

## Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Inspection date</b>	20/09/2013
<b>Inspector</b>	Karen Malcolm
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Full
<b>Provision subtype</b>	Children's home

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## Service information

### Brief description of the service

This children's home is operated and managed by a charity and provider of social housing. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for no more than eight children and young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties age range from 12 - 17 years old, with two of the eight bedrooms used as emergency placement only for 140 days each per calendar year.

### 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**.

This is the children's home's first full inspection since opening in April 2013. The outcome judgment is good in all areas. A part of this inspection included an investigation into a complaint received by Ofsted, which was found to be robustly managed through the home's own complaints procedures.

All young people are new to the home are in a period of settling into their new environment and getting to know each other and the staff. However, with regards to their education they have made good progress in relation to their starting points and are now attending education. Young people are fully protected if they are missing from care through the home's robust procedures. Young people are supported and cared for by an enthusiastic supportive team. Young people are encouraged, to be independent, and they also come together as a family, especially at meal times. Contact with family is supported. The emphasis for young people to develop socially and educationally is of a good standard.

The management of the home is strong. There is a commitment to providing young people a good and safe environment that enables them to have positive outcomes in many areas of their lives. Staff have created an environment where young people and staff work together to promote their safety, solve problems, lead healthier lifestyles and enjoy learning.

The shortfalls identified during this visit relate to young people's behaviour management plans and peer relationships.

## Areas for improvement

### Recommendations

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

- ensure that children develop and practice skills to build and maintain positive relationships, be assertive and resolve conflicts positively (NMS 3.5)
- ensure that children are encouraged to take responsibility for their behaviour, in a way that is appropriate to their age and abilities (NMS 3.6)
- ensure that children's emotional and behavioural needs are met, as set out in their care plan. Children's privacy and confidentiality are appropriately protected. (NMS 3.7)

### Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people say that the staff team are fun. They are able to make decisions about their daily lives and are encouraged by the staff to be as independent as possible. This means that young people are able to enjoy free time and support appropriately if needed.

Education is well-supported. Young people are able to attend mainstream schools and further educational provisions. School attendance is good for some and for others, this is their first time in education for a while and this has been an achievement for them. Staff have clear strategies to ensure that young people feel comfortable and are appropriately supported to attend their education provision. This input helps the young people to take their education seriously and think about what career they would like to pursue in the future. Young people are encouraged to take part in additional after-school activities, which will be supported by staff.

Young people are able to access the internet under appropriate supervision. This helps them with their homework and to learn to access social network sites in an appropriate manner.

Young people receive good support to learn about healthy eating and manage their own health. Young people are encouraged to prepare and plan meals and share their main meals together, therefore presenting a homely atmosphere and help with peer bonding.

All young people are registered with appropriate health professionals and the home has been proactive in chasing health appointments for all young persons to ensure

that their emotional health needs are fully met. All health appointments and treatments are generally well kept.

Contact arrangements are well organised. Young people enjoy regular visits to their families. One young person said they were not able to talk to the inspector, as they were preparing for a weekend visit to their family home, which they were pleased about. This is part of a plan for the young person to eventually return to live in their family home.

All young people are all new to the home. Therefore, those who are at the stage of preparing to leave care are in their initial stage of preparing for this transition. There are plans in place to provide young people with an independent advocate who has experience of being in care.

### **Quality of care**

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

Young people's relationships with staff and their peers are mixed. The Registered Manager and staff realised this is a concern and have put strategies in place to support this. Young people are supported in one-to-one key working sessions, informal comfy chats and residents' meetings to talk about how they feel. Staff are aware that the group dynamic of the home is fairly new and for some, bonding has been difficult. One successful area of bonding for young people is mealtimes, where everyone including staff sit around the table and chat about the day's events. However, some relationships between young people have not been fully resolved. There is a caring ethos to be open and transparent about feelings and emotions, therefore, any conflicts can be positively resolved.

Information is made available to young people so they know how, and to whom, they can make a complaint. Young people confirmed they know how the process works, but some feel that some of their concerns are not addressed all the time. The residents' meetings enable young people to voice issues, and any concerns or grumbles mentioned are addressed. These issues are then addressed individually or as a group in an open and honest atmosphere.

Young people know why they are at the setting and contribute to placement reviews with support from staff. Staff are fully informed of individual placement plans and deliver good standards of care to meet placement objectives. Feedback from placing social workers confirmed this. They also state that this is a new service and that the communication is good. Access to services appropriate for individual young people enables their physical, emotional and psychological health needs to be met. Staff are reflective in their practice and take feedback from professionals seriously and if identified, change their practices to promote better outcomes for young people. There is a clear commitment to developing practices and knowledge to further improve outcomes for young people.

Education attendance is good in relation to individual ability. Staff provide support to

ensure young people attend school and complete homework. Liaison with schools is also maintained. Individual chats enable young people to feedback reports about their school day and to discuss any areas that have caused them upset or difficulties whilst at school.

Young people enjoy a range of activities both in the house and in the local community.

Needs relating to areas such as gender, sexuality, disability, faith, and religious beliefs are identified and form part of individual placement plans. Staff are able to address sensitive issues and provide appropriate non-discriminatory support for young people's needs. Staff treat young people with respect and dignity and the same expectation is made clear of young people.

The home is located in a residential area. The home is decorated to a high standard. There are plenty of communal living spaces, such as a computer/games room, large lounge and a very spacious dining/kitchen area. These spaces are used to their full potential by all young people. One young person was observed playing monopoly in the games room with a member of staff and winning to their joy. Young people are able to decorate and personalise their room as they so wish. This allows young people to individualise their own spaces.

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

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

There are good arrangements to safeguard young people. The management of the home and practices in place protect young people while enabling them to take reasonable risks as part of their growth and development.

The home's child protection and safeguarding policy is fully understood by staff. They are well informed of action to take if they are concerned about the welfare of young people. The home and staff team are new and all staff have undertaken a good induction, which includes safeguarding training.

There are clear procedures for staff to follow if a child is missing without authority. The procedures are in line with the Runaway from Home and Care protocols and procedures.

The numbers of incidents relating to young people either missing from care or frequently absent without authority is significantly high. There are excellent and robust individual risk assessments in place to ensure all measures of safety have been explored to minimise and safeguard the young person. Safeguarding meetings are held regularly to ensure all areas of risk have been managed appropriately and safety. If there are any changes, this is updated immediately and discussed with staff and reviewed regularly to ensure the safeguarding measures remain appropriate. Young people are treated positively on their return and understood that it is not acceptable to go missing. The home has good links with the local community police

officer, which means that there is a protocol in place, should any young person go missing.

Young people stated that there are relationship issues with other young people in the home, which are minor, however, staff act immediately to this with some positive results but further work is being reviewed. Group discussion on a daily basis enables young people and staff to discuss any concerns. As a result, young people are acutely aware of the home's view on bullying and incidents are low.

Staff actively encourage and promote positive behaviour. Where the impact of a behaviour affects others, this has been discussed and action plans have been put in place to address this. Young people are supported and guided to take responsibility for their actions and to understand the consequences of their actions and how this makes other people feel. Staff undertake training in the company's chosen method of physical intervention. Following any behavioural incident, young people are encouraged to make a comment on the matter. The outcome of one behaviour incident where this impact affected others young people decided to write a letter of apology. Staff also reflect on what lessons have been learnt as part of their own personal development as a new team and individually. However, behaviour management plans do not consistently evident all new areas of risks effectively.

The home's health and safety procedures are monitored well. Risk management systems are robust. Fire safety procedures are known to staff and young people with regular checks taking place of fire alarms. External contractors regularly check the gas and electrical installations.

Young people are further protected by the organisation's recruitment procedures. All staff are new. Staff appropriately monitor any visitors to the home and maintain a visitor's book.

## **Leadership and management**

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

The home's Statement of Purpose accurately reflects the services that the home is able to offer. The children's guide is appropriate and available in a child-friendly format.

All external complaints received have been robustly addressed by the Registered Manager in a timely and thoughtful manner. Clear strategies that involve all young people and staff as part of the process, gave an open, transparent and positive result that helped to resolve any differences quickly and smoothly.

The home is effectively and efficiently managed by a competent suitable Registered Manager who understand the individual strengths and needs of the young people placed. Staff focus on building emotional well-being and in helping the young person develop resilience and a sense of purpose by using the strengths they have identified. The young people are encouraged to not only fulfil their potential, but to

aspire by developing self-esteem and positive self-image. There is a commitment to anti-discriminatory practice and to supporting cultural, gendered and sexual identity.

Young people receive care from a motivated, caring and supportive team. Staff are sufficient in number and experience to ensure good staffing levels at all times to meet the needs of the young people. Staff are able to be reflective, so when things are going well, they can identify what their successes were. When things do not go to plan they can review their approach and act quickly to get on track. Staff stated that this is credit to the team and the Registered Manager, who is knowledgeable and skilled in shaping the culture and ethos of the home. Another stated it is not like a job, it is better, especially working with the young people.

The organisation takes training seriously and as this is a new home, they have demonstrated a commitment to ensuring all staff have all mandatory training completed and as required the National Vocational Qualification. Regular supervision is carried out for all staff, which ensures the quality of service and has a positive impact on the young people.

The young people and the staff team benefit from positive management and clear leadership. The Registered Manager has the appropriate skills, experience and qualifications to provide an efficient and effective service. The staff and the young people spoke about the Registered Manager and her commitment to ensure young people and staff are well supported and build a trusting relationship. The Registered Manager has clear and effective procedures in place for monitoring the operations within the home. The quality assurance process includes consultation with the young people. The home demonstrates its capacity for continued improvement through reflective learning for both staff and young people. Social workers, commissioners and the Regulation 33 visitor spoken with, all agreed this was an exceptionally good service providing clear and positive outcomes for the young people.

There is a clear and effective procedure for monitoring and controlling the activities of the home. This includes any serious incidents, complaints. Part of the home's placement agreement is provide the placing authority with a clear and robust overview of the service provided to young people, including all the incidents relating to young people who may go missing. This has been well managed.

All notifications or significant events relating to the protection of children are notified to the appropriate authorities and appropriate action is taken. There are regular Regulation 33 visit reports and the young people are always spoken to during these visits. Good quality records that are clear, comprehensive and up to date contribute to an understanding of the young people's lives.



## 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.