

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	18/04/2013
Inspector	Pete Hylton
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	23/01/2013
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This home is operated by a private provider and is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to of four young people with learning disabilities, two of whom may have concurrent physical disabilities.

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 **inadequate**.

The home has not made sufficient progress since the last inspection in January 2013. Four of the six regulatory requirements and the one recommendation, have not been addressed. As a result, the safety of young people and the leadership of the home are inadequate. Furthermore, key information is missing from young people's files. The religious needs of young people are not appropriately identified or met. These shortfalls negatively affect the quality of care given to young people.

However, young people make adequate progress at the home. They develop some independence skills and enjoy positive relationships with staff and peers. All young people are in appropriate educational placements and regularly attend.

Young people say that they feel safe at the home. Safe recruitment practice ensures only suitable adults work at the home. All required safety checks are in place for the premises. However, young people's safety is compromised through shortfalls in staff training.

The Registered Manager is aware of some of the strengths and weaknesses. However, a lack of development plan means that the home is not identifying and making improvements. This is further affected by inadequacies in the manager's monitoring systems and a lack of appropriate monitoring from the organisation.

As a result of this inspection, nine requirements and three recommendations have been made.

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)	compile in relation to the children's home a written statement (in these Regulations referred to as "the statement of purpose") which shall consist of a statement as to the matters listed in Schedule 1 (Regulation 4 (1))	17/05/2013
5 (2001)	notify HMCI of any revision of the home's Statement of Purpose within 28 days (Regulation 5(b))	17/05/2013
11 (2001)	make suitable arrangements to ensure that the home is conducted with due regard to the sex, religious persuasion, racial origin, and cultural and linguistic background and any disability of children accommodated there (Regulation 11 (2) (b))	17/05/2013
27 (2001)	ensure that all persons employed by him receive appropriate training and appraisal (Regulation 27 (4) (a))	17/05/2013
28 (2001)	maintain in respect of each child who is accommodated in a children's home a record in permanent form which includes the information, documents and records specified in Schedule 3 relating to that child (Regulation 28 (1) (a))	17/05/2013
32 (2001)	make arrangements for persons working at the home to receive suitable training in fire prevention (Regulation 32 (1) (d))	17/05/2013
33 (2001)	ensure that visits under paragraph (2) of this regulation shall take place at least once a month, the person carrying out the visit shall interview, with their consent and in private, such of the children accommodated there, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as appears necessary in order to form an opinion of the standard of care provided in the home (Regulation 33(3)(4)(a))	17/05/2013
33 (2001)	supply a copy of the Regulation 33 report required to be made under paragraph (4)(c) to HMCI (Regulation 33(5)(a))	17/05/2013
34 (2001)	establish and maintain a system for monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 at appropriate intervals and improving the quality of care provided in the children's home. The system shall provide for consultation with children accommodated in the home, their parents and placing authorities. (Regulation 34 (1)(3))	17/05/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the home provides a comfortable and homely environment and is well maintained and decorated. Avoidable hazards are removed as is consistent with a domestic setting. Risk reduction does not lead to an institutional feel (NMS 10.3)
- ensure that there is a written development plan, reviewed annually, for the future of the home, either identifying any planned changes in the operation or resources of the service, or confirming the continuation of the home's current operation and resource (NMS 15.2)
- ensure that the manager regularly monitors, in line with regulations, all records kept by the home to ensure compliance with the homes 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)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **adequate**.

From their starting points, young people make adequate progress at the home. Young people are encouraged to develop their independence skills and make good progress in this regard. A teacher commented that a young person is, 'Making good progress with independence' and that 'Social skills and confidence have come on leaps and bounds.'

Young people are enabled to sustain relationships with their families. They benefit from regular and meaningful contact with important people in their lives. This also supports young people in maintaining their personal identity and emotional security.

Young people enjoy and benefit from regular access to activities in the local and wider community. All young people regularly attend appropriate educational provision. Transitional arrangements help prepare and support young people to move on into adulthood. Young people develop age appropriate skills in cooking, cleaning and community safety. A young person commented, 'I learn how to look after myself.'

Young people are supported to attend their statutory reviews. This ensures that they are given opportunities to express their views in a formal setting. Young people confirm that they can make choices about food and activities. A young person commented, 'I can choose my dinner' and there is evidence to show that young people have some input into activity choices. The Registered Manager commented, 'We ensure that our young people are able to enjoy the same opportunities as other young people.'

Quality of care

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

The quality of care provided to young people is negatively affected by incomplete young people's files. Furthermore, the religious needs of young people are not clearly defined in care plans used in the home. There is a lack of clarity in these care plans which means that staff do not know the religious needs of young people. As a result of this shortfall, it is not clear if young people wish to follow their expressed religious beliefs. This has the potential to impact on the spiritual well-being of young people.

Young people's files are not fully up to date. Key information is missing from these files and this negatively impacts on the quality of care. For example, placement and care plans from the local authority are not always kept on young people's files in the home. As a result, the staff team may not be providing care packages in line with the expressed wishes of parents, carers and social workers. This has the potential to negatively impact on the progress of young people.

Medication is safely stored and appropriately administered. Records are appropriately made and regular audits of medicine stock levels ensure that any mistakes are quickly identified and resolved. The health of young people is monitored and any concerns are referred to the relevant professionals. Young people are encouraged to eat healthily and meals provided to young people are varied, balanced and nutritious. Young people say that they like the food and are able to have input on menu choices.

The staff team have positive relationships with parents, carers and placing social workers. A social worker commented that the staff team are, 'Very flexible and change plans where needed.' A parent commented that there is, 'Always staff I can talk to.' Regular communication between the home and school ensures that any issues are appropriately identified and resolved. A teacher commented that, 'Communication is very good' and the staff team are, 'Very good at working with us.'

There have been no complaints since the last inspection. The young person's guide includes contact details for services of support and young people can access a telephone when they wish. The guide is also in a symbol format so young people with communication difficulties can access this information.

Young people are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms and display posters and pictures of their choice. Young people are able to express their individuality and interests. Photographs of young people are displayed around the home and they feel relaxed and settled in their environment. However, a young person's window is stained and unsightly. A shower cubicle used by young people has mould on it. As a result, young people do not live in an environment that is appropriately maintained and decorated.

The home is situated close to local amenities and this means that young people are able to access a range of activities. For example, young people enjoy going to the

cinema, bowling and going on trips out. Activities within the home are age appropriate and enjoyed by young people. Young people can access a computer, play video games and a large garden provides adequate space for young people to play. They are able to choose their activities and enjoy spending time with peers and staff. The Registered Manager commented, 'We ensure that our young people are able to enjoy the same opportunities as other young people.' Young people are encouraged to sit together at mealtimes and share in conversations about their day and plans for the evening. This creates a homely feel and enables young people to develop social and communication skills. A young person commented, 'I like living here.'

Safeguarding children and young people

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

The safety of young people is compromised as a result of incomplete staff training. To date, there has not been a negative impact on the outcomes for young people. However, the potential exists for young people to be at risk of significant harm.

Restraint is used for the purpose of keeping young people safe. The majority of the staff team are appropriately trained in restraint. However, not all staff have updated their restraint training. To date, this shortfall has not negatively impacted on the safety or welfare of young people. However, the potential exists for young people to be restrained by staff who are not fully trained in safe methods of restraint.

Sanctions are rarely used in the home. Where they do occur, they are fair and proportionate. Individual records of restraint, kept in young people's files, contain all required information. However, the home's central record of restraint is not always kept up to date. The Registered Manager is therefore not monitoring all records kept by the home or ensuring adherence to the home's policies. Furthermore, this shortfall means that staff may not be fully apprised of incidents occurring in the home. For example, where staff are coming on duty, incomplete records may result in necessary information not being available for review. To date, this shortfall has not negatively impacted on the outcomes for young people.

The Registered Manager ensures that appropriate checks are made on staff prior to their employment starting at the home. Visitors to the home are appropriately supervised at all times. This ensures that only suitable adults have contact with young people. Young people feel safe in the home and do not express bullying as a problem. All required electrical and gas safety checks are up to date. The staff team regularly check all areas of the home for defects or potential hazards. However, the risk of fire is not adequately managed in the home. For example, staff are not appropriately trained in fire safety and this shortfall potentially places young people at risk of significant harm.

Leadership and management

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

Young people do not live in a home that is appropriately managed or monitored. A failure to address requirements from the last inspection means that the home is not making sufficient progress. Further areas of regulatory concern have been identified as a result of this inspection. This has the potential to affect the progress that young people make.

Four of the six requirements from the last inspection have not been acted on or met. The one recommendation, relating to taking action where improvement is needed, has similarly not been addressed. As a result, the home is not improving the quality. Young people do not live in a home that is well managed, monitored or appropriately quality assured. The safety and well-being of young people is therefore affected.

The provider has not ensured that regulation 33 reports are sent to Ofsted. For example, since the last inspection in January 2013, Ofsted have received no reports. The Registered Manager made arrangements to send these to Ofsted during the inspection. This means that prior to this inspection, the regulator has not been able to review the home's quality of care or monitor any issues in the home. Where visits do take place, the views of young people are not adequately explored or recorded. As a result, the quality of care cannot be fully evaluated in the home. The home is inconsistently monitored by the organisation.

The Registered Manager has not improved the monitoring activities in the home since the last inspection. The views of young people and feedback from parents, carers and placing authorities remain unsought. As a result, the home is unable to demonstrate how the views of young people and stakeholders influence the development of the service. The Registered Manager is aware of some strengths and weaknesses in the home. However, a lack of a development plan means that improvements are not formally recorded, monitored or evaluated. This lack of planning and development further impacts on young people as they are living in a home that is not progressing.

There are clear routines in the home and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities. All staff receive regular supervision and feel supported by the management of the home. However, staff appraisals have not taken place since 2011. As a result, there has been no formal review of staff performance or training needs. This has the potential to impact on the quality of care as staff may not be up to date with their knowledge and skills.

The home's Statement of Purpose does not contain all required information; staff details are not fully up to date and there is no description of the use of electronic monitoring devices. Therefore, parents, carers and placing social workers are unable to review the skills, experience and qualifications of staff working at the home. Furthermore, parents, carers and placing authorities may not be aware of, and consent to, the use of electronic monitoring devices. The provider has failed to send the Statement of Purpose to Ofsted as required from the last 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 the inspection of children's homes.