

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC381531
Inspection date	14/02/2013
Inspector	Sue Winson
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	22/05/2012
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2013

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

This home is a specialised children's home that is provided by a private residential childcare provider in partnership with an independent mental health community service. The service provides residential care for children and young people who have experienced moderate to serious mental health problems. The home is registered to care for five children at any one time.

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**.

Young people make good progress in relation to their starting points, due to effective and high quality support based on individual need and knowledge of particular vulnerabilities. Young people were complimentary about the staff and their care. They commented that staff care about them and are 'always there when you need them and listen'. Positive views of the young people's care were expressed by social workers, and others involved with the young people.

Care planning is highly personalised and young people are involved in their plans. Effective partnership working with a range of agencies and professionals is a strength which is central to the young people's ability to progress. Good relationships and communication with parents also benefits the young people. Young people's health needs are met and they understand the importance of healthy living. All have made considerable progress in education, from their starting points, including taking public examinations and attending college. They take part in a range of activities in the community, for example, volunteering for a local charity. Young people develop life skills and their independence is maximised and promoted, as far as possible, while ensuring they are safe.

Young people say they are safe in the home and there is a strong focus on educating them about risks and personal safety and safeguarding their welfare. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of safe working practice. Young people have positive relationships with the staff and say that they trust them. The home can

demonstrate that unsafe situations and behaviour are well managed, in the interests of the young people. Young people are cared for by staff they know and good communication in the team ensures continuity and consistency of care to which they respond well. Respect and understanding of difference is well promoted.

Leaders and managers understand the strengths of the home and areas for development. There is a focus on development to ensure that practice progresses to the benefit of the young people. Effective monitoring and auditing ensures that the quality of care is continually under review. Consultation with young people ensures that their views are central to the running of the home. The views of parents and others involved with the young people have been sought to inform the development plans.

One statutory requirement has been made as a result of this inspection in respect of recording of restraints in the correct format. Full and comprehensive information is however, held in other reports. There is no impact on outcomes for the young people of this deficit in recording, so this has not affected the overall judgement.

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
17A (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, restraint or discipline in a children's home, a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose. (Regulation 19B(3))	14/02/2013

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make good progress in developing a positive self-view and confidence in themselves. They enjoy living in the home and benefit from positive relationships with staff and a nurturing environment. They commented that staff support them 'really well' and 'find time for every young person'. They receive appropriate levels of care to ensure they are safeguarded in line with their individualised plans which they know about. They are routinely consulted and their wishes and feelings are taken into account. They say that staff listen to them and they freely give their opinions.

Young people understand the importance of healthy eating and are informed about

risks such as smoking and drug use. They are involved in shopping and cooking meals and are able to maintain their dietary preferences. Specialist services are available to them to ensure their physical, emotional and psychological health needs are met. They benefit from access to mental health services, and professionals meet with them individually and as a group, on a regular basis.

Their education is geared to their needs and abilities, and they are making good progress, taking into account that they have sometimes been out of education for long periods. Where young people are unable to attend schools, education is provided in house, and through external specialist tutors. Suitable arrangements are in place which gives them opportunities to sit public examinations. They are informed and assisted to gain access to college courses, in line with their wishes and interests. Young people develop and build on their independent living skills which helps them prepare for adult life.

Young people take part in community activities and are well supported to follow their interests. They have contact with their families, in line with their care plans, and are supported to do so.

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy positive relationships with staff who place their wellbeing at the centre of their practice. The staff work with them in a positive and open way to help them develop self-confidence and learn to manage their feelings and behaviours. Praise and encouragement are used rather than sanctions. Young people are cared for and supported by people who they know well, and can talk to when they have any worries or concerns. The stable staff group are alert to individual vulnerabilities and are responsive to the young people's need for support, even when they are unable to ask for assistance. Good communication within the staff team ensures that young people receive continuity of care. Regular communication with parents and social workers ensures they are kept up to date and fully informed about young people's progress.

Young people are cared for in line with comprehensive and individualised care plans, which are regularly monitored and updated in consultation with other professionals involved in their care. This ensures that they receive the service and support required to meet their needs and help them to progress. This includes well planned transitions for young people to move back to their home areas. Young people are given regular opportunities to contribute to their plans, which include their views and wishes. They are supported to attend and contribute to their statutory reviews.

Healthy living is promoted as part of everyday life and young people are encouraged to eat a balanced diet and take exercise. Where there are concerns staff monitor individual diets. Education is promoted as valuable and young people are encouraged to attend and achieve. Successful transitions to college have been well managed so that young people are able to make informed choices about courses and maintain

their places there.

The arrangements for the administration of medication protect the young people. Staff receive training and do not administer medication until they have completed this. Records are kept fully up to date. The arrangements for the safe storage of medication have been strengthened, to ensure that young people do not have access to medication. In response to a recommendation made at the last inspection, a system has been put in place to record and alert the manager to any incidents of concern about medication stocks. The house is appropriately located and large enough to allow young people space to have privacy. An outbuilding is used for education and meetings. Young people have been involved in refurbishments and have personalised their bedrooms. Staff are alert to the need to talk quietly when in the office to maintain confidentiality.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people say that they feel safe in the home and staff discuss personal safety issues with them. They have people outside of the home who they can contact with any concerns and know about their rights to complain. They know what constitutes bullying, and say that this does not happen.

Appropriate levels of supervision, based on individual need, ensures that the young people are safeguarded as far as is possible. The balance between their need for independence and safeguarding is well managed, to the benefit of the young people. This is underpinned by robust risk assessment and effective risk management planning, in partnership with other professionals. Because the staff know the young people well, they are able to take appropriate actions to minimise young people's risk taking behaviours.

There is minimal use of restraint due to the positive behaviour management strategies, to which the young people largely respond well. Although full recording of restraints is not kept in a book kept for the purpose, as required,, other documentation demonstrates that young people are only restrained for safety reasons, when other strategies are ineffective. The manager signs that he monitors the records regularly and adds his comments to these records.

The home has been successful in reducing incidents where young people go missing. When they do so actions are taken to protect them as far as is possible. Good working relationships with the local authority designated officer for child protection and the police, benefit the young people, and allow for multi-agency discussion about keeping them safe. Any allegations of harm are handled in a way which provides effective protection for the young people. There is safe staff recruitment practice. The use of a visitor's book and appropriate supervision of visitors further protects the young people.

The house is physically safe and secure, and regular maintenance and prompt

response to repairs, ensures that it remains so.

Leadership and management

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

The Registered Manager provides effective leadership and guidance to the staff team who say they are well supported, supervised and managed. Senior staff members and key workers have well defined roles which empowers them to work in the best interests of the young people. Sufficient staff are on duty at any one time to provide the necessary levels of support and supervision, and to allow young people to keep appointments, have contact visits and go on activities.

There is a largely stable, experienced and skilled staff team who are enthusiastic and focussed on the holistic needs of the young people. The gender balance has been improved, in the interests of the young people. They communicate effectively and work together well to support each other and the young people in often demanding situations. Staff are positive about the range and quality of training, and its value to them in working with the young people. Some of the courses are geared to the specific needs of the young people resident. Staff also have access to the mental health team for advice, consultation and support.

The manager has implemented improved monitoring and auditing and his regular reports contain analysis and learning points. There is a clear improvement agenda, shared by the staff, to improve the quality of care and outcomes for the young people. Visits carried out by the monitoring visitor take place regularly. All the necessary notifications have been made to Ofsted. The recommendations made at the last inspection have been addressed.

Records are largely clear, well organised and securely stored. They are up to date and are routinely signed by the manager.

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 the inspection of children's homes.