the provision of exercise is part of the timetable and this may include walking or

bouldering.

The home is well maintained and has ample space to meet young people's individual needs for leisure activities and personal space.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

The home provides a physically and emotionally safe environment for young people, which supports them to engage in the therapeutic process. Young people do not go missing from the home. Staff know what to do in the event of any child protection concerns. Extensive training opportunities ensure staff have up to date knowledge to assist them to keep young people safe. Well established links with the local police provide staff with the opportunity for consultation around a range of issues in relation to safeguarding.

The home does not tolerate bullying and young people and staff discuss this issue openly in weekly house meetings. Young people confirm that they have not experienced bullying and if this were to happen they know who they would talk to about it.

Young people benefit from positive approaches to behaviour management. The staff team constantly look at creative ways of acknowledging and rewarding positive behaviour. This approach helps to build confidence in young people, many of whom have not experienced positive feedback in the past. The staff team know the young people really well and understand their emotional and psychological needs. Typically they are able to intervene at an early stage to prevent escalation of problems. Consequently it has not been necessary to restrain any young people. There is minimal use of sanctions or consequences. However, when used these are appropriate, and discussions are subsequently held with the young person about the event.

The home has a robust recruitment procedure with all necessary vetting processes undertaken. This helps to ensure that young people are not at risk from adults who could cause them harm.

The home is physically safe and suitable for young people to live in. The siting of sensor pads outside bedrooms is necessary to create a safe environment for the young people in the home. These alert staff if young people leave their rooms in the night, however, they do not detract from a homely feel. All electrical and gas appliances within the home are subject to regular checks and there are no hazards apparent. These measures help to ensure that the living environment for young people is safe.

Leadership and management

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

The Registered Manager is suitably qualified, experienced and competent. She runs the home very well and fully supports staff to provide good quality care to the young people. Effective monitoring systems track improvements and evidence outcomes. Reports from independent visitors under Regulation 33 are thorough and highlight the quality of care given, and any deficits in the service. These are used to improve service provision. The manager has good systems to monitor the running of the home as demonstrated in reports provided to Ofsted, as required. Complaints are dealt with effectively and speedily.

Young people benefit from a stable staff team who offer consistency of care to them. In terms of their ages and genders, the staff bring a wide range of experience to support them in their role.

The home gives high priority to staff training and development. The majority of the staff hold a recognised childcare diploma or are working towards this. Newly appointed staff are currently undergoing their induction programme and will move on to their childcare diploma once this is completed. Staff benefit from a good range of in-house training, including refresher courses in core subjects such as child protection and safeguarding. Staff also undertake training in techniques which enable them to provide care in a way that complements the therapeutic process. The training helps to ensure that staff are equipped with the skills necessary to provide good safe care to young people.

Staff receive regular supervision in accordance with the Statement of Purpose. However, there is a minor deficit in relation to the recording of the duration of staff supervision sessions. While this does not have a significant impact on the care of young people, it falls short in evidencing good professional practice. The staff team has a fortnightly meeting with the therapists for development and consultation. These forums assist staff to discuss young people's progress and any difficulties they encounter. The provision of therapeutic consultancy enables staff to continue to offer good care and effective management of the young people.

The home's Statement of Purpose is comprehensive and clearly sets out the aims and objectives of the home. There is an omission in terms of the home's arrangements in relation to young people going missing from home. The lack of written procedures impedes stakeholders from having a clear understanding of what action the home takes to safeguard any young person who goes missing from home.

Records in the home are stored securely in locked cabinets. Young people's files are well ordered and easy to read. This ensures staff have sufficient information to enable them to continue to offer effective care. However, staff sometimes mis-file information so that information pertaining to a young person is filed incorrectly on another young person's file. This undermines the confidential storage of information.

Maintenance of the home is high priority and any repairs promptly dealt with. This ensures that the home continues to offer a comfortable, homely and safe environment for young people.

There were no requirements or recommendations made at the previous inspection.

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* and the evaluation schedule for children's homes.