

## Inspection report for children's home

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| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC368032          |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 09/05/2013        |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Elizabeth Barrett |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | Full              |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>       | Children's home   |

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| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 20/11/2012 |
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## Service information

### Brief description of the service

This children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is privately owned.

### 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**.

Individual young people make steady progress living in this home and receive positive care and support in meeting their placement needs. Young people comment that staff are concerned about their welfare and as a result, some young people are making progress in working towards educational achievement and independence.

The home has good care plans in place that encourage young people to engage with staff and the home in working towards individual placement aims. While some young people do not always engage with the activities and expectations of staff, relationships between staff and young people are generally positive. The commitment of the home's manager and core staff, and the working relationships with other professionals mean that young people continue to receive a competent level of care

Young people generally feel safe and can identify an adult they can talk to discuss specific issues and concerns. Staff recognise the particular vulnerabilities relating to the diverse needs of young people and take action to support them. For example, staff participating in multi-agency meetings to discuss increased incidents of concern in the local community.

The Registered Manager and provider recognise the home's strengths, weaknesses, and plans are in place to develop the care practices and the operations of the home, to encourage overall progress and achievement for young people.

There are three statutory requirements and four recommendations for improvements

set as a result of this inspection. This is to ensure the training, knowledge and experiences of the Registered Manager and staff meet the individual needs of all young people and the operations of the home. In addition, shortfalls are identified in relation to educational provision, promoting individual identity, and the notification of significant events. The service is also asked to develop proactive and productive partnership working within the local community to ensure positive outcomes for young people.

## 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   |
|--------------|---|------------|
| 9<br>(2001)  | ensure the registered manager shall undertake from time to time such training as is appropriate to ensure that he has the experience and skills necessary for managing the children's home (Regulation 9(3))  | 28/06/2013 |
| 18<br>(2001) | ensure the registered person shall promote the educational achievement of children accommodated in a children's home, in particular by ensuring that children make use of educational facilities appropriate to their age, aptitude, needs, interests and potential (Regulation 18(1)(a))   | 28/06/2013 |
| 30<br>(2001) | ensure if, in relation to a children's home, any of the events listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 5 takes place, the registered person shall without delay notify the person's indicated in respect of the event in column 2 of the table. In particular ensure Ofsted are notified of all safeguarding concerns in relation to young people who are missing from care. (Regulation 30(1)) | 31/05/2013 |

### Recommendations

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

- ensure children receive personalised care that promotes all aspects of their individual identity and future wishes and wants, set out in their in-house care plans (NMS 2.1)
- ensure the home's approach to care minimises the need for police involvement to deal with challenging behaviour and avoids criminalising children unnecessarily. In particular, ensure the home works effectively in partnership with the police to

reduce levels of concern in the community (NMS 3.22)

- ensure all staff are trained in appropriate safe-care practice, including skills to care for children at risk of exploitation and concern in the community (NMS 4.6)
- ensure children take part in age appropriate peer activities as agreed by the home's staff in a way similar to how a reasonable parent might reach agreement with their children, taking into account the framework of the placement plan decision making and any assessment of risk to the child. (NMS 7.5)

## Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **adequate**.

Progress for young people living in this home is variable. For example, some young people have made progress in relation to their individual educational attendance and achievement. For those young people without a full time education placement, staff encourage them to participate in regular school hours through the provision of an in-house timetable. However, this has had mixed success because some young people display high levels of challenging behaviour and are not consistently motivated to work within the home. As a result, not all young people are experiencing learning and development opportunities to help them achieve academically, and acquire the skills they require to prepare them for adulthood.

Young people's health needs are being met to ensure general health and well-being. Young people benefit from routine medical assessments and appointments with all the main health care services. Some young people are making progress in relation to their emotional health. For example, young people are starting to engage positively with clinical psychological services. This means that individual young people are beginning to build and develop their self-esteem, emotional resilience, and well-being.

Young people know how to share their wishes and views. There are systems that promote young people's involvement in the day-to-day life of the home and their care and support through regular young people's meetings, and key worker sessions. As a result, young people's views and ideas are shared and where possible acted on in a timely way.

Young people benefit from individual contact with those of significance in their lives with support in place to maintain these contacts including overnight stays. Young people are encouraged to work alongside staff in acquiring basic practical skills. For example, a routine involvement in planning for and preparing meals, doing their own laundry, and cleaning areas of the home. In addition, each young person's individual abilities are assessed in order to identify gaps in preparation for independence. Young people comment that they are making progress in relation to personal care and household tasks in preparation for transition from the home.

Some young people are making steady progress in reducing areas of personal risk such as missing from home. This is because individuals are building positive

relationships with the adults that care for them. Most young people interact positively with staff within the home and during some activities away from the home. However, young people do not always engage with staff in organised activities and are not developing appropriate individual interests and friendships in the community. Consequently, young people are engaging in incidents of anti-social and offending behaviour which is affecting the wider community.

## Quality of care

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

Young people receive a good quality of care in this home from a developing staff team who are genuinely interested in, and concerned for their welfare. Most young people have sound relationships with staff through the establishment of daily routines, boundaries, and expectations. Young people are encouraged to discuss their concerns openly to enable staff and young people to work together to build a safe and nurturing environment. Individual young people say they enjoy living in the home and speak positively about the care they receive from staff.

Good initial placement planning and assessment identifies young people's individual care needs. Staff are sufficiently informed about each young person's needs because the home has established effective partnerships with families and placing social workers. These arrangements help staff to gain important information about young people's backgrounds, family histories, and current needs. Social workers comment positively on the quality of care for young people. For example, 'The home's manager and staff team have worked hard to meet the high levels of challenging behaviour displayed by a young person.'

Improvements have been made to the in-house care planning and assessment frameworks since the last inspection. Health plans and baseline assessments provide good information in relation to young people's individual needs and abilities linked to the local authority placement objectives. However, in-house plans are not personalised to include details of young people's identity, and young people say they are not always involved in compiling their plans. As a result, young people's views and preferences for the future are not sufficiently promoted and supported.

Young people's educational needs are assessed and monitored through individual plans and strategies. Staff facilitate young people's attendance at school, and attend meetings and communicate with providers on behalf of the young people in their care. For those young people who continue to be without full time education the Registered Manager is proactive in advocating for and challenging barriers that may prevent individuals receiving education suited to their needs. However, educational provisions have not always been addressed in line with individual placement plans. This means that some young people have not been provided with opportunities to resume full time education in a timely manner.

There are processes in place in the home for young people to express their views, wishes, and feelings. House meetings take place to discuss the day-to-day running of

the home, with care-planning frameworks giving scope to consultancy with young people. For example, staff engage young people in discussions on specific individual objectives including substance use, staying safe, anger management, and appropriate relationships. This ensures young people are consulted on matters that are important to them and those that promote young people's safety and welfare.

The home has a complaints procedure which is understood by staff and young people. Young people say that they are aware of the process and know how to make a complaint. Staff support young people to access independent services to share their issues and concerns.

Young people live in a home that is adequately resourced and maintained. Young people enjoy the privacy of their own rooms; and say that they have recently chosen new colour schemes to decorate their bedrooms. However, some areas of the building would benefit from further decoration. The Registered Manager is aware of this and says that this is currently under discussion with the provider as part of the home's development plan.

### **Safeguarding children and young people**

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

Young people say they feel safe in the home, and report that staff keep them safe because they are concerned with their welfare. The environment is sufficiently risk assessed to ensure young people are safe from potential hazards and harm. Staffing levels ensure that young people are supervised and monitored in the home in line with their individual placement needs.

Safeguarding policies and procedures are compliant with those of the local authority and staff confirm their knowledge of these procedures in practice. The home has clear protocols with the local police to support action when young people go missing. Staff are able to identify some of the times when young people are most likely to go missing and promote strategies to reduce young people leaving the home without permission. Individual key working sessions focus on safety in the community, and support from the local street team has meant episodes of missing for some young people are decreasing.

This home supports young people who exhibit high risk or socially inappropriate behaviours. For example, there has been a significant increase in incidents of anti-social and offending behaviour by young people in the local community. This has resulted in young people being arrested and charged with criminal offences. The Registered Manager and staff team have responded to some of these concerns by making referrals to other agencies and professionals to help support young people, and reduce issues that affect the home and local area.

The provider has liaised with the responsible authority, the police, and the local anti-social behaviour unit to help reduce the unnecessary criminalisation of young people. However, relationships between the home and the local police are not sufficiently

robust. This means that services are not working together effectively to ensure young people receive consistent support to reduce incidents of concern, and promote positive social interactions and relationships within the community.

There are clear processes to assess and identify the particular vulnerabilities of young people. Individual risk assessments and behaviour management plans are detailed and up to date. The home's behaviour management policy promotes positive behaviour and staff only use physical restraint when necessary to keep young people safe from harm. However, increases in incidents of challenging behaviour for some young people have resulted in physical restraint and other measure of control being used more frequently. Records show that incidents of restraint and sanctions are appropriately recorded and restorative. Debriefs with staff and young people are made to evaluate the effectiveness of all measures of intervention, and identify action to reduce the use of future measures of control. Social workers and family members confirm that they are informed of all incidents, and acknowledge that for some young people restraint may be necessary to keep them and others safe.

The home is adequately resourced and managers ensure that health and safety requirements are met. For example, fire safety requirements including fire drills take place at appropriate intervals meaning young people and staff know what to do in the event of a fire. There are sound staff recruitment and selection procedures in place to ensure that unsuitable people are not employed in the home.

## **Leadership and management**

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

The home has a Registered Manager in place following the last inspection. The one requirement and one recommendation made at the previous visit have been met. The provider ensures that copies of external monitoring and quality assurance reports are forwarded to Ofsted in line with regulations. In addition, the manager is implementing a process of redecoration to the home to provide a more comfortable and homely environment for young people to live in.

This home has a clear statement of how it operates which is available for parents and others needing this information. Young people know what services they can expect from the home. Local authorities and parents say that overall, the manager, and staff provide positive care to young people with challenging behaviours and complex needs.

The home has experienced some staffing changes since the last visit with new staff recruited. Staff receive formal support and supervision to guide them with the work they do with young people. There are sufficient numbers of staff deployed in the home. However, not all staff are suitably trained and experienced to meet the individual challenging needs of young people in their care. For example, young people who display high-risk behaviours in the home and the community. Although the provider is addressing this shortfall, this can affect the home's ability to safeguard young people's needs while they are away from the home.



Since the last inspection there has been an increase in incidents of anti-social behaviour involving young people from the home in the local community. These have resulted in concerns raised by the police with the placing authority. Issues have been discussed at community partnership meetings, and the home's manager has endeavoured to implement some strategies to reduce incidents. However, the local police and staff in the home comment that individual concerns remain high, and they are limited in what they can do to affect change for a minority of young people. As a result, local authorities are reviewing individual placement needs.

The Registered Manager ensures that information relating to issues and concerns are made to the appropriate agencies, with investigations into allegations and complaints made openly and transparently. Current concerns raised by a minority of young people relating to practices in the home are being investigated. These concerns are not affecting the safety and well-being of others living in the home. However, some notifications about young people missing from care and resulting safeguarding issues have not been notified to Ofsted in accordance with regulatory requirements. This means that the regulator is not able to monitor such issues promptly to ensure young people's safeguarding needs are suitably met.

The manager has an understanding of some of the strengths and weaknesses of the service, and the home has a development plan in place. Areas identified for improvement include; staff recruitment, training, and induction, quarterly auditing of the home and improved consultation with young people and stakeholders. However, shortfalls identified at this inspection mean that further work is required to improve the manager's and the staff team's knowledge base, to ensure the home is achieving consistent positive outcomes for young people.

Systems are in place for the regular monitoring of this service, both internally and externally. The provider ensures that monthly monitoring visits are made with reports provided to the home and Ofsted. Discussion with the Registered Manager and provider demonstrate an awareness of the current difficulties faced by the home. The manager is aware that she has not completed any leadership or management training since her registration for this service, and recognises that this is a requirement of the role. The Registered Manager and provider demonstrate a commitment to acting on the findings of this inspection and implementing change.

## 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.