

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	21/08/2013
Inspector	Natalie Burton
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Date of last inspection	14/02/2013
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This home is registered to provide care and accommodation for four young people with learning disabilities. A charitable organisation owns and operates this setting. The organisation provides a separately registered education facility which is based locally.

the home was registered in February 2013.

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**.

This is a newly registered service and this is the first full inspection. Young people make good progress in education and further developing life skills. They enjoy varied opportunities to engage in hobbies and activities and as a result, young people improve their social skills and increase their self-confidence.

Young people are positive about their care and relationships with staff. Staff seek young people's wishes and views, which significantly improves young people's sense of worth and control of their lives.

Ofsted has recently carried out a monitoring visit to look at concerns about the welfare of children. The service has acted in response but changes are not yet sufficiently embedded in practice to demonstrate improvement. Ofsted has previously found shortfalls in behaviour management techniques, fire safety and notifications to Ofsted.

Improvements need to be made to, young people's records, behaviour management policy, recruitment checks, implementing a development plan, and supervision records to be signed. These do not significantly impact on outcomes for young people. However, the number of shortfalls indicate that leaders and managers do not fully understand the strengths and weaknesses 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
17B (2001)	prepare and implement a written policy (in this regulation referred to as the "behaviour management policy") which sets out the measures of control, restraint and discipline which may be used in the children's home and the means whereby appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the home. Specifically in relation to statutory guidance for restriction of liberty (Regulation 17B (1)(a) and (b))	04/11/2013
28 (2001)	maintain in respect of each child who is accommodated in a children's home a record in permanent form which includes the information, documents and records specified in Schedule 3 relating to the child. With particular regard to a copy of any plan for the care of the child prepared by his placing authority, and of the placement plan. (Regulation 28 (1)(Schedule 3)(18))	04/11/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure the guide includes a summary of what the home sets out to do for children, how they can find out their rights, how a child can contact their Independent Reviewing Officer, the Children's Rights Director, Ofsted if they wish to raise a concern with inspectors, and how to secure access to an independent advocate (NMS 13.5)
- have a written development plan, reviewed annually, for the future of the home (NMS 15.2)
- ensuring where only one member of staff is on duty at any time, a risk assessment has been carried out and recorded in writing, identifying any likely risks to children, staff and members of the public (NMS 17.9)
- ensure written or electronic supervision records are signed by the supervisor and the member of staff at the end of supervision (NMS 19.5)
- demonstrate from records, that the home consistently follows good practice, and all applicable current statutory requirements and guidance, in staff recruitment. In particular with regard to ensuring checks on those working in the home have at least two references, preferably one from a current employer. (NMS16.2)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people make significant progress in all aspects of their lives, such as in maintaining educational placements and social skills. For example, some young people access work experience within the community. Young people access the organisations school or a local college. Staff work closely with the education team to promote the benefits and structure of daily education. As a result young people's attendance and achievement is good.

Young people have a range of communication and learning disabilities, and staff are resourceful about interpreting meaning in speech, gesture, eye contact, symbols and photographs. This support means that young people are confident that staff will know what they are communicating, and helps young people develop a positive and confident sense of self.

Young people enjoy good health and healthy lifestyles. Close working arrangements with parents and multi-agency arrangements ensure strategies to manage health needs are current and agreed by all parties. Young people are encouraged to exercise their own healthy choices of foods; they eat a balanced diet and make choices based on their likes and dislikes.

Young people grow in confidence because they are treated with respect. For example, they are encouraged to express their views, wishes and feelings. Staff support young people to access the local community. For example, they go on visits to parks, shops, youth clubs and the zoo. Young people receive positive recognition for their achievement, no matter how small. This promotes their confidence and positive behaviour. For example; they complete their individual visual timetable to get ready for education, and learn to be more patient.

Young people are supported to see their families. This enables them to build and maintain close family relationships by enjoying time in their home and in family outings supported by the staff team.

Young people make good progress with self-care skills, so increasing independence. For example, they wash their own clothes, get ready for bed, and go shopping with support of staff. This support gives young people a smooth transition to their next stage in supported accommodation as young adults.

Quality of care

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

Young people are cared for by a stable and caring staff team. As such young people benefit from attachments to key people. Staff have built a good rapport with young people and are responsive to their individual needs. Staff know young people well

and implement their individual routines. This helps young people feel secure. Since registration, the home has admitted young people whose needs could not be fully met, and this impacted on the quality of care provided to all young people. The provider has now improved the admission policy and matching needs of children who can live together at the home. Young people currently accessing the service interact positively with each other and develop their social skills. This is because the service has implemented the new admission criterion to the home.

Satisfactory individual placement plans outline individual needs and times where young people may need increased support, such as personal care. However, plans do not fully identify all areas of need. For example, some young people's cultural needs. Although care plans are not specific about young people's cultural, religious or identify needs, staff have a sufficient commitment to promoting diversity and equality. They have an adequate understanding of the individuality, social, cultural and religious backgrounds of young people. They seek opportunities to positively engage young people in activities to stimulate and broaden their horizons. Young people are offered a range of activities to stimulate and broaden their horizons. As a result, they enjoy trips out strawberry picking, to the park, bowling and to the zoo.

Young people are regularly consulted about choices such as activities or food. Additionally staff actively listen to parents about the likes and dislikes of young people. There are established forums, including house meetings which the young people use to express their views on aspects of how the home is organised and activities they wish to participate in. Staff gain young people's views as best they can using a range of alternative communication methods that are preferred by the individual young people. These include pictures, photographs, and symbols that enable young people to make their feelings known.

Young people's personal care is sensitively managed to preserve dignity and afford privacy. Their needs are well understood and interested by staff, enabling them to respond to any discomfort and anxiety promptly. This is enhanced through good working relationships with parents, whose advice is central to the care of young people. For example; staff listen to how to support young people to become less anxious when going on a trip out. Medication arrangements are robust. Records are up to date and staff are knowledgeable about the medicines that young people are prescribed. There are sufficient number of staff trained in first aid. This makes sure young people receive appropriate attention in the event of an accident. Staff and young people use the organisations occupational therapist who identifies potential options to improve young people's well-being, for example, the use of aids such as water light toys or gym balls.

The home provides young people with good individual and communal accommodation. Bedrooms are personalised using soft furnishings and there is a plan to decorate bedrooms areas young people.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people who use this service have limited means of communication. However, feedback from some young people is that they feel safe. Adequate levels of supervision both inside and outside the home recognise their significant vulnerability. However, on an occasion, young people have left the home without staff knowing, and this has put them at risk. For example, a young person was able to get to a main road before staff were able to bring them back safely to the home. The organisation has taken action to ensure that young people are now appropriately supervised.

Whilst the service has not had to make a child protection or safeguarding referral, there are policies and procedures in place and staff demonstrate an adequate understanding of action to take should they have any concerns about the young person's safety or well-being.

Staff know young people well, and can often pre-empt a difficulty or divert young people when they appear anxious. Staff respond appropriately by reinforcing boundaries, using signs and symbols, or making agreed changes to how they support young people. Young people benefit from this consistency. The quality of relationships between staff and young people is positive and reinforces the caring atmosphere throughout the home. Young people develop appropriate behaviour, however, the home's behaviour management policy is not in line with legislation. For example, the policy refers to using restriction of liberty. While this is now not done in practice, the provider still gives staff clear guidance in this approved policy.

The home follows adequate recruitment procedures and ensures that staff are suitable to work with young people. However, on occasion, the organisation has not sought references from the current or most recent employer. This does not demonstrate good recruitment practice.

The home is kept safe from hazards and is well maintained to provide a homely environment. Health and safety checks, including checks of fire equipment are routinely undertaken to maintain a safe environment. Young people have personal evacuation plans and practice evacuations to support a safe exit from the home in an emergency. Risk assessments are regularly reviewed in light of changing needs and managers ensure they are implemented in practice.

Leadership and management

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

Overall, the home is adequately managed with the support of senior management. The home's Statement of Purpose clearly sets out the service they offer to children for parents and interested parties. A child-friendly version explains for young people what they can expect. However, while consultation and children's rights are promoted, the children's guide does not include how they might contact the independent reviewing officer or the Children's Rights Director.

The management conducts regular monitoring activities and an external person

carries out monthly visits, but these have not been effective. There is no development plan. As a result, there is no means of tracking progress of the home, objectives and actions or demonstrating improvement over time. Ofsted has previously found regulatory shortfalls in behaviour management techniques, fire safety and notifications to Ofsted about significant events. The Registered Manager has taken action in response to requirements made. Behaviour management practice regarding restriction of liberty in practice has stopped. Managers have taken sufficient action to address fire deficiencies and have an awareness of following significant events to notify the relevant agencies. Also, the Registered Manager now signs records of measures of controls used within the home.

Staff levels are sufficient, and staff report to enjoy their work and have opportunities to develop areas of interest. On occasion staff lone work young people, such as at night time and on accessing the community. However, there is no lone working risk assessment. This does not ensure that all identified risks are highlighted, and that sufficient action has been taken to reduce these risks. Staff possess basic competencies, skills and knowledge necessary for looking after vulnerable young people. Staff report training is of good quality, and they receive good formal and informal support from managers and leaders, however supervision records are not signed.

Staff keep sufficient home records about young people, they are clear, up to date and stored securely. However, not all young people have the required placing authority plans at the home. For example, care plans and review reports. This means the home may not properly plan for children's daily care.

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.