

Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Inspection date</b>	18/07/2013
<b>Inspector</b>	Joanna Heller
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Full
<b>Provision subtype</b>	Children's home

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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	24/04/2013
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## Service information

### Brief description of the service

The home is privately owned. It is registered to look after a maximum of six young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. There are education facilities within the grounds of the home.

### 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 have sound relationships with staff which are helping them develop confidence and reflect on their past. Young people are consulted on all aspects of their lives and feel that staff help them develop as individuals. Some young people have made strong progress in relation to their education and are enjoying their school experiences. Young people are very positive about the home rating it between good and brilliant reflecting how their views have improved substantially since the previous inspection.

Support to young people is individualised and child focused. Young people are supported to articulate their feelings; this means that incidents of challenging behaviour are rare and restraint is not used. Some young people however, continue to participate in some risky behaviour despite staff support and guidance.

The home has experienced some difficulties in the past six months with a lack of clear leadership and direction. However, under the new management arrangements leadership within the home is sound. The acting manager has overseen significant improvement in the home during the past three months which has been noted by both young people and placing authorities. The acting manager and responsible individual are working together to secure continuing improvement in the home. Young people, placing authorities and staff have confidence in the management team to lead the home forward.

## 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)	supply to Ofsted a copy of a report in respect of any review conducted in accordance with regulation 34. Ensure that the system established for monitoring and improving the quality of care provides for consultation with young people accommodated in the home, their parents and placing authorities. (Regulation 34 (2) & (3))	30/08/2013

## Recommendations

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

- implement a proportionate approach to risk assessment. In particular; ensure individual risk assessments are kept up to date and reflect those measures which staff take to safeguard young people (NMS 4.5)
- provide suitable arrangements for the professional supervision of the manager. (NMS 19.3)

## Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **adequate**.

Young people enjoy living at the home and feel safe and well supported. Young people have developed positive relationships with staff and each other. Some, but not all, young people make strong individual progress with growth in their confidence and self-esteem. Young people are able to express their views confident in the fact that they will be listened to.

Young people are developing their emotional resilience and are able to reflect on their past histories and how this impacts on how they feel now. Young people are supported to understand how some of their behaviours place them at risk. Some young people, however, continue to make poor decisions which place them at risk of re-offending.

Young people are healthy and are supported to improve their eating habits. Young people are encouraged to undertake healthy extra-curricular activities, such as, dance and sports. Some young people have good school attendance and have made strong progress in their education. Some others however, have not made the

progress that was anticipated, and these young people are committed to redressing this through further education opportunities with staff support. Some young people have represented their school in key athletic events giving them a keen sense of achievement.

Young people are able to maintain contact with family and peers according to the level they wish. Staff have a robust approach to ensuring that such contact is maintained in a safe way and young people are involved in negotiating boundaries for this, ensuring that they continue to feel in control of their lives.

Young people are supported in developing skills that they will need when they move on from the home in a way which is tailored to their needs. Young people are secure in the knowledge that when they move on, staff will continue to offer them support and guidance.

### **Quality of care**

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

Young people have sound relationships with each other and young people feel that the home is a calm and pleasant place to live. Young people say 'It is a happy place now, we are all laughing and joking.' Young people have good relationships with staff which underpin the strong progress some young people have made in relation to their education, health and emotional well-being. The staff team come from a variety of backgrounds and reflect the diversity of the young people. Staff are aware of young people's individual needs and ensure that these are met.

Young people are able to talk to staff about things which are worrying them and confide in them. Young people refer to the staff group as 'good people'. Staff are committed to listening to the views and wishes of young people and work in partnership with them to try to effect change. Young people are encouraged to be involved in decision making within the home, for example, some young people have recently participated in the recruitment of prospective staff.

There has been one complaint since the last inspection which was fully investigated and the young person kept informed at all stages of the process. This means that young people value the home's complaints procedure and are confident to raise any issues of concern, secure in the knowledge that the staff and manager will listen to them and fully investigate their concerns. Some young people have developed very good skills in articulating their views and are using these to advocate on behalf of others.

Placement plans developed by the home are of sufficient quality and detail to set out how young people's needs are met. Young people are clearly involved in the development of these plans. This ensures that young people feel ownership and are therefore more likely to achieve the aims and objectives.

Young people are healthy and are encouraged to live a healthy lifestyle, having

signed up to the local 'healthy living' scheme. There are positive links with local health services and young people are supported to access these as appropriate. The home has safe systems in place for the storage and administration of medication. Where there are concerns regarding young people's substance use, the support of specialist agencies and the local police are secured. This ensures a rounded approach to enabling the young people understand the potential consequences of their lifestyle choices.

Education is prioritised and some young people have successfully reintegrated into mainstream school. This has been a positive experience enhancing young people's confidence, particularly as they have been representing the school in sports events. Staff maintain close contact with the school and are there to support young people at educational meetings or events. Staff are effective in supporting young people secure appropriate further education placements. Young people are able to receive extra support and guidance through the onsite tutoring arrangements, and staff are creative in identifying educational opportunities within activities that young people enjoy. This ensures that young people are provided with opportunities to learn and progress throughout their daily lives.

Young people are provided with opportunities to enjoy group activities, such as trips to theme parks as well as smaller local individual activities. Young people are enjoying planning activities for the summer and their holiday.

Young people who are working towards independence are supported in managing their own budgets and developing other skills, such as, cooking. The independence programme is reviewed where there are concerns and young people are not ready for this. Staff provide an outreach service to positively support young people move on into independent living.

The home that young people live in is spacious, adequately maintained and comfortable. Young people have their own bedrooms which they personalise according to their taste.

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

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

Young people say they feel safe and well cared for. Young people say 'the staff are good people who care about us.' This view is supported by the local police and placing social workers.

The young people have become more settled in the past three months and placing authorities comment positively on the ability of staff to effectively introduce structure and boundaries for some young people. When sanctions are used these are applied appropriately, are clearly recorded and monitored. Staff focus on restorative measures and addressing the consequences of behaviour through key work discussions. This helps young people begin to understand the impact that their behaviours have on others, and how they themselves are perceived.

No restraints have taken place since the last inspection and young people living in the home are currently settled. Staff training in the home's control, restraint and de-escalation techniques is scheduled to take place shortly. A central record for restraints is maintained in the home. This means that the manager effectively monitors the number and frequency of restraints; in particular, any patterns and trends emerging.

The current group of young people live harmoniously together and bullying is not a problem within the home. Some young people have made a commitment to severing gang relationships and are keen to ensure that the home stays a place of refuge from such past negative ties. Positive relationships with local police have been established and the home works well in partnership with them to prevent the criminalisation of any antisocial behaviour.

Regular one-to-one discussions evidence how young people are encouraged to learn about keeping themselves safe and to take responsibility for their actions. Some young people, however, continue to engage in risky behaviours, such as, taking cannabis and offending. Some risk assessments, have not been kept up to date and do not clearly reflect young people's progress and the work that staff undertake to minimise these risks. This means that a clear and accurate assessment of risks posed is not always in place.

Young people rarely go missing and when they do, staff take all reasonable action to locate them in accordance with their individual assessment of vulnerability. Clear records are maintained of any incidents of young people going missing. The home's policy has recently been updated to reflect current local joint protocols. This means that staff are now clear as to the difference between being absent without permission and being missing from care.

Young people are safeguarded from unsuitable people gaining employment in the home through robust vetting practices. The home ensures that staff are not employed until all checks on their suitability are in place. Suitable systems are in place to ensure that visitors are suitably monitored.

Staff have recently undertaken training on safeguarding and child protection and staff have the confidence to address issues of concern should they arise. Nationally recognised higher level safeguarding training is scheduled for the senior management team so that they can lead staff more effectively. This solid approach to safeguarding has been tested in practice and the issues of concern managed appropriately in conjunction with partner agencies.

The home's environment is a safe place in which to live and work. Attention is paid to ensuring regular checks of the home take place. Fire precautionary arrangements have recently been assessed as satisfactory by the local fire brigade, ensuring young people and staff are safeguarded from fire in line with current good practice.

## **Leadership and management**

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

The home has had a turbulent period over the past six months with unsettled management arrangements which undermined the quality of care within the home. Following the last inspection the responsible individual has reviewed the management arrangements and recruited a new manager to lead the service forward.

There have been significant developments since the last inspection which have improved the service as a whole. Particular examples are improvements in the level of support and training to staff, in addition to the quality of record keeping and management oversight. Young people, placing authorities and staff comment on how positively the home is progressing under the new leadership arrangements.

Staff feel well supported by the introduction of regular good quality supervision, this means that staff are now clear on the expectations of them and how to achieve these. Staff feel that new systems introduced help them use and maintain records more consistently. Investment in staff training in the past three months means that all staff now have, or are scheduled to undertake, training in core areas, such as, child protection, medication, restraint and food hygiene. The introduction of better support systems for staff means that they feel more valued and are more able to confidently and competently perform their role. Suitable arrangements for the professional supervision of the manager have yet to be put in place; this means that the manager has limited support and opportunities for professional discussion and reflection.

The quality of care provided to the young people remains sound and staff continue to demonstrate positive expectations of, and aspirations for, the young people in their care. Staffing levels are suitable to meet the needs of the young people. Regular bank or agency staff are used in order to ensure continuity of care is not compromised.

The senior management team ensure that complaints are effectively responded to, investigated and managed this ensures that young people have confidence in the system. Recording processes are clear and enable access to key information and give a good account of the young people's time at the home. These new recording and file management systems, aid effective monitoring of the service. The manager has a clear development plan for the home, which has been drawn up after consultation with staff and young people. This has begun to be implemented effectively facilitating the positive developments noted at this inspection.

There are suitable systems in place for effectively monitoring the standards of care and management within the home. The manager is in the process of pulling together this information in order to provide a formal review of the quality of care in line with regulation 34. Monthly visits to monitor the quality of care have been carried out since the last inspection and the responsible individual and manager have used these to help further develop the services provided. The responsible individual has



embarked on a personal learning programme ensuring further development of their awareness of regulations and their responsibilities. The responsible individual is also undertaking nationally recognised higher level safeguarding training and exploring further recognised child care training.

The manager has ensured that all but one of the requirements, and all recommendations set at the last inspection have been met. The manager has demonstrated the home has significant capacity to continue to improve.

## 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.