

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC415347
Inspection date	27/06/2013
Inspector	Julian Mason
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	30/01/2013
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for three young people with emotional and/or 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**.

Overall, the home provides individualised care and support that helps young people with their education, personal and social development. Young people are treated as individuals as the care they receive is tailored around their changing needs and circumstances. Young people are consulted on a daily basis about their routines and they are frequently involved in decisions that affect their lives. Where young people make choices that are potentially harmful or behave in ways that are risky, staff work to lessen the impact of these circumstances and encourage positive change. Young people feel safe in the home and acknowledge that staff want them to do well in their lives.

Four requirements have been made as a result of this inspection and these relate to the numbers of staff working in the home and the consistency of staffing; the home's updated Statement of Purpose not being sent to Ofsted and not all notifiable events being shared with the regulator.

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
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5 (2001)	notify the HMCI of any revision to the home's Statement of Purpose within 28-days (Regulation 5(b))	31/07/2013
25 (2001)	ensure that there is at all times, having regard to the size of the children's home, the Statement of Purpose and the number and needs of the children accommodated and the need to safeguard and promote their health and welfare a sufficient number of suitably qualified, competent and experienced persons (Regulation 25(1)(a)(b))	31/07/2013
25 (2001)	ensure that the employment of any persons on a temporary basis will not prevent children from receiving such continuity of care as is reasonable to meet their needs (Regulation 25(2))	31/07/2013
30 (2001)	ensure that if any of the events listed in column one of the table in Schedule 5 takes place, the registered person shall without delay notify the persons indicated in respect of the event in column two of the table. (Regulation 30(1))	31/07/2013

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **adequate**.

Young people are supported and encouraged to make positive progress in their lives although this is not always consistent or sustained. This is because young people are not always keen to accept the guidance and support offered by staff so the impact on improving outcomes or reducing risks is sometimes limited. In addition, longstanding relationships young people have had with permanent staff are being disrupted because of sickness and staff leaving. Consequently, this has increased the need for the home to use a greater number of cover staff to work directly with young people.

Established staff team members are reassuring and helpful because they are aware and knowledgeable of young people's individual circumstances and needs. Young people have formed important attachments with some staff but this has been undermined by the increase in the number of temporary staff used to work in the home.

Young people's education and learning arrangements take account of their needs, abilities and previous school experiences. There is a mix of arrangements that are matched to young people's current circumstances and academic potential. Staff work supportively with each young person and frequently liaise with school staff to help promote good attendance and achievement. This partnership working helps young people to sometimes overcome their difficulties with attendance, relationships and engagement with teachers.

Young people are consistently provided with a healthy environment where they are able to access the services and support needed to meet their medical and physical needs. Services are also available to support young people emotionally and

psychologically but individuals currently choose not to access these services. Staff talk to young people about their well-being and the best ways to maintain healthy lifestyles. Young people's family attachments are effectively supported by well-planned and organised arrangements. Staff provide practical and sensitive support to help young people overcome emotional difficulties associated with being away from their families.

Young people are supported and encouraged to make sensible choices and decisions as part of growing up and taking more responsibility for themselves. They learn practical skills by carrying out domestic chores and sometimes helping out around the house. Young people are able to exercise choice about how they spend their leisure time, which sometimes includes periods of free time with friends away from the home. Young people also have opportunities to take part in general trips and outings as well as specific activities relating to their personal interests. Staff listen to what young people have to say and this helps shape weekly planners that reflect individual choices and preferences.

Quality of care

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

Respectful relationships and interactions are encouraged within the home. Young people's behaviour can be challenging at times but the Registered Manager and staff team work hard to ensure a consistent and fair approach is taken when this happens. When young people struggle with expected behavioural boundaries, staff use their training and experience to influence and promote change. However, on a number of occasions recently, this has not worked and police have been called to the home for assistance. Despite these difficulties, the team continues to challenge poor or unsafe conduct in a way that offers young people alternative ways to behave.

Staff are with young people most of the time as a group and also on a one-to-one basis, so they are able to discuss their daily care and support needs. This helps staff to plan and organise themselves in a way that ensures each young person gets the right support and help they need.

Young people know how to complain if they are not happy about something and have used the home's procedure for doing so on a number of occasions. Resolutions are sought quickly and outcomes are always confirmed in writing to each young person. Young people also know who they can contact outside of the home if needed as this information is prominently displayed within the home. These arrangements give young people choice in how they go about raising a concern about the home if needed.

Detailed individual placement plans are devised in partnership with young people, residential staff and placing social workers. Plans are comprehensive and reflect important information about each young person's needs such as health, safety, behavioural support and managing risk. Staff use this information to guide and develop their routines and practices. There are systems in place to keep staff, social

workers and families up to date with day-to-day progress. Detailed review reports are produced that provide a comprehensive picture of how well young people are doing and what progress they are making. This information also contributes to formal reviews undertaken by the placing authority which young people are fully involved in.

Young people are provided with living accommodation that is spacious, clean and tidy. The home is decorated, maintained and furnished to a reasonable standard. Young people's bedrooms are personalised to meet their individual tastes and needs. The Registered Manager and staff team monitor the home's environment to ensure it is safe for everyone. Damage to the furniture, fixtures and fittings has occurred but regular maintenance routines enable repairs to be made quickly.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Staff use established procedures and practices to help protect young people and promote their safety. Detailed assessments are in place, which identify areas of risk and vulnerability. Staff use this information to shape their daily work with young people which includes managing risks associated with poor behaviour and being missing from care. Generally, young people do not go missing from the home and for most of the time; staff know where young people are. Recently, some missing from care events have occurred and staff use individualised assessments to guide their responses in these circumstances. Staff are actively involved in gaining young people's return and use local protocols to promote joint working with social workers and the police.

The permanent staff team receive child protection training and they know how to respond to allegations or suspicions of abuse or report concerns about an individual's safety. The home's responses to safeguarding events are closely monitored and as a result have been strengthened following a delay in referring a matter on to all relevant external agencies. The Registered Manager has established links with the local police and other designated professionals who are involved in the protection of young people.

Young people are also kept safe because the home has good systems in place for the recruitment and vetting of all new care staff. In addition, visitors to the home are closely monitored and checked. The home is physically safe and appropriately secure to take into account young people's needs. Detailed risk assessments and fire safety checks are undertaken to maintain acceptable levels of health and safety.

Staff work in a way that supports and encourages reasonable behaviour and social interactions. Any unacceptable behaviour is challenged as staff are always around to do this. This means everyone in the home knows what is expected in terms of behaving towards each other. Young people are praised and congratulated and receive rewards for behaving well. Formal sanctions are rarely used and physical restraint is only applied in circumstances where the risks to young people or others are significant. Currently, staff sometimes struggle to positively influence young

people's behaviour, which can be uncooperative and very disruptive. In these circumstances, staff use their training and skills to try and deescalate situations which currently results in varying degrees of success.

Leadership and management

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

Overall, the Registered Manager and staff team work together to ensure the management of home meets young people's needs. A Statement of Purpose is in place, which gives clear information about the services to be provided although an updated copy has not been shared with Ofsted as required. Young people receive their own guide, which contains clear information about how the service operates and what to expect from the staff team.

The home is managed by a Registered Manager who also manages another registered children's home close by. The Registered Manager's time is shared between both homes depending on the needs, demands and circumstances of each service. Staff are provided with practical support, which helps them structure their daily routines and the activities for each young person. The permanent staff team are qualified, trained and experienced in working with the current group of young people. They are supervised and supported and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

The manager closely monitors staffing levels and adjusts these where necessary to ensure that young people receive support that is consistent with their needs. However, a combination of circumstances has necessitated the use of an increasing number of agency staff as well as staff from other homes. Although individual shifts are still led by experienced members of the team, the opportunities young people have to develop relationships with all their carers over the last few months has been limited. Although the Registered Manager has worked to reduce the impact of these circumstances by using experienced staff, young people still do not know some of their carers very well.

Monitoring visits are routinely carried out and written feedback is provided about the home's operation, which includes areas for improvement and development. The Registered Manager also evaluates how well the home is meeting young people's needs and the progress they are making. This information is used to formulate development plans and actions to improve the service. Staff and managers ensure records are kept up to date, stored securely and contribute to understanding each young person's progress and life experiences. Nearly all significant events that have occurred in the home that relate to young people's safety and welfare are shared with the appropriate agencies including Ofsted. Although one recent notifiable event has not been shared with Ofsted, other agencies were notified so the impact on young people of this shortfall is minimal.

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.