

## Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Inspection date</b>	23/05/2013
<b>Inspector</b>	Valerie Shephard
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Full
<b>Provision subtype</b>	Children's home

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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	12/02/2013
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## Service information

### Brief description of the service

The home is run by a privately owned company and is registered for up to four children or young people who have a learning disability or mental health disorder.

### 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**.

Children and young people benefit from a good standard of care provided within a safe and nurturing environment. Children and young people develop supportive and ultimately trusting relationships with staff. This helps them with the development of attachments and enhances the effectiveness of therapeutic services.

The home implements effective safeguarding practices to ensure the protection of children and young people from significant harm. Care planning is personalised and takes into account children's and young people's individual complex learning, emotional and mental health needs.

Consultation with children and young people ensures consideration of their views in the delivery of care. Once children and young people settle in the home, they make encouraging progress in relation to all areas of their development. One parent said 'overall I am very happy with the home and what it has done to support my child.'

Two requirements and five recommendations have arisen from this inspection. These relate to: notification of events to Ofsted, adherence to care plans, full information in case records, review of the home's development plan, recording of the duration of staff supervision sessions, verification of references for new staff and attention to wear and tear within the fabric of the home.

## 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
28 (2001)	ensure that children's case records includes the information specified in schedule 3 particularly in relation to the statutory provision (if any) under which the child is provided with accommodation (Regulation 28(1) Schedule 3 (7))	28/06/2013
30 (2001)	ensure to notify without delay any events listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 5. (Regulation 30(1))	28/06/2013

## Recommendations

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

- ensure the home provides a comfortable and homely environment and is well maintained with particular reference to general wear and tear of carpets and fitments (NMS 10.3)
- ensure the home's development plan is reviewed (NMS 15.2)
- ensure that as well as obtaining written references, telephone enquiries of references are made and that the outcomes of these are recorded (NMS 16.1)
- ensure supervision records detail the duration of each supervision session (NMS 19.5)
- ensure that the requirements of each child's placement plan are implemented in the day-to-day care of the child. (NMS 25.2)

## Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Outcomes for children and young people are good and commensurate with their starting point at the time of admission. Children and young people enjoy good physical health through established relationships with community health services. Strong links with an independent children and adolescent mental health service ensure children's and young people's mental health needs are met.

Children and young people learn about living a healthy lifestyle. They develop self-care skills in relation to their personal hygiene, for example taking regular showers and cleaning their teeth. Children and young people are encouraged to choose their

menus and learn about healthy eating. A member of staff said that some young people have improved their eating and now eat a wider range of food including fruit and vegetables. Children and young people develop independence skills in accordance with their age and stage of development. Some young people buy food and cook their own meals and are learning about money management. The acquisition of these skills helps to prepare young people for independence in the future.

Some children and young people attend their education regularly and are making steady progress. Where children or young people are out of school, staff ensure plans are in place to address suitable educational provision. Some young people have now left their education and have chosen not to enter college or further training. With assistance from staff they have been able to access opportunities to gain further qualifications or take part in voluntary work. This has enabled them to gain confidence in their abilities which has a positive effect on their self-esteem. Some have aspirations to return to education at a later date.

Once they are stable, children and young people make steady progress in understanding what has brought them to the home. With the assistance of the therapeutic process, they learn about the impact their early life experiences have on their behaviour. Good relationships exist between staff and the children and young people, especially those with keyworkers and therapists. These relationships serve to assist children and young people to learn alternative coping strategies to those they entered the home with.

Children and young people enjoy a range of sporting and leisure activities such as swimming, walking and visiting the local park. Engagement in these activities assists them to develop their social skills and feel part of the wider community. For some young people a great deal of encouragement and persuasion is necessary so that they are able to avail themselves of these opportunities.

All children and young people benefit from well organised and safe arrangements in relation to contact with their families. These arrangements assist them to sustain existing relationships and consequently attachments, and help them to maintain their sense of identity.

## **Quality of care**

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

Staff provide good quality care to children and young people and work effectively to create structure, clear boundaries and routines. Staff promote positive relationships and there is evidence of good attachments emerging. Children and young people readily seek their favourite staff member and staff respond in a warm and inclusive manner. The provision of patient and consistent care assists children and young people to begin to address their behavioural problems.

There are efficient working relationships with parents, placing authorities and

professionals such as children and adolescent mental health workers. Communication is effective and ensures staff work successfully with others who are connected to the children and young people. A social worker said, 'there is good communication with the home and they keep me informed of significant events in relation to the young person.'

Staff support young people to engage fully in their education, wherever possible. They work effectively with social workers and educational providers to ensure children and young people can access resources they require. In some cases it has been hard to engage young people in further education or training. However, opportunities through voluntary work assist some young people to advance their learning and acquire skills for future employment.

The provision of a healthy environment promotes children's and young people's physical and emotional well-being. Staff encourage them to make healthy choices in relation to their meals, or for those on independence plans, the purchasing of food. Staff ensure that children and young people can access a range of activities in the community to support good physical health. Some young people gain enjoyment from their voluntary work in local cafés and with animal care providers. These opportunities assist young people with their socialisation and have a positive effect on their emotional well-being.

Children and young people benefit from clear well written placement plans which identify their needs and how the home will meet them. Placement plans are subject to regular review and update. Consultation with children and young people about their plans ensures they have an input into the delivery of their care. However, there is a shortcoming in relation to the implementation of some plans. On occasions there have been inconsistencies between staff and poor adherence to plans when working within young people. The Registered Manager is aware of this and plans are in place to improve communication within the staff team.

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

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

Children and young people are safe in the home. Staff fully understand policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding and social workers confirm that staff keep children and young people safe. Children and young people feel able to talk to staff if they have any concerns or wish to make a complaint.

Children and young people in the home are particularly vulnerable due to difficulties associated with their behaviour, learning and/or mental health. Risk assessments are in place for all children and young people and these are subject to regular review and update. Generally children and young people do not go missing from the home and there have been no reports of bullying. Where there are concerns about possible risks of child sexual exploitation, staff refer these to the appropriate services. This ensures provision of early intervention and support for the child or young person.

Children and young people are encouraged to behave in a positive manner through the use of individual behaviour management plans. These focus on personalised reward schemes which assist children and young people to repeat desired behaviour and work towards their targets. While staff are trained in the use of physical restraint, they always aim to de-escalate a potentially difficult situation first. They talk calmly to children and young people and assist them to try and regain control of their behaviour. However, where necessary they restrain a child or young person to protect them or others from potential harm. Records clearly demonstrate the circumstances and the duration of a restraint, followed by an evaluation of its effectiveness. These measures help to ensure that children and young people do not put themselves or others at significant risk of harm.

There are effective recruitment practices in relation to the appointment of new staff to the home. Checks and references help to ensure that adults who could cause harm to children or young people are not appointed. There is a shortfall in relation to the following up references. There is no documentary evidence to demonstrate that appropriate verification with referees has taken place. The Registered Manager confirms that she verifies references; however the lack of written evidence does not fully support safe recruitment practice.

There are sufficient staff to ensure the safety of children and young people in the home. Concerns about restriction of liberty have been resolved and the practice of routinely locking exterior doors has now ended. In the event of an escalation of difficulties with a child or young person, interim measures are applied. This may mean temporarily locking exterior doors to safeguard the child or young person who is in crisis. In such situations, staff inform the other young people how they can exit the building. The issuing of keys to some young people in the home is currently under consideration.

## **Leadership and management**

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

The newly Registered Manager is implementing a range of systems to effectively monitor and evaluate the running of the home. The focus of the home is the delivery of good quality care to children and young people. One professional said, 'the home's referral procedure is sound, introductions are very child centred and there are clear aims and objectives for the placement.'

The home benefits from a staff team who are well qualified and experienced. The provision of a new deputy manager supports the Registered Manager in the running of the home. Sufficient staffing ensures that children and young people are supervised safely and staff are able to meet their needs. There are well-established working relationships with the children and adolescent mental health service. The home consequently meets the objectives of the Statement of Purpose.

The system for monitoring the quality of care under regulation 33 has improved with the appointment of an independent visitor. The Registered Manager addresses any

actions raised by this individual in an effort to drive improvements within the home. The requirement, under regulation 34, for the submission of six monthly reports to Ofsted is met. These measures ensure the regulatory body has oversight of the running of the home.

The home's development plan is due for review as this was initially prepared for the opening of the home 12 months ago. There have been changes in relation to management, staffing and the number of children and young people resident. Consequently this document is due for update to highlight changes made and demonstrate plans for the future development of the home.

Supervision of staff takes place regularly and is of good quality. However, a minor shortcoming exists as there is no record of the duration of the supervision session. This does not impact negatively on children and young people; however it does not uphold best practice in relation to staff support.

Children's and young people's records are well ordered and provide information of the child or young person's history during their period in the home. However, not all information is contained in the file in accordance with regulation. This is with particular reference to the statutory provision under which the child or young person is placed. This information is necessary to ensure that staff are clear about who has parental responsibility for the child or young person.

The physical condition of the home is good overall and maintenance is high priority with prompt repair to any damage caused. However, the home is shabby in parts due to general wear and tear. Examples include the kitchen units which need repair or refurbishment and some carpets which are showing signs of wear. Improvements would ensure a more homely environment for children and young people.

The manager has positively addressed the one recommendation from the last inspection. This related to the restriction of movement within the home for children and young people. The one requirement from the previous inspection is partly met. This pertained to the sending of notifications of events to Ofsted in a timely fashion. While there has been some improvement, there is still a shortfall and a further requirement is made in this respect.



## 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.