

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	07/08/2013
Inspector	Kevin Whatley
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The setting offers care and accommodation for up to six females aged from 8 to 17 years. Children and young people are normally placed at the home for medium- to long-term periods, although emergency and short-term placements are also provided. The home is run by a private organisation.

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**.

Young people receive good levels of care, support and guidance and make progress in their lives. The quality of care is outstanding with a holistic approach assisting young people to engage in therapy and ultimately address the complex issues they have. Approaches to care planning are extremely effective with the individual needs of young people being expertly assessed and incorporated into programmes of care and intervention.

Young people play an active role in all aspects of life in the home and contribute fully to the way it is run. Young people have their views listened to and are encouraged and supported to consider the needs of others in the home and the wider community. A core strength of the home is the quality of relationships between young people and staff. As a result young people benefit from a positive and committed staff team who display clear aspirations for the young people in their care.

Young people say they feel safe with robust and individualised intervention programmes and strategies reducing their risky and inappropriate behaviours. Comprehensive and objective monitoring procedures ensure appropriate standards of care are maintained.

The home is managed well, with a new acting manager recently taking over following a period of some transition; this has included a large number of new staff being employed. Comments from young people, social workers and staff are most

positive regarding the manner in which the home is run.

The three requirements made at this inspection relate to the need for an application for the acting manager to be forwarded to Ofsted so that due consideration can be given for him to become Registered Manager; notifying Ofsted of serious events; and the need for a copy of the manager's reviews of care to be forwarded to Ofsted once every six months. None of these shortfalls pose any risk to the well-being of young people.

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
7 (2001)	appoint an individual to manage the home; in particular ensure if a new manager is in post and is not registered, there is an application in process, received by Ofsted, within 28 days of the appointment (Regulation 7 (1))	23/09/2013
30 (2001)	ensure, if, in relation to a children's home, any of the events listed in column 1 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 2 of the table (Regulation 30 (1))	23/09/2013
34 (2001)	supply to Ofsted a report in respect of any review conducted by them for the purposes of Regulation 34 paragraph (1). (Regulation 34 (2))	23/09/2013

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people make good progress at the home; in some cases this is considerable given their starting points on admission. Parents, social workers and young people state that staff go above and beyond in their duties. Young people say, 'my keyworker is great' and 'I know staff really care about me'.

Young people always have their views, opinions and wishes incorporated into the day-to-day running of the home. They say they feel listened to and that 'there is always someone you can talk to.' Young people contribute fully to their care plans, reviews, intervention strategies and risk assessments. The open nature of the home

allows for young people to voice their issues easily.

Young people are supported to engage in their education. A positive learning culture ensures young people are made fully aware of the importance of attending and engaging in their schooling. Young people who arrived shortly before the summer holidays already have agreed plans in place to ensure they receive education from the start of next term.

Young people are enabled to maintain and develop constructive relationships with their families and friends. Staff assist and support young people with contact arrangements and offer on-going advice and guidance concerning the feelings that these events may create. Such an approach ensures young people enjoy contact with their family members and other significant people in their lives. Young people have been encouraged to make appropriate friendships in the local community, which adds to the feeling of normality within the home.

Young people receive appropriate support as they approach adulthood. The home has its own independence programme which includes cooking, household chores and financial management. Staff offer informed and realistic advice and guidance for young people of the circumstances of looking after themselves more interpedently.

Quality of care

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

Young people receive an outstanding quality of care where they benefit from extremely positive relationships with staff. This in turn enables them to develop improved levels of self-esteem and self-worth and make progress in their lives. The importance of high quality relationships forms the backbone of the work undertaken at the home and encourages young people to gain confidence in themselves. For example young people who were admitted directly from a secure welfare environment have been able to learn about their own vulnerabilities when away from adult supervision. In doing so they have significantly reduced the occasions when they put themselves at risk of harm or exploitation.

Young people receive excellent support in addressing their health care needs, in particular their emotional well-being. Alongside ensuring all routine medical appointments are kept the home liaises closely with external agencies, such as the looked after nurse, who regularly visits to the home. This allows for one-to-one advice and guidance, for instance sexual health awareness, to be delivered sensitively and in the comfort of the home. The home employs a child psychologist who assesses the holistic needs of each young person from the point of referral and throughout their placement thereafter. Such an approach enables individualised programmes of care and intervention to be put in place and intensively reviewed to ensure they match the needs of the young person concerned. All young people are considered for individual therapy, which can be provided at any stage of their time in the home. Young people currently placed are attending and engaging in regular individual therapy sessions. In turn young people are able to gain an insight into

their own behaviours, attitudes, fears and anxieties.

Young people have individual plans of care that are completed to the highest standard and followed by staff in practice. Care planning takes account of the cultural background and personal identity of each young person. All plans are compiled in line with the aims of the placing authority and take into account all available information. The home's child psychologist assists in the development of plans while young people are helped to complete their own care planning assessments. The later encourages young people to express their views easily and directly influence how they are cared for. Reviews of care occur routinely with weekly reports providing a most detailed overview of the progress of young people. The close scrutiny of the success of strategies and interventions ensures young people receive individual packages of care that matches their specific and changing needs and wishes. Young people are enabled to participate fully in statutory reviews and are supported to express their views meaningfully.

Young people enjoy a wide range of activities which are purposeful and linked to their wishes and interests. Regular trips are undertaken to local leisure centres and places of interest which helps them to engage in healthy physical pursuits such as swimming. As it was the summer holidays a trip took place to a theme park during the inspection. A holiday is planned for this summer which will see all young people going away together. The home encourage young people to involve themselves in the community as much as possible and to experience situations the same as for any young person. As a result young people currently attend a local regular roller skating event which has allowed them to make and sustain age appropriate friendships.

Young people live in a home which provides a high standard of accommodation. The home offers considerable comfort and space being furnished in a homely and young person centred way. Young people are assisted to personalise their own rooms and to choose the décor when they wish to have them redecorated. The building is well maintained with the garden offering a good amount of outdoor space.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

The home are successful at keeping young people as safe as possible. Young people say they feel safe and that they are given considerable support to help them reduce their risky or negative behaviours. Staff display a sound understanding of key child protection protocols and are mindful of the particular vulnerabilities of each young person when away from adult supervision. All young people have detailed risk assessments in place which accurately reflect the risks they maybe to themselves or others. Such assessments provide clear guidance for staff in how to reduce and manage risk/s which are followed in practice. These include working alongside other agencies, such as the police, in providing support and advice in reducing the risk of sexual exploitation.

A comprehensive recruitment process ensures only staff who have been

appropriately checked work with young people. A similarly robust approach ensures when allegations are made against staff that swift and appropriate actions are taken to safeguard all parties. This includes liaising closely with the local police and Local Authority Designated Officer and supporting those affected.

Staff implement appropriate boundaries which enable young people to gain an understanding of what constitutes behaving well. Expert input from the organisation's child psychologist provides staff with focused advice and guidance to meet specific behavioural concerns. The quality of the relationships between staff and young people encourages open discussion concerning issues such as respect for themselves and others. Close liaison with the local community police support officer also assists in young people developing an appropriate rapport with figures of authority. Young people say the rules are 'fair' and that these have helped them appreciate there are consequences to their actions. These can include the implementation of sanctions, although alternatives to punitive penalties are always considered. For example a young person helping to repair some damage rather than just giving them a fine.

The home work hard to reduce the occasions when young people leave the home without permission. Predominantly this relates to young people returning home from free time late rather than running away from care. Clear protocols are in place to report young people to the police in such instances with staff being proactive in searching for them when they do not return. Each incident of this nature is written up in detail, including what led up to the episode, what reduction/safeguarding actions were taken and a de-brief with the young person on their return. Such an approach provides an excellent evaluation of the circumstance of the event. More importantly it allows young people time to consider the reasons behind their behaviour and the potential harm they could have placed themselves in. This has led to young people reducing the times they act in such a way and ultimately gaining a greater understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

Behaviour seen during the inspection was extremely good with young people clearly settled in their environment. Staff are trained to deal with situations which require the use of physical intervention and only do so when absolutely necessary. The use of restraint is low with just two incidents occurring since the last inspection.

The health and safety of all those living and working in the home is taken seriously to ensure their safety and well-being. The testing and servicing of gas, electrical fire safety equipment is completed routinely. Fire drills occur regularly and ensure that everyone knows what to do in the event of a fire.

Leadership and management

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

The home is effectively managed with the particular needs of young people a priority of care practice. Since the last inspection the home has experienced a considerable transition which has included the appointment of virtually a whole new staff team,

including a new acting manager. The previous Registered Manager left the home shortly before May 2013. Although the process of obtaining all the necessary information is nearing completion, as yet the required application has not been received by Ofsted. The acting manager has a wealth of experience within the residential child care arena. He clearly understands the strengths and weaknesses of the service and displays appropriate aspirations to improve further. Feedback regarding the impact the acting manager has had on running the home from staff, social workers and young people is extremely positive. None of the shortfalls identified at this inspection can be attributed to the acting manager.

The home's statement of purpose reflects the move toward offering care and support to females only with care practices matching the aims and objectives of service provision. Social workers and independent reviewing officers praised the home for meeting the specific needs of young people and treating them as individuals.

A good number of staff are employed to care for the assessed needs of young people. Many staff are experienced with the team being suitably balanced in terms of gender and age. Staff receive a good standard of training and say they benefit from 'fantastic' support and guidance from the acting manager and senior team. The staff team appear motivated and committed to their tasks and clearly understand the needs of young people in their care.

The home is monitored robustly with regular reviews of care ensuring the impact of services being provided are assessed as a matter of course. The organisation completes monthly inspection visits which are thorough and objective in context. The acting manager also carries out monthly checks of care standards which provide a reasonable overview of the home; Ofsted has not received a copy of this format within the last six months as required. This shortfall does not pose a risk to young people.

Records were found to be accurate and completed to a high standard. All relevant documentation focused on the individual needs of young people and their subsequent progress thus providing a clear picture of their life within the home.

In general all significant events which take place in the home are notified to Ofsted as required. However Ofsted has not been informed about one incident where police had been called to the home. This took place a number of months ago prior to the current acting manager being employed. This shortfall did not impact on the care provided to 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.