

## Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Inspection date</b>	14/05/2013
<b>Inspector</b>	Emeline Evans
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Full
<b>Provision subtype</b>	Children's home

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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	15/01/2013
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## Service information

### Brief description of the service

This privately owned home provides care and accommodation for up to six children and young people with special educational needs and/or 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 **adequate**.

Young people appear very settled and familiar with their surroundings; they are clearly relaxed and comfortable with the staff and their peers. The staff are described as 'good' and 'they listen to us' by young people. Young people benefit from individualised care from a stable and experienced staff and management team who are committed to further improving the quality of care for young people.

Young people are making significant progress since their admission and staff support young people to progress in areas such as social development and independence. The young people are very positive about the care they receive and say they feel safe living in the home. They are supported by a staff team who are familiar with their needs and vulnerability. As a result, safety is a central to all aspects of care planning, shift planning and staffing arrangements. Young people and staff enjoy warm and constructive relationships.

The manager has a strong presence within the home and is actively involved in working with the young people and staff. Positive relationships with external professionals are in place to ensure a holistic approach is achieved. There is a commitment from the management team to meet the day-to-day needs of the young people currently accessing the service. However, the manager has taken on many additional roles and is in the process of delegating tasks to the staff team. This will ensure she can then focus on service developments.

Areas of shortfall were identified within this inspection and are reflected in the overall judgement. These shortfalls include: improving the quality of the Statement of Purpose; changes are required to improve the staff training programmes and

appraisal systems; reviewing of the current behaviour management policy; obtaining consent to the use of monitoring devices; and strengthening current management monitoring systems. Additionally, some aspects of safe recruitment practices could not be evidenced for one member of staff. A requirement and some recommendations have been re-stated from the previous inspection because they have not been completely acted on. The manager is aware of the home's shortfalls and is committed to further improve outcomes for the young people and provide a high quality service.

## 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.

<b>Reg.</b>	<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Due date</b>
4 (2001)	update the Statement of Purpose to ensure that it includes all of the required information (Regulation 4 (1), Schedule 1)	30/06/2013
17B (2001)	review the behaviour management policy to ensure it sets out measures of control, restraint and discipline which may be used in the children's home and the means whereby appropriate behaviour is to be promoted (Regulation 17B (1)(a)(b)(2)(a))	30/06/2013
22 (2001)	obtain consent from the children's placing authorities regarding the use of electronic monitoring devices and ensure that this information is provided in the children's placement plans (Regulation 22 (1) (a) (b))	30/06/2013
26 (2001)	obtain and record for all staff, before they start work at the home, all the information set out in Schedule 2 (Regulation 26)(3)(d))	31/05/2013
34 (2001)	implement an effective system to monitor the matters set out in Schedule 6 to improve the quality of care provided; ensure this system provides for consultation with children, their parents and placing authorities and that any report made under this regulation is supplied to Ofsted. (Regulation 34 (1)(a)(b)(2) and (3))	30/06/2013

### Recommendations

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

- ensure all staff are trained in the use of physical restraint techniques, only use the home's agreed techniques, and restraint training is regularly refreshed (NMS 3.15)

- review the safeguarding policy to ensure it clearly outlines the procedure staff should follow in the event of an allegation or disclosure. With particular reference to ensuring the child protection officer in the home is named and who to contact should that person not be available (Children Act 1989 Statutory guidance Volume 5, 2.68)
- ensure the home provides a comfortable and homely environment, with specific reference to ensuring bathrooms are well maintained and free from hazards (NMS 10.3)
- ensure there is an emergency escape plan that all staff and children are familiar with, with particular reference to ensuring this is up-to-date (NMS 10.9)
- ensure the home has clear programmes for promoting the children's independence which prepares them for and supports them into adulthood (NMS 12)
- ensure there is a good quality learning and development programme in place which staff are supported to undertake. This is to include in-service training to enhance individual skills and to keep up-to-date with practice developments (NMS 18.1)
- ensure existing care staff are working towards the Children and Young People's Workforce Diploma (NMS 18.5)
- ensure all staff have their performance individually and formally appraised at least annually and this appraisal takes into account any views of children the service is providing for. (NMS 19.6)

## Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people make positive progress in most aspects of their lives; their confidence and self-esteem are developing well. This is achieved by the personalised care each young person receives from a skilled staff team who understand the individual ways in which young people express their needs. This approach ensures young people's emotional well-being is central to all aspects of care planning and behavioural management. Staff and professionals recognise the achievements young people have made and are able to give examples of how young people have developed as a result of their placement. Young people have made measurable progress in their behaviour, social interaction and personal care skills. Young people are now able to sit at the table, eat a meal, and accept and respond to peer interaction. One social worker commented, 'I hadn't ever seen her laugh before and she is now,' and 'she is putting on weight and can eat with the other young people now.'

Young people's health needs are fully met. Young people attend regular health appointments and are now able to cope appropriately with medical check-ups. Young people are supported to make decisions during health appointments and some are able to realise the importance of this decision making and reflect on this with staff.

This is enabling young people's confidence and self-esteem to develop. Young people receive appropriate support from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and specialist health services. This practice ensures individual health needs are identified and met.

Staff fully support young people's education and young people have excellent attendance at school or educational placements. Staff ensure there is good communication and relationships with schools and attend educational reviews as appropriate. Staff work closely with teachers to ensure consistency is achieved. These relationships help staff gain an overarching understanding of how young people are progressing and achieving their targets.

Staff ensure young people are supported to engage in community-based activities. Young people talk enthusiastically about the activities they undertake; these opportunities mean that young people's experiences of social interaction are further enhanced. There are facilities on site to allow for participation in activities including a sensory room and garden. This enhances the sensory development of the young people.

Young people benefit from appropriate contact with family and those who are significant to them. Individual contact arrangements are suitably supported and facilitated by staff. This ensures that young people maintain contact and attachments with parents, carers and those important to them. Effective communication between staff, parents and social workers ensures key messages about the care and well-being of each young person is properly addressed. Young people's parents and social workers are extremely pleased with the way in which the home works with everyone to achieve realistic outcomes. One parent commented, 'Communication is very good and we work together.'

Young people receive the care and encouragement they need to develop independence skills. Staff report that young people are developing well in this area and this is contributing to enhancing their self-esteem. However, the progress young people have made or the skills young people could further develop was not clearly documented. Therefore, staff are unable to fully ensure young people are equipped with the necessary skills in preparation for successful transitions in to adult placements.

## **Quality of care**

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

The young people benefit from good supportive relationships from committed and experienced staff members. Comments from a parent include, 'The staff are just as good as they ever were and go far beyond their duty.' A young person commented, 'Staff are nice and just like the staff at my last home which is good.' Observations were indicative of the trusting and fulfilling relationships established between the young people and staff. Staff are aware of and observe non-verbal communication and are proactive in reassuring young people during difficult times.

The staff team are now supporting young people to express their views through house meetings. During these meetings individual choices are established in relation to food and menu planning. The home is using these meetings to reflect on ways to improve the service. Young people are supported to make choices in many aspects of their care. For example, personal care routines and the activities they take part in. This results in young people feeling that their views are actively sought and acted upon. Young people are supported to be able to make a complaint. A young person commented, 'Staff listen to me and I can talk to staff.' Since the last inspection, no complaints have been received.

Young people are cared for in line with detailed and comprehensive placement plans. Placement plans take into account the diverse and complex needs of the young people accessing the service, including their medical, health and cultural needs and additional support required due to disability. These plans are individualised and enable staff to support young people and understand the possible reasons for their negative behaviours. Staff are familiar with young people's placement plans and these are used fluidly across the shifts. This practice ensures consistency in the quality of care.

Medication systems in the home are safe and effective. Staff are suitably trained in first aid skills. Staff work in partnership with community nurses and other health professionals to ensure a consistency of care. Healthy lifestyles are promoted and young people are encouraged to make healthy choices in relation to the food they eat and the exercise they take. One young person commented, 'The food is good, I like it.' Staff support the young people to make choices at meal times and this is assisting in developing their independence skills.

The home is situated in a residential area within easy reach of local facilities. The home has appropriate equipment to assist in delivering personal care needs, such as ceiling hoists and adapted baths. Young people enjoy a safe and pleasant environment; there are photos of the young people having fun displayed around the home. However, the bathrooms require some maintenance and are showing signs of wear and tear therefore a recommendation regarding this has been raised.

## **Safeguarding children and young people**

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

Young people are kept safe through on-going supervision of their whereabouts and the retention of high staffing ratios. Young people's vulnerability is central to all aspects of care planning, risk management and the supervision of young people for off-site activities. Young people say they feel safe in the home. Staff receive training on safeguarding and recognise the particular vulnerabilities relating to the needs of children with disabilities. The policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding are readily available to staff. However, the current policy uses the term 'child protection officer in the home' but no details are given as to who this person is or who should be contacted should this person not be available. The supervision provided by the

high levels of staff minimises the risk of young people going missing. Procedures are known by staff if such an incident should arise.

Staff are vigilant in responding to young people's gestures, expressions and unusual behaviours. Early intervention is encouraged to understand how young people are feeling but physical restraint is used in exceptional circumstances. There have been no incidents of physical intervention recorded since the last inspection. Following a previous recommendation, the home has provided training on managing challenging behaviour and the use of physical restraint. However, some staff have yet to complete this training, which could lead to inconsistencies in managing difficult behaviours in the staff team. Therefore, this recommendation is re-stated. Care planning documentation clearly identifies risks and preventative measures and young people have individual behaviour plans in place. The home has a behaviour management policy in operation, however this does not contain current information and relates to old legislation and practice. This requires reviewing to include all measures of control, restraint and discipline currently used in the home and how positive behaviour is promoted.

Young people are protected through the implementation of a range of personalised risk assessments. These risk assessments include young people's health needs, mobility impairment and environmental factors such as young people's lack of knowledge around personal safety. The home currently uses listening monitors in one of the bedrooms due to the assessed needs of a young person. The use of the listening monitors is for the purpose of safeguarding the young person. However, the home has not sought consent from the placing authority on the use of these measures. This use of surveillance is also not detailed in young person's placement plans.

In most cases there is careful selection and vetting of staff working with young people in the home including Criminal Records Bureau checks which are taken up prior to staff starting work. However, on one permanent staff member's file, gaps in employment were not fully documented and it was not clear if they were explored at the time of recruitment. The registered person therefore could not demonstrate that they consistently follow good recruitment practice.

Young people know what to do in case of a fire or emergency. Regular health and safety checks of the home are undertaken. Maintenance issues are promptly addressed. This ensures a safe environment for everyone living in and visiting the home. The home has been in regular contact with their fire service contractor and has consulted with the local fire and rescue service with reference to providing adequate means of escape. The local fire officer has accepted current arrangements in place. However, the home is looking to further improve the means of escape to ensure staff and young people are fully protected in the event of a fire. The home has still to revise the current fire evacuation plan in place to take into account the keypad that is currently in operation on the front door.

## **Leadership and management**



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

The Registered Manager and staff team are committed to and focused on improving the quality of care in the home. The manager has an active role within the home both working with the young people and working in partnership with parents and outside agencies. She is looking at further delegating tasks to enable staff to feel more empowered and give herself more time to focus on understanding areas for development in the home. There is a development plan in operation with a focus on improving outcomes for young people. The manager has a sound understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home.

A Statement of Purpose is in place and has recently been revised but in some cases information required is not included or lacks clarity. For example: details of staff and their qualifications and experience; what forms of control, restraint or discipline are used in the home; and a description of the monitors which are used in the home and what benefits this form of surveillance has on the well-being and safety of young people. The young people's guide is informative and comprehensive and explains what a young person can expect from the home.

The home is not required to undertake monthly monitoring visits by the registered provider. It is clear the Registered Manager undertakes monitoring within the home and gains feedback from young people, parents and placing authorities. Following a previous requirement, the Registered Manager has devised a form to ensure all matters required are monitored. However, this form is not currently in operation and requires some additional information. It is therefore difficult to establish how monitoring is currently being used to improve the quality of care provided. Therefore, this requirement is not fully met and is repeated.

The home employs sufficient staff to meet the needs of the young people. The staff team work together to cover any gaps; this ensures that young people receive consistent care from people who know them well. Staff benefit from regular supervision and feel well supported by the management team. However, there is inconsistency in the annual appraisals taking place; some staff have not received an appraisal in the last year. This means that staff performance over the year is not fully evaluated. Staff are suitably trained to meet the needs of the children who access the service. Recent training includes safeguarding and first aid. However, a learning and development programme is not in place for staff. Therefore, it is not clear what in-service training is provided to staff to enhance their individual skills and keep them up-to-date with practice developments. Some, but not all, of the staff team hold level 3 childcare qualifications or above. This means that not all staff have successfully attained a level 3 qualification.

Young people's case records are clear and comprehensive and contribute to an understanding of the young person's life. This helps staff to support young people to understand their background.

## 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.