

## Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	SC402370
<b>Inspection date</b>	13/11/2013
<b>Inspector</b>	Judith Longden / Andy Waugh
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Full
<b>Provision subtype</b>	Residential special school (>295 days/year)

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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	10/05/2013
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## Service information

### Brief description of the service

The service is a residential school that is registered as a children's home to provide care for 54 children and young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The service is owned by a private company.

### 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 **inadequate**.

Some young people make progress as a result of the care provided by this home. However, care plans are not always kept up to date and do not always indicate the individual or current needs of young people. Young people do not have the benefit of regular access to community activities and this means their ability to form relationships with peers is limited. Activities provided on-site are structured and supervised which does not afford young people the opportunity to choose how to spend their free time. Young people make good progress in their education attendance and achievement.

There are a number of shortfalls in relation to behaviour management and as a result young people are not adequately safeguarded. Risk assessments and behaviour management plans are not always updated. The use of restraints is not always appropriate, proportionate or in line with the young person's plans and incidents are not recorded accurately or in sufficient detail. Staff do not receive a debrief following physical interventions to enable them to learn from incidents. Sanctions are often excessive with a number being imposed for one incident. The use of sanctions is not monitored to ascertain their effectiveness.

The home has a new management team who have made some improvements, especially in relation to supporting young people who self-harm and in handling allegations. However, some previous requirements and issues of compliance have not been met.

## 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 that the children's home is conducted so as to promote and make proper provision for the welfare of children accommodated there and make proper provision for the care, education, supervision and, where appropriate, treatment, of children accommodated there (Regulation 11 (1)(a) and (b)) *	15/12/2013
11 (2001)	ensure that the home is conducted in a manner which respects the privacy and dignity of children accommodated there; and with due regard to the sex, religious persuasion, racial origin, and cultural and linguistic background and any disability of children accommodated there (Regulation 11 (2)(a) and (b)) *	15/12/2013
17 (2001)	ensure no measure of control or discipline which is excessive, unreasonable or contrary to paragraph (2) shall be used at any time on children accommodated in a children's home (Regulation 17 (1)) *	15/12/2013
17A (2001)	ensure where a measure of restraint is used on a child accommodated in a children's home the measure of restraint must be proportionate and no more force than is necessary should be used (Regulation 17A (2)(a) and b)) *	15/12/2013
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, restraint or discipline in a children's home, a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose which shall include the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure (Regulation 17B (3)(f)) *	15/12/2013
17B (2001)	ensure where a measure of restraint is used on a child the record under paragraph (3) must include the duration of the measure of the restraint; and details of any methods used to avoid the need to use that measure (Regulation 17 B (4) (a) and (b))	15/12/2013
27 (2001)	ensure that all persons employed by him receive appropriate training. This is in relation to behaviour management. (Regulation 27 (4))	15/12/2013

\*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice

## Recommendations

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

- ensure that the home regularly reviews incidents of challenging behaviour, examines trends or issues emerging from this, to enable staff to reflect and learn to inform future practice. (NMS 3.21)

## Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **adequate**.

Some young people make sound progress in achieving positive outcomes in some areas, particularly in education. One social worker said that a young person who had previously been out of education for 18 months was now fully engaged in school and the school had predicted they would achieve mostly C grades in their forthcoming examinations. Attendance at the school is very high. As a result, most young people achieve their educational potential.

Young people generally enjoy good health. They benefit from a healthy, balanced diet and are encouraged to play sport and undertake exercise to further promote their health. Personal hygiene routines ensure young people learn self-care skills and take responsibility for their appearance and hygiene.

Young people have the opportunity to participate in a range of activities and clubs provided on-site. These are structured activities which are supervised by the care staff. Young people have little opportunity to socialise outside of these activities with their peers. The home does not allow pupils to contact each other via their mobile phones at any time. This means young people do not have the freedom to make and sustain friendships within the care setting.

Young people enjoy appropriate contact arrangements with family. Visits are often facilitated by the staff and there is a separate accommodation area where families can spend time together. A social worker commented 'the staff made it very special, it was brilliant. The use of the contact area made it a good experience.'

Young people undertake some chores within the home and daily routines to develop basic practical and life skills such as food preparation, tidying and cleaning. This means young people receive adequate care which helps them prepare for adulthood.

## Quality of care

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

Some young people thrive in the framework and structure of routines provided by this home and as a result find their time at the home a very positive one. Others find the structure regimental and punitive and feel it does not support them to break the cycle of the negative behaviour they display.

Young people participate in a reward programme that gives them points for reaching various targets every day. This enables them to participate in off-site activities with staff such as ice hockey trips. The home also provides opportunities for holidays

abroad. In addition young people earn their off-site independence through good behaviour sustained over a period of time. This means they can access activities such as the gym without constant staff supervision. However, this means many young people are limited in their access to off-site facilities and this impacts on their ability to form and sustain friendships and they do not benefit from social interaction in the community.

The quality of young people's care plans is varied. Some information is not updated following meetings and where issues are highlighted in key work these are not always reflected in the young person's plan. This means some of the care provided is fragmented. In addition, some of the targets for young people appear to be standard targets, such as being able to clean their teeth, and do not reflect the individual needs of young people. One young person who identified to staff two months ago that they would like to attend church has not been provided with the opportunity to do so, although it has been mentioned in several key work sessions. This means young people do not always receive the appropriate level of individual care.

Young people know how to make a complaint. These are recorded and responded to in a timely manner. This means young people know their complaint is taken seriously.

Young people are able to express their feelings and views through key work sessions and young people's meetings. These meetings provide an opportunity for young people to discuss any issues and share their ideas with staff. It is also a forum for discussing topics such as bullying. Young people say they feel some staff listen to their views more than others and they will actively seek out the staff they enjoy good relationships with. As a result young people are able to participate in the running of the home and have some input into their care.

Young people have access to a variety of medical professionals including a school nurse and a psychological assessor. This provides young people with specific, identified points of contact for them to raise any health concerns they may have. The home has improved its response to young people who self-harm. The majority of individual self-harm care plans identify the specific issues for each individual young person and details how staff should respond. However, some of these care plans have not been updated with details of new self-harming behaviours. This means full information is not always available for staff to ensure the right response to young people in all situations. Young people are now disclosing their self-harm to staff at an early stage to enable them to respond quickly. As a result the incidents of significant self-harm have reduced.

The home and school staff enjoy a very good working relationship which provides consistency for young people. Senior staff from care and education meet daily. As a result young people are supported in their education.

Young people live in a home that is well maintained and decorated to a good standard. There are ample rooms for young people to spend time in. Their bedrooms are personalised with posters and furnishings. This provides a good environment for

young people.

## **Safeguarding children and young people**

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

Young people continue to be involved in a number of incidents that result in restraints being used, some escalate to the use of ground holds. The quality of recording of incidents remains poor and in particular the reason for intervention and methods used to avoid intervention are not always clearly identified. Some records detail two restraints on one form. This means it is not possible to indicate the duration of a specific restraint. Staff often record that a restraint is required as the young person's risk assessment and behaviour management plan identifies a particular issue such as significant risk of violence. However, this is often based on historic events that have not been reassessed to reflect any changes or improvements in the young person's behaviour. Staff may use inappropriate interventions as a result of these risk assessments and behaviour management plans not being updated. As a result, young people are not adequately safeguarded. Staff do not have the opportunity to formally debrief following the use of restraint and this means there is no evidence of learning from that incident to inform future practice. The manager is planning additional training for staff in how to avoid the use of physical intervention. However, a requirement is made to ensure staff are trained in appropriate responses to protect young people.

Young people continue to receive sanctions for their involvement in incidents of restraints. These are often multiple sanctions such as a period of immediate reflection with staff, a period of grounding to continue to reflect and the attendance at a weekend 'club' to complete worksheets to identify why they may have misbehaved. This means young people experience an extended period of consequences that does not provide them with an opportunity to move on from their behaviour in a timely manner. Sanctions are not discussed with staff or young people on completion. This means there is no monitoring of the effectiveness of the sanction and young people are not able to evidence any learning from the incident.

The home has a range of policies and procedures for safeguarding practices in respect of recruitment, child protection and handling allegations. Staff are trained in safeguarding and understand their role in the process. Allegations are taken seriously, investigations are carried out appropriately and liaison with the relevant agencies is evidenced. The home is strengthening its safeguarding practices by increasing the number of designated child protection officers and working with a child protection consultant on tracking processes. The home has a good recruitment process and the recording and monitoring of visitors to the home ensures young people are protected from harm.

Young people understand what bullying is and how to protect themselves. This is because bullying is addressed in key work, resident meetings and specific projects within the home. Any issues of bullying are handled promptly to ensure young people

remain safe from bullying.

The home has a missing from care policy and protocol and the recording of any absence has improved. Young people are encouraged to discuss their issues in relation to being absent and as a result they are protected as far as possible and responded to positively on their return.

Regular fire, maintenance and equipment checks promote the safety of young people. Fire drills are held as required and this means staff and young people know how to evacuate safely.

## **Leadership and management**

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

The home and school has undergone a number of management changes in recent months. The new senior team work closely together and have made some improvements in areas such as dealing with self-harm and handling allegations and complaints. The home has made some progress in addressing the compliance notices that have been issued and the requirements from previous inspections. However, there continues to be serious shortfalls in behaviour management. This means young people are not adequately safeguarded.

The manager is making some improvements with the restructuring of the home to provide a number of smaller units rather than one large home and the implementation of the role of new house leader. However this is not yet fully operational and as a result the move to more individualised care is not established.

The registered provider undertakes visits to the home on a regular basis as required and reports on their findings. These are sent to Ofsted as required. This means the quality of care and welfare of young people is sufficiently monitored. The manager provides notifications of significant events as required and these are sent in a timely manner.

The home has a clear Statement of Purpose which is regularly reviewed to ensure full and accurate information is available to parents and placing authorities. The home provides each young person with a guide which details the service offered and telephone numbers for young people to contact for support and advice. This ensures young people are clear about the care and service provided.

Young people are cared for by staff who bring a variety of skills and experience to the service. Staff receive regular supervision and benefit from a range of training opportunities. The staff rota ensures young people's needs are met through the provision of sufficient staffing.

## 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.