

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Stella Henderson
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This children's home is operated by a private company. It provides three long-term placements for young people who have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

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**.

Young people are safe at the home. They enjoy stable and secure long term placements with staff who have known them for several years. As a result good and supportive relationships exist between staff and young people. Parents and social workers express satisfaction about the home's ability to care for young people and keep them safe.

Young people's plans, tailored to their diverse needs, are of reasonable quality. This enables them to experience some improved outcomes, for example in attendance at college and educational achievement and reduction in some risk taking behaviours.

These positive elements ensure that the home's overall effectiveness is adequate. However, there are some shortfalls in practice which compromises young people's ability to achieve their full potential, enjoy optimum health outcomes and move successfully on to independence.

A requirement and recommendations are therefore set to assist the provider in improving 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
34 (2001)	ensure that the system for reviewing the quality of care shall provide for consultation with children accommodated in the home, their parents and placing authorities (Regulation 34)(3)	13/06/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure that children communicate their views on all aspects of their care and support (NMS 1.3)
- ensure children's physical and emotional and social development needs are promoted. This is with specific reference to improving young people's nutrition (NMS 6.1)
- enable children to pursue individual interests and hobbies. This includes taking part in a range of activities, including leisure activities and trips (NMS 7.2)
- improve the care that children receive which helps to prepare for and supports them into adulthood, so that they can reach their potential and achieve economic well-being (NMS 12.1)
- improve the quality of the registered provider's written report of a visit carried out under Regulation 33 visit and which is lodged in the home for the manager and staff to read and respond to. (NMS 21.8)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **adequate**.

Young people enjoy long term stable placements. Staff communicate and work well with parents who have frequent contact with their children. This enables young people to gain, over a period of time, some emotional resilience and understanding of the reasons for being in care.

Young people's general health is promoted through full immunisation, visits to the dentist, access to good sexual health advice and attention to personal hygiene. They are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles, and some young people have had success in engaging in exercise and eating regular and nutritious meals. Not all young people benefit from a sensible diet however, which undermines their general good health in the short and long term.

Some young people attend college and achieve full attendance. They enjoy learning and the social benefits that participation in education brings. Those young people

who are not in compulsory education are pro-active in seeking work and have plans for their future education.

Young people have the opportunity to have an influence on how the home is run. Some young people engage in the wider community through attendance at youth clubs, for instance. Opportunities for wider social engagement is limited however. This undermines young people's ability to develop friendships and social networks.

Contributing to household tasks and taking some responsibility for decision-making assists young people in their journey to adulthood. There is however a lack of scrutiny of the progress they are making in preparation for leaving the home. This means that some of their needs may be overlooked and compromises their ability to move successfully on to independence.

Quality of care

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

Young people experience satisfactory quality of care. Staff set clear boundaries so that young people generally enjoy cordial relationships with each other. As a consequence there is no bullying at the home and no need for physical restraint.

Young people's views are gathered through individual consultation and their opinions inform some aspects of the running of the home, such as choosing decorations and menu-planning. They are confident about using the complaints procedure, and any complaints are promptly responded to by management.

Young people benefit from staff effectively working with a range of agencies to fulfil the requirements of their placement plans. This enables young people to access the services and support they need to make progress. Family members say they are made welcome at the home. This improves the quality of contact between parents and young people and reinforces their sense of identity.

Placement plans adequately capture the unique and diverse needs of young people and the actions to be taken by staff to address those needs. Young people's contribution to this planning process is limited however, which means their needs may not be fully identified and addressed.

The property and location of the home provides young people with access to a range of local amenities and facilities. It is comfortably furnished, well-maintained and spacious which allows young people room for private meetings as well as communal activities.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are safe at the home and there is no bullying. They are protected by

the pro-active approach to safeguarding issues, particularly where incidents of missing from home are concerned. Young people benefit from effective liaison and working with safeguarding agencies, police and social workers in respect of this. As a result these incidents and other risk-taking behaviours are decreasing.

Young people are helped to improve their behaviour in a way that respects their level of development and understanding. There is rarely any need to use physical restraint, and sanctions are reasonable and part of a wider behaviour management strategy.

Young people are provided with good advice on the use of social networking sites, and the dangers of on-line bullying, grooming and the dangers of repetitive strain injury from overuse of the computer. Sensible measures are also taken to ensure young people are safe in their relationships. This includes meeting with the parents of boyfriends and advice on sexual relationships.

Adherence to health and safety procedures ensures that young people live in a home that provides safety and security. Medication is stored and dispensed safely and environmental checks help to identify any hazards. Sound vetting procedures ensure that no one who is unsuitable to work with vulnerable children is employed at the home.

Leadership and management

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

The home has an acting manager who had been in post for only a few weeks at the time of this inspection. She is suitably qualified, experienced for the role and is undertaking the Level 5 award in management. A new manager has been appointed and has submitted their application to Ofsted.

In their first few weeks in the role, the acting manager has already identified some of the shortfalls highlighted at this inspection. She has provided a clear steer to staff on what needs to change and has begun to implement measures to address them. She ensures that the home is well-maintained, appropriately staffed and resourced, and that the home is meeting the objectives of its Statement of Purpose.

Young people are supported by staff who confirm that they receive sufficient training and supervision to carry out their work safely with young people. Staffing levels meet young people's needs and this enables young people to have the attention they require on an individual basis and for the home to run smoothly.

Both independent and internal monitoring mechanisms ensure that young people receive an adequate level of care. The independent report does not always give an accurate reflection of processes at the home however, which may give a false impression of how the home is running. The internal assessment of the performance of the home lacks input from children, their parents and placing social workers. This means that important areas of need may be overlooked.

No requirements or recommendations were made at 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.