

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	10/05/2013
Inspector	Joanne Vyas
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	29/11/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This privately operated home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four young people who may display emotional or behavioural difficulties.

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**.

A change of Registered Manager and a new admission has had a significant impact on the behaviour of young people in this home which has led to young people being expelled from mainstream education. However, the consistent approach from staff has meant young people are now responding positively and are starting to make significant progress, particularly with regards to their behaviour but also with their education. The new Registered Manager is well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the home and has plans in place to ensure its continued improvement.

A number of shortfalls have been identified at this inspection. Young people do not have access to a phone without asking staff. The organisation does not ensure the suitability of all placements. Young people are not sufficiently prepared so they can more fully understand when significant relationships have to change. Staff training is not always updated. Young people are restricted from accessing some communal areas of their home. Some areas of the home are not kept adequately clean.

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 accommodated in the home are provided at all reasonable times with access to the following facilities which they may use without reference to persons working in the home; a telephone on which to make and receive telephone calls in private (Regulation 15 (4)(a))	10/06/2013
11 (2001)	ensure that the children's home is conducted so as to promote and make proper provision for the welfare of children accommodated there. This specifically refers to taking into account the suitability of the placement for the child and the ages and the range of needs of the other children in the home prior to the child's admission. (Regulation 11 (1)(a))	10/06/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure staff are equipped with the skills required to meet the needs of the children and purpose of the setting, and training keeps them up-to-date with professional, legal and practice developments and reflects policies, legal obligations and business needs of the home (NMS 18.1)
- ensure physical restrictions on normal movement within or from the home are not used unless this is necessary to safeguard children and promote their welfare and development. Such measures are only used where agreed with the responsible authority and, if appropriate, the parents. Such restrictions for one child do not impose similar restrictions on other children (NMS 10.4)
- ensure the home provides a comfortable and homely environment. This specifically refers to ensuring carpets and bathrooms are kept clean (NMS 10.3)
- ensure staff support children's social and emotional development and enable children to develop emotional resilience and self-esteem. This specifically refers to helping children to understand when significant relationships change. (NMS 2.2)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people like living in this home and say they are happy. They get on well with each other and the staff. A young person said, 'It's a really lovely and friendly house.' Young people make good progress towards managing their own behaviour and their education.

Young people are looking forward to starting up a business club where they grow vegetables or make cards to sell to the public. They have already made a start. A

young person said, 'Planted some vegetables yesterday, beetroot and cabbage.' Furthermore, young people help with painting and decorating the house, 'I'm good at painting and decorating. It's a really fun house.' This will provide them with a range of skills they will require as they transition into adulthood and the workplace.

Young people who have not been attending education or have been excluded are attending education on a planned part-time basis and taking exams. They are making steady progress which may mean returning to mainstream education in the future. Staff are proud of the achievements of young people in their care.

Young people who arrive in the home with extreme risk taking behaviours such as running away and mixing with undesirable and risky people are helped to develop their self-esteem and confidence, therefore reducing such behaviour. Young people develop a good understanding of their emotional, psychological and physical health. They attend regular healthcare appointments to ensure their continued good health. A counsellor employed by the organisation also visits the young people on a weekly basis to provide emotional support. Young people are actively encouraged to attend appointments and have a good understanding of their health needs. For example young people who smoke understand the health implications of smoking and are actively trying to stop smoking.

Young people have contact with their families as set out by the placing authorities. Families are welcomed into the home. However, young people do not have access to a phone without reference to staff. A young person said, 'It's alright to use the office phone. I have enough privacy.' However, not all young people may feel like this and they currently have no way of contacting outside agencies such as Child Line, their social worker or Ofsted without asking staff to use the phone.

Quality of care

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

Young people and staff build strong relationships with each other. A young person said, 'When I'm upset staff give us a cuddle. This helps.' And, 'Some are crazy in a good way.' A young person referred to another as being like a sister. Young people said they enjoy doing activities with staff such as swimming, the gym and the cinema. They also enjoy walks, playing on the games console or playing card games.

Staff challenge barriers to ensure young people have a good education which is suited to their specific needs. They support young people to go to their education placement and attend all meetings with regards to education. Staff help young people with their homework. An external professional commented that staff try to encourage young people with things they do well. For example if a young person is good at art, this is encouraged and supported.

External professionals all agreed that staff communicate effectively with them. They work closely with staff to ensure the best outcomes for each young person. Staff also work in partnership with schools, parents (where appropriate) and healthcare

professionals providing a holistic approach to care and education. An external professional said, 'Staff are very informative and cooperative.'

The views and wishes of young people influence the running of the home and the delivery of their care. Young people are involved in decisions about their care, future and the home. A young person said, 'I helped pick the décor in the dining room. Painted the landing and my bedroom.' They have open and honest conversations with staff, informally, on a day to day basis. They also have more formal meetings with their keyworkers to discuss specific issues such as drug misuse, missing from home and smoking. Young people attend house meetings where they discuss forthcoming activities, menus and issues within the home. The Registered Manager has also introduced a questionnaire which young people can complete about the progress they feel they have made. This information informs their care plan.

Young people benefit from a homely environment which is decorated and well maintained. They have single rooms providing young people with their own private space. However, some carpets are heavily stained and bathrooms are not cleaned frequently enough leaving the bath in a poor state of cleanliness. The bathroom was cleaned immediately and a new cleaning rota drawn up. Furthermore, the home has been informed that new carpets will be provided but no timeframe has been given for this as yet.

The lounge door is kept locked during the hours of education to prevent young people accessing the television. This prevents young people moving around their home as they wish. Furthermore, this physical restriction has not been agreed with the responsible authority and, where appropriate, the parents.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people feel safe and are safe in this home. They say staff keep them safe and feel the house is very secure. Staff have a good understanding of the home's safeguarding procedures and know how to keep young people safe. The local authority designated person said of the staff, 'They certainly understand the process. I always feel when talking to them that they are being open with us.'

Young people benefit from a multi-agency approach towards ensuring their safety. This ensures that appropriate professional guidance is sought to ensure correct strategies are implemented to safeguard young people. For example, professionals will meet to discuss young people who go missing regularly to ascertain a strategic consistent approach. This has meant the incidence of young people who run away from the home has significantly reduced and, in fact, no young people have gone missing from the home since February. The skills and competence of staff working in partnership with other agencies has proved successful in reducing risk taking behaviours in young people.

Strong relationships with other agencies such as the police and fire officers means

young people have positive experiences of the emergency services. For example, the local police community support officer regularly visits to chat with the young people informally and have lunch or a drink with them. This helps to build relationships so if the police are required to intervene with young people from the home, they have a better understanding of the young people and young people are more likely to respond positively to them. Additionally, a local fire officer talks to the young people about the dangers of setting fires. This helps young people to better understand the consequences of carrying out dangerous activities.

Staff work consistently with young people, spending time talking and reflecting which helps prevent a lot of incidents. Young people are able to comment on incidents of restraint they are involved in and any sanctions they are given. They are given the opportunity to talk through incidents after the event to help them to understand what happened, why it happened and how they can stop it from happening again. Furthermore, the incidence of physical intervention and sanctions given has reduced significantly in the last few months. Additionally, there has been a significant increase in the number of rewards given to young people for good behaviour. This demonstrates a significant positive change in the behaviour of young people signifying they are starting to understand the implications and consequences of their behaviour.

Leadership and management

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

The home has a comprehensive statement of purpose which clearly sets out the ethos and practice of the home.

This home has gone through an unsettled period of time. This can be attributed to the previous Registered Manager leaving the home. The impact of her leaving was not fully realised and therefore young people were not properly prepared for the loss they felt. Furthermore, there has been poor matching of placements with existing young people and young people being admitted to the home. These events have had a significant impact on the existing young people in the home with regards to their behaviour and their education. However, the Registered Manager has ensured staff work consistently as a team and young people have started to respond positively.

Young people are supported by a staff team who are skilled, mostly qualified, experienced and caring. The organisation ensures staff receive appropriate on-going training to enable them to meet the needs of the young people in their care. For example, staff have received training about young people who are at risk of child sexual exploitation. However, some training is not updated at appropriate times and most staff have not yet received any training on equality and diversity.

The Registered Manager understands the strengths and weaknesses of the home. The development plan sets out realistic improvements to the home. The Registered Manager challenges discrimination and provides an inclusive environment where young people and staff feel they can fully participate in the development of the

home.

The Registered Manager has made significant progress towards ensuring the requirement set at the previous inspection is now met. Staff now make a full written account whenever there is an incident involving physical intervention.

The Registered Manager makes good use of a range of monitoring activities such as Regulation 34 checks to ensure the home operates to a satisfactory standard within its statement of purpose. It is also clear that the Registered Manager actively keeps up to date with new legislation and practice developments to further improve the quality of the service provided. A senior member of the organisation visits the home at least monthly to assess the conduct of the home. Reports produced from these visits provide good evidence of life within the home and positive outcomes for young people.

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.