

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	16/05/2013
Inspector	Jim Palmer
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Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	06/12/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The service is run by an established private provider. The home is registered to provide medium to long term care and accommodation for up to four young people who may have emotional and behavioural difficulties and/or learning disabilities. The home is managed as two separate units within one house.

The registered provider bases its practices on the integration of home, education and therapeutic services working together to meet the needs of the child. Young people living in the home can attend a school also run by the provider and have access to in-house therapeutic support.

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**.

At the last full inspection in August 2012 the service was judged as outstanding and at an interim inspection in December 2012 the home was assessed as making good progress. No requirements or recommendations were made.

Most young people have continued to make very good progress since the last full inspection. Young people's educational attendance and achievements continue to exceed many expectations. Most young people are very enthusiastic about the developments that have taken place since living at the home. They express significant improvements in their self-esteem, confidence and a greater ability to successfully manage any difficulties that they may encounter in the future.

All young people are very well supported by staff in the transition to adulthood and achieving their future plans. Most young people enjoy living in the home and clearly have very good relationships with staff and other young people. Not all young people share the same view, but all agree that the staff act in their best interests. Staff continue to provide young people with a sense of safety, good care and a particularly strong sense of self-worth and value.

Young people's health is promoted by the provision of access to health care professionals; all young people's health needs are very well met including specialist psychological and emotional needs. The staff have good contacts with health care services. Young people are encouraged and supported in taking some personal responsibility in developing healthy lifestyle choices.

Staff skills are developed by regular, effective supervision and appraisal. There is a comprehensive induction and training programme for staff. The manager provides excellent leadership and sets ambitious but achievable targets for young people, staff and the service.

Some young people are not able to access a telephone to use in private without referring to a staff member and some calls are monitored by staff listening to the conversation. While the intention is to promote the safety of young people it is a breach of regulation 15.

Young people's behaviour is managed largely by positive rewards and sanctions are rarely used. Staff are trained in the use of physical restraint but this is rarely used. The manager has been asked to review each of the individual holds that are approved by the company.

The service is well monitored and the quality of care regularly checked by the manager and visiting director. However, to date no report on the quality of care under regulation 34 has been received by Ofsted.

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
15 (2001)	ensure that children are provided at all reasonable times with access to a telephone that they may be able to use without reference to persons working in the home in order to make and receive calls in private. (Regulation 15(4)(a)	31/05/2013
34 (2001)	ensure that the registered person supplies Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) with a report in respect of any review of the quality of the service. (Regulation 34(2)).	31/05/2013

Recommendations

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

- review each of the methods of physical restraint currently approved for use within the home, specifically to ensure they comply with government guidance on the use of restraint (NMS 3.15).

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **outstanding**.

Young people continue to make significant progress in developing self-confidence and self-esteem. They each have a very good understanding of their backgrounds, their individual needs and the reasons why they are living in the home. Excellent relationships with staff and individually focused placement plans have encouraged the young people to make exceptional progress in gaining skills to give them greater strategies for managing aspects of their behaviour and developing greater resilience in managing their emotions in a more mature manner. Young people recognise the developments that are continuing to be made and are rightly proud of their achievements. As a result young people are able to make a constructive and positive contribution towards planning for their future and achieving the goals they set themselves. They are able to recognise other people's perceptions and engage in mature negotiations to resolve any conflict within the group.

Young people are enthusiastic and very positive about their attendance and the progress they are making in education. Each young person is making excellent progress and achieving beyond the level that some may have expected prior to placement in this home. They talk very positively about their experiences in school and some are planning to move on to college. Young people welcome the support they have been given in achieving educationally and clearly benefit from this experience. This has a significant impact on their self-esteem and social presentation.

Young people's health is promoted by the provision of a healthy diet and the opportunity to make healthy lifestyle choices. Each young person described how they make healthy choices when selecting meals for the week and when preparing meals for the group. Young people benefit from the good role modelling that staff provide and the strength of relationships that exist between themselves and staff. This has enabled young people to take a positive view of their lives and the importance of making healthy lifestyle choices for their futures. This includes seeking strategies for reducing risky behaviours. Young people make good use of the opportunity for individual time with staff and specialist workers. Their health needs are well assessed and regularly monitored in health assessments.

Young people have developed strong positive relationships with staff and feel cared for and valued. They speak very warmly about the staff and each other and are able to share views and opinions in an open and mature manner. The ethos that the home adopts encourages this and is immediately noticeable. All young people can

identify who they would speak with if they had any personal concerns. Staff are aware of the importance of contact between young people and their families and provide positive support to the young person and their family where a return to live at home is part of the placement plan.

Quality of care

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

Young people benefit from strong and positive relationships with staff and high levels of support, which provides them with emotional stability and confidence in the adults they live with. As a result of this support young people are able to fully participate in their future planning and achieving the goals they set for themselves.

Young people meet regularly with their key workers and fully participate in reviews of their placement. They are confident that their views are valued and considered in decision making. Young people recognise that their wishes and views cannot always be met. However they say they are always offered a reason why it is felt that their wishes may not always be in their best interest. Young people's plans are regularly reviewed with targets set for young people to aspire to. Achievement of these targets increases young people's self-esteem and confidence. Placement reviews take place at appropriate intervals and the views of young people and their families are fully considered.

All young people are clear about how they would raise any concern about any aspect of their life in the home, and who they would take those concerns to. The culture of open communication in the home provides young people with confidence that any concerns raised will be addressed.

Young people's physical and emotional health needs are met by detailed health care plans. Young people are encouraged to take responsibility for promoting their own health. Access to health care professionals is good; the home liaises regularly with health care professionals. Specialist health care services and psychological support are provided to young people as necessary.

Young people's educational achievement is promoted by staff taking an enthusiastic and supportive role in promoting their education. Staff attend school with young people and provide support in class if necessary. Staff and managers have high aspirations for young people and are proud to celebrate their achievements. This promotes pride in achievement by young people, who are achieving highly in school.

Young people have access to a mobile telephone on which there are pre-programmed numbers for contacts such as social worker, independent reviewing officer, Ofsted and Children's helplines should they wish to make a complaint. Young people do not have access to a telephone they can use without making reference to staff. Calls may be made to pre-agreed people at specific times on request. Staff dial the number for the young person and in some cases calls are monitored by staff listening to the call on an extension. Young people are aware of these restrictions;

however this is a breach of regulation.

Young people are encouraged to participate in a wide range of physical and more leisurely activities aimed at promoting self-confidence, self-esteem and social awareness. Young people are enthusiastic about activities such as Street dance, forest school, horse riding, swimming, and writing.

Young people live in a home that is very well decorated and furnished to a high standard. They each have their own bedroom which they are able to personalise as they wish. Young people are mostly very proud of their home. The home is maintained to a high standard and is a pleasant domestic style home comprising of two self-contained flats.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people's safety is promoted in the home by robust safeguarding policies and procedures that are known and understood by the staff. The home uses risk assessments to manage risks effectively. Young people say that they feel safe in the home and they are very clear that the staff do their best to keep them safe and promote their best interests. Young people receive excellent support in making appropriate choices about keeping themselves safe. Direct work is taking place with young people enabling them to develop appropriate strategies to keep themselves safe from child exploitation.

The home has agreed a protocol with the local police should young people be missing from the home. No young people have been missing from the home without consent since the last inspection. There have been occasions when young people have left the home, but were followed by staff and returned while being observed without going missing. Staff are very aware of the risks of such an absence and this is discussed with young people, who are able to make decisions in their own best interests. This is a reflection of the skills of the staff confidence young people have in them. Staff encourage young people to take controlled risks such as travelling independently in a controlled incremental manner.

Young people have detailed behaviour support plans and behaviour is largely managed by positive rewards and incentive schemes. Sanctions are rarely used. Young people say that sanctions and rewards are fair and reasonable. All staff are trained in physical intervention; the use of any restraint is well recorded and monitored. There have been nine occasions in which restraint has been used since the last inspection. Some holds are not used by the company. The company has been asked to review the list of approved holds in order to provide clarification for the team.

Staff recruitment is robust and all statutory checks are completed on staff prior to them starting work, ensuring the safe recruitment of staff. Safety in the home is

promoted by regular health and safety checks, regular gas and electricity checks and regular fire test and evacuations.

Leadership and management

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

The home is managed by a very experienced and competent manager. She demonstrates positive leadership and direction to staff and is clear of the standards she expects. She sets high expectations for young people and seeks to promote excellent outcomes for young people. The manager is passionate in seeking to continuously improve the quality of the service and is very aware of the home's strengths and weaknesses.

All complaints are well recorded and appropriately resolved, the home has a good track record for implementing any requirements or recommendations arising from previous inspections. At the two previous inspections there were no requirements or recommendations. The manager has however continued to consolidate good practice and is currently introducing staff to the child sexual exploitation training pack as a means of developing staff skill and knowledge in this area. She is encouraging the personal development of the staff team. Young people are set clear boundaries and expectations.

The Statement of Purpose is reviewed annually and accurately describes the service provided. Placing authorities are aware of the statement and what the service aims to provide. All young people have a copy of the young person's guide, some contributed to its content and design. The culture of the home is well established and the home has a good record of achieving highly successful outcomes for young people.

The home is regularly monitored by a visiting director and the manager effectively monitors the quality of the service in accordance with regulation 34 in monthly reports to senior managers. However to date no report of any review of the quality of care has been received by Ofsted. Young people benefit from detailed monitoring of their development, which promotes very good outcomes for young people. There is a service development plan in place that is reviewed annually. This sets realistic and achievable targets consolidating previous progress.

All young people have their own dedicated staff team who display a very thorough knowledge of young people's needs and how they are to be met. Staffing levels are good and young people clearly benefit from this highly personalised model of care. Staff receive excellent training, supervision and appraisal, which contribute to positive outcomes for young people.

All confidential records are securely stored; files are well recorded, structured and up to date. Young people are encouraged to participate and comment on their own development.

All significant events are appropriately recorded, followed up and notified to the relevant agencies.

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.