

## Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Inspector</b>	Emeline Evans
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<b>Provision subtype</b>	Children's home

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## Service information

### Brief description of the service

The service is a two-bedded children's home registered for boys with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The home is owned and operated by a private organisation that specialises in the assessment and treatment of male adolescents who have experienced some form of abuse and have subsequently been involved in perpetrating abusive behaviour themselves.

### 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**.

Since the last inspection the organisation has had difficulties in recruiting to positions within some of their homes. This has resulted in experienced staff from this home being deployed to work shifts where there are vacancies. In addition, young people currently residing in the home have been supported at times within other homes in the organisation. The staff and manager are working to try and achieve consistency for the young people. The manager has a strong presence within the home and is actively involved in working with the young people and staff.

Young people have built positive relationships with staff and are confident to raise concerns as necessary. Young people talk positively about these relationships and comment 'they do their best.' However, these attachments have at times been disrupted due to shortages of staff in the organisation. Young people feel listened to and generally report that the staff are concerned for their well-being. Staff have a clear understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities and are very aware of the vulnerabilities of the young people; safeguarding is central to all aspects of care planning. They work closely with the therapy team to ensure a holistic approach is achieved.

Young people's voices are an essential part of the process. Young people are

beginning to develop independent living skills through the support from staff. Areas of shortfall were identified within this inspection and are reflected in the overall judgement. The majority of these shortfalls relate to records and ensuring they comply with regulations. However, a requirement has also been made in relation to promoting the welfare of children accommodated in the home. This specifically relates to continuity of staffing.

## 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
11 (2001)	ensure the registered person makes arrangements for the home to be conducted in a manner that promotes and makes proper provision for the welfare of children accommodated in the home and make proper provision for the care and supervision of children accommodated there. This specifically relates to continuity of staffing (Regulation 11(1)(a)(b))	30/11/2013
29 (2001)	ensure the records specified in Schedule 4 are maintained and kept up to date. With specific reference to a record of the actual rosters worked by persons working at the children's home (Regulation 29(1))	30/11/2013
34 (2001)	ensure the monitoring of matters set out in Schedule 6 shall provide for consultation with children, parents and placing authorities and the system focuses on improving the quality of care provided. (Regulation 34 (1(b)(3))	30/11/2013

### Recommendations

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

- ensure risk assessments are updated and include strategies to prevent risk to both the children and staff (NMS 4.5)
- ensure written records kept by the home when a child goes missing detail any reasons why a child for running away from the home, and any action taken in the light of these reasons (NMS 5.10)
- implement and keep under review a contingency plan to achieve continuity of staffing so that children's attachments are not overly disrupted (17.8)
- ensure existing care staff are working towards the Children and Young People's

### Workforce Diploma (NMS 18.5)

- ensure all records are consistently clear and of a high quality, and they are kept up to date. (NMS 22)

## Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **adequate**.

Staff support young people in coming to terms with significant matters from their past which are currently impacting on their emotions. Individual time spent with staff provides opportunities for discussion and moving forward. Each young person is valued as an individual and the positive regard staff have for them provides the foundation to developing appropriate relationships with peers and family. However, since the last inspection, young people have spent a significant time during the day and evenings in other homes within the organisation. Therefore, outcomes have at times been limited for the young people currently in placement. Despite these moves, young people are beginning to make some progress in this home. This is achieved as young people engage and make use of the therapeutic support offered. Through understanding their past experiences young people are supported to move on and develop a positive self-view in preparation for transition to adulthood.

Promotion of health ensures young people have an understanding of healthy lifestyles and what this means for them. Staff help young people to produce nutritious meals and some now take responsibility for their own meals. This is encouraged and supported by staff and enables young people to develop their independence skills. Support from staff and external health professionals ensures young people are able to have access to an adequate range of information and advice on health issues. This practice enables young people to make informed choices and develop independence.

Staff encourage young people to attend their education provisions. Young people within the home attend either the organisation's school or a college placement. This helps them to develop and achieve skills for their future lives. Attendance has improved in recent months and staff motivate young people to engage in education. Young people are beginning to understand the importance of achieving their educational potential.

Young people are supported by staff with family contact arrangements. They benefit from the emotional support of staff at these times. These arrangements are subject to any limitations set out in care plans. Placing authorities report on the flexibility of the home in providing and supporting these arrangements for contact.

Young people have some positive relationships in the local community, accessing local shops and sports and leisure activities. Young people assist with tasks around the home and develop their independence skills according to their age and ability. For example, young people receive an allowance to be able to plan, budget and shop for meals. Staff validate young people's achievements and encourage and support

them to achieve in this area; this helps to enhance their self-esteem.

## Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy positive and warm relationships with the core group of staff within the home. Comments from young people include, 'staff are good,' and 'they do what they can.' Since the last inspection, due to shortages of staff within the organisation, staff have been deployed at times to provide support in other homes. This has had an impact and resulted in young people 'visiting' other homes in the organisation for periods of time throughout the day. This has not provided opportunities for young people and staff to form consistent and stable relationships. Young people report that at times they are happy about these arrangements. However, they also report 'I don't always like it as I don't have my own space,' and 'it hasn't been good recently with all the changes and moving to other homes.' These moves are having an impact on being able to provide continuity of care for the young people.

The home ensures that young people have opportunities to share their wishes and feelings about their placement and the running of the home. Young people comment that they feel staff listen to them and take their views seriously. They are aware of how to make a complaint. House meetings take place regularly, giving the young people the opportunity to express their views. These meetings are also used to enable a young person to understand why it is not always possible to act on their wishes. Staff appropriately support young people to take part fully in meetings and make decisions. There is a culture and ethos of openness where questions can easily be raised.

Young people are cared for in line with detailed placement plans that are indicative of the young people's individual requirements and identify personal identity. Young people are encouraged to be involved in the review of their placement plans; this gives them the opportunity to contribute and make their views known about their own plan. The joint work between the home, education staff and therapy team provides a basis for addressing young people's diverse and personal needs. There is an emphasis on promoting the young people's emotional well-being and welfare. Young people's health needs are being met. Staff encourage and support young people to attend health appointments. Staff work in partnership with health professionals to ensure a consistency of care. Medications are locked in a secure cabinet and appropriate medication policies and procedures are in place.

Young people are given opportunities to visit local attractions and develop links with the local community. Staff work extensively with the young people about their safety in the community and work within clear risk assessment framework and guidelines. Activities involve a high level of planning and supervision.

The home is situated in a residential area within easy reach of local facilities. Young people live in a comfortable relaxed environment. Staff encourage young people to

personalise their bedrooms, which they do. Young people are happy with their surroundings which meet their needs well.

## **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 that staff do what they can to keep them safe in the home. Safeguarding is a core element in the work of the home. Staff try hard to achieve a safe and open atmosphere. Young people do not feel bullying is currently an issue in the home, staff are proactive in working with young people around instances of bullying. Young people are confident in approaching staff for advice on issues that are worrying them.

Staff are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and they have completed appropriate training in this area. There are clear child protection policies and procedures, which inform and support staff practices. The home's staff group demonstrates a good understanding of child protection policies and procedures. There are clear procedures and protocols to follow in the event of a young person going missing which staff implement and they work towards their safe return. Staff are aware that at certain points in therapeutic intervention and when certain life events occur these behaviours increase and support the young people during these times. However, records within the home when a young person goes missing do not detail any reasons given by the young person for running away or any action taken in light of those reasons.

Young people understand the rules of the home and the sanctions in place. Staff are trained in de-escalation techniques; restraint is not used within the organisation. Staff and the therapy team work with the young people on anger management. Young people are encouraged to reflect on their behaviour and how it affects others. Risk assessments identify known risks relating to young people, activities and the environment. However, young people's individual risk assessments do not reflect their present vulnerabilities and require updating to ensure details which are required to keep young people and staff safe are fully recorded.

The home has a sound recruitment process, which ensures all necessary checks are completed before a member of staff starts work. Information supplied during the inspection shows that all health and safety and fire checks are completed regularly. Young people know what to do in case of an emergency. Effective maintenance systems ensure the home remains safe for young people and all who visit.

## **Leadership and management**

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

The Registered Manager and staff team are committed to improving the quality of care in the home. The manager has an active role within the home both working with the young people and working in partnership with professionals. One

professional described the manager as having; 'a good handle on things.' At the last interim inspection in January 2013 there were no requirements or recommendations made. The Registered Manager is mindful of the strengths and weaknesses of the home and she has clear and comprehensive development plans in operation to clarify the future of the home.

The monthly monitoring visits have been reviewed since the last inspection so that there is now more of a focus on evaluation and improvement of the service. Young people are consulted during these visits and are able to give their views. In addition, the manager undertakes regular monitoring of the home. However, it is not evident that routine consultation with young people, parents and placing authorities takes place during this internal monitoring and how this is used to further improve the quality of care provided.

Staff are familiar with the home's Statement of Purpose and its aims and objectives. There is an emphasis on working in partnership with the young people, parents and professionals to achieve a holistic approach to meet the needs of the young people. The young people's guide is informative and comprehensive and explains what they can expect from the home.

The home received one external complaint since the last inspection. This was addressed robustly and resolved fully. This demonstrates a capacity to learn from feedback and to make changes in order to improve outcomes for young people.

Staff experience and support sufficiently meet the needs of the young people. The home has recently recruited more staff to the home. Regular supervision and team meetings support staff to provide a quality service to the young people. Staff undertake regular training which provides them with the necessary knowledge and competencies to fulfil their role. However, not all of the staff team hold level 3 childcare qualifications or above. This means that not all staff have successfully attained a level 3 qualification.

The management team are trying to recruit to the vacant positions in the other homes and they are aware of the impact that the shortage may have on being able to meet the individual needs of young people in this home. However, there is not a formalised contingency plan in operation to ensure continuity of staffing levels so attachments are not overly disrupted.

Records are observed to be secure and contain a range of documents. However, there is some inconsistency in the quality of record keeping. In addition, some documents are completed a long time after an event and this results in some records not being clear and comprehensive. In addition, the rosters within the home did not detail actual hours worked by staff. Therefore, it is difficult to fully evaluate certain documentation.

## 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.