

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Angus Mackay
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Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	05/03/2013
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is privately run and provides care and accommodation for no more than five children with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Education is provided in an adjacent building.

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**.

Young people enjoy good relationships with staff saying they feel safe in the home. Staff have a strong focus on education ensuring that all young people have good attendance at school and are all making educational improvement. All young people actively engage in therapy, aiding their emotional development. Social workers and family members believe young people are making good progress in the home stopping high risk behaviours including self-harm, offending and going missing. One social worker said of a young person, 'It has been very positive since he came here and he has made huge progress. He is a different boy since working with staff.'

The home encourage young people's development by engaging them in shared training events with staff. This has included fire safety and anti-bullying training. Young people feel very involved in the running of the home and engaged in decision making about their own care.

The home has an effective whistleblowing policy and managers take considered action to ensure the safety of young people and staff in the home following any complaint. External monitoring reports are detailed, comprehensive and helpful in identifying gaps in recording or breaches of regulations. However, the manager is not systematically recording or evaluating his internal monitoring of the home. During the inspection the provider commenced an update of the Statement of Purpose to ensure it accurately reflects the service provided. The reporting of serious incidents is not always timely or in line with the required method of reporting. Restraint guidance and policy is not in line with regulations requiring an immediate change. The home have commissioned their own fire safety audit which has

identified some actions which they are currently evaluating prior to implementation. Other shortfalls identified were a need to share internal monitoring reports with HMCI on a regular basis, review incidents of challenging behaviour, share safeguarding procedures with relevant agencies and to make notifications of relevant significant events within 24 hours.

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
30 (2001)	ensure that if 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))	20/12/2013
34 (2001)	ensure that the registered person shall establish and maintain a system monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 for improving the quality of care provided and for consultation with children accommodated in the home, their parents and placing authorities and shall supply this to HMCI at appropriate intervals (Regulation 34 (1) (a) (b) Regulation 34 (3))	20/12/2013
17A (2001)	ensure that a measure of restraint is only used on a child accommodated in the home for the purpose of: (a) preventing injury to any person (including the child who is being restrained); (b) preventing serious damage to the property of any person (including the child who is being restrained) (Regulation 17A (1)(a)(b))	20/12/2013
4 (2001)	compile in relation to the children's home a written statement of purpose which shall consist of a statement as to the matters listed in schedule1 (Regulation 4(1))	20/12/2013
32 (2001)	ensure that after consultation with the fire and rescue authority the home takes adequate precautions against the risk of fire. (Regulation 32 (a))	20/12/2013

Recommendations

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

- review incidents of challenging behaviour regularly, examine trends or issues emerging from this, to enable staff to reflect and learn to inform future practice (NMS3.21)

- ensure there is a system in place to notify Ofsted within 24 hours of any significant events in accordance with Regulation 30 (NMS 24.1)
- ensure that the provider's child protection procedures are submitted for consideration and comment to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) and to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for Child Protection (NMS 20.4)
- ensure that reviews of the quality of care in the home under Regulation 34 are sent to Ofsted at six-monthly intervals. (Volume 5, statutory guidance, paragraph 3.14)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people have access to plenty of fresh, nutritious food. This promotes the development of healthy eating habits. One social worker said, 'Health wise they have encouraged him into a healthy life style, good eating and no bad habits. He eats fresh fruit vegetables and is not involved in smoking, drugs or drink.' Young people are taught how to prepare meals for themselves and others and are highly aware of health and safety and meeting environmental health standards in the kitchen. Young people confirm that they also learn other self-help skills, such as doing their own laundry. Young people are gradually learning how to look after themselves and show consideration for others.

Young people are enthusiastic about the wide range of activities available to them and are clear that these are their choice and reflect their interests. Some activities are challenging and expose young people to controlled risks such as climbing. On holiday young people did climbing, canoeing, quad bikes, swimming and surfing. One young person's relative commented, 'Staff take boys on so many activities they do not have time to be bored.' Young people improve relationships, sustain attachments, enhance social skills, develop new interests, gain in confidence and have a lot of fun through this.

Young people have good attendance at education. All young people either attend the in-house school or a local college. Young people successfully engage in education programmes and progress to work and further education schemes. Reports from the local college talk of outstanding performance, praising attitude and engagement. Young people who attend the on-site school make good progress and are improving literacy and numeracy as well as making good progress in other subjects. For example, some young people are engaging positively in art making very good progress and are very proud of their work. Young people discuss educational aspirations with staff and recognise the importance of gaining good results in school. Relatives and social workers comment positively on the progress their young people have made in school. For example one social worker commented, 'Prior to coming here he did not manage school well. Here he is working to a high level in art and his reading has improved. I have witnessed him reading complex documents now.'

Young people are actively and positively engaged in a wide range of activities within the home and local community. Successful engagement in local activities and fund raising events, enables young people to develop social and life skills while making a positive contribution to their wider community. For example, the young people recently took part in a fund raising 'swimathon,' for Cancer Care. The day raised a large amount of money and involved a visit from Marie Curie nurses. This helped the young people to understand the difference their money would make and how they were helping to raise awareness of cancer. Young people are very proud of their actions and have increased their awareness of the needs of others and how they can help.

Young people influence the running of the home and address their interpersonal relationships, through the daily meeting. The daily meetings allow young people to contribute their views on day-to-day life in the home and to offer each other support. Topics discussed include their day in school, racism, respect for themselves, bullying and activities. Young people develop listening skills, personal awareness and a sense of responsibility through this meeting. In addition personal success is celebrated reinforcing positive behaviours.

All young people successfully engage in therapeutic sessions, either in house or with external consultants. As a result young people make good progress in developing a positive self-view while forming and sustaining attachments. Staff continually engage young people utilising all situations for learning and development. Achievements are recognised and celebrated thereby promoting confidence, self-esteem and feelings of self-worth. Young people also make significant progress in managing difficult behaviours. One social worker commented, 'His behaviour has improved and in particular his attitude towards others.'

Quality of care

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

Young people are very positive about staff and the care they provide. Relationships between staff and young people were observed to be positive with appropriate warmth and affection shown by young people and reciprocated by staff. Staff understand young people and their needs well. It is clear from observing staff interactions with young people, that young people receive good individualised support. Young people strongly believe that their views are valued by staff and influence the running of the home. One young person said, 'Staff are very supportive. They really do listen to what we have to say and they help us get what we need.'

Staff are knowledgeable about the individual needs of the young people and help them to meet personal or cultural needs. Staff are sensitive to differences in young people and skilfully address these. Young people confirm that staff help them explore personal issues including sensitive issues on puberty and development. Young people are also helped to explore interests in religion or aspects of their own background or

culture.

Staff actively promote young people's development and learning through providing information, practical instructions and help. For example, help with school homework and the development of social skills, independence skills and positive attitudes towards cultural diversity. Staff have a strong focus on education and use the daily meeting to look at young people's performance in school and seek resolution of any difficulties they may have. Staff skilfully explore behaviours in school, getting young people to reflect on their behaviours and arrive at positive approaches for the following day. The successful cross working, between home and school, enhances young people's drive to be successful in school and reinforces the importance of education for them.

Medication is safely stored and issued to young people. Recording of medication is done in line with Royal Pharmaceutical Guidelines ensuring safe storage, recording, issuing and disposal of controlled drugs. Staff maintain clear records on appointments and health targets for young people. All young people are registered with a general practitioner and receive regular optical and dental checks. Young people are knowledgeable about healthy eating and health and safety in the kitchen. One young person said, 'The food is good. We get good hot meals and staff use proper ingredients. Everything is properly cooked; no microwave meals and they use the proper boards for preparation. Staff do all sorts of meals including, stir fry, chilli, Jamaican patties, salads and shepherd's pie.' Young people's development and cultural awareness is aided by this approach.

Young people say that they know how to make a complaint and are confident to do this. All young people confirmed that they would not fear differing treatment from staff if they did make a complaint. Many complaints are dealt with informally but this is poorly recorded and there is no analysis of complaints, in the managers monitoring report, to identify any common themes.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people say that they feel safe in the home and trust the staff and managers. One young person said, 'I feel safe in the home and staff look after us properly.' Young people say that there is some bullying but that staff address it immediately. Staff are trained in working with issues of bullying and apply this positively in practice. Young people also took part in recent training on bullying gaining more insight into it and better understanding of the issues. Bullying is discussed in young people's meetings in an open and honest way. These interactions are skilfully managed by staff seeking understanding of the issues and differing feelings and perceptions of the victim and perpetrator. Young people say that results are mixed and this does not always sort out bullying. The home do not effectively analyse incidents of bullying potentially missing trends, patterns or triggers to these incidents. Keyworkers do follow up on any incidents with both victim and perpetrator to ensure that the risks to young people are reduced.

The home applies a rigorous and thorough staff recruitment and appointment process. All appropriate checks are in place and records are clear and well maintained. Young people are involved in the process enhancing safe selection of staff.

All staff have up to date training in the use of physical intervention, with a strong focus on de-escalation of incidents wherever possible. Whilst the majority of young people have no restraints a small number have between one and four restraints each month. One young person said of restraint, 'restraint is only used to protect us and other people from injury and to prevent us from causing damage to the home.' However, the home's policy on the use of restraint is not compliant with regulations, including the use of restraint to stop absconding, potentially compromising the safe care of the young people. The records on restraint show only one incident where this occurred and other factors were occurring which put others at risk. Incidents are clearly recorded in an on line data base and reviewed by the manager and external monitoring visitor. However, there is no structured monitoring of the use of physical restraint. The lack of monitoring means that there is no clear analysis of the success or failure of differing interventions to avoid the use of restraint. The home has no recorded identification of patterns or trends in behaviour and no clear strategic approach to reducing incidences of restraint. Keyworkers ensure that individual behaviour management plans contain detailed guidance on what interventions work with each child minimising the impact of the poor monitoring process.

Staff have received training in safeguarding and child protection which enhances the safe care of young people by applying this in their work with young people. Staff are aware of the whistle blowing policy and the requirement to notify managers of any concern in a timely manner. The home have recently reviewed their child protection policy but have not yet shared it with the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) and to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for child protection. Reporting of incidents is not always done in a timely manner, potentially compromising the safe care of young people. The managers do report any concerns, including inappropriate behaviour of staff, to the LADO and ensure that appropriate measures are put in place to safeguard young people. Codes of practice include possible suspension of staff, prior to any safeguarding investigation, ensuring the safe care of young people.

The home has an innovative approach to fire safety which led to young people joining staff training. Consequently young people recently completed accredited fire safety training, including learning the appropriate use of fire fighting equipment. The home has recently commissioned and received a fire safety risk assessment which recommended some changes to fire safety measures, fire prevention and detection within the home. The risk assessment also identified poor recording of the monitoring of fire points. Fire drills are well recorded, efficient and all staff and young people have practiced safe evacuations of the home and school. Managers recognise the need for these evacuations to be conducted frequently and at different times, including night time, to enhance the secure care of the young people.

Young people are settled in the home and explain how they can earn free time or

trips out. Staff engage positively with the young people and are highly aware of hotspots and signs of unsettled behaviour which could lead to young people going missing. Consequently there are few occasions when young people go missing.

Leadership and management

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

The manager of the home is experienced, and well respected by staff and young people. Young people, social workers, family members and staff have confidence in him. He has successfully addressed the recommendations from the last inspection. Supervision of staff is now regular but recording lacks detail making it difficult to assess the quality. Staff say that it is of good quality and that they find it helpful in addressing the work with the young people and their professional development. The manager has a basic development plan for the home which identifies targets, activity, specific tasks, who is responsible timescales and monitoring of this. The development plan has a strong focus on improving the quality and delivery of care to the young people.

Young people benefit from receiving care from a stable, diverse and well-trained staff team. All staff complete a comprehensive induction programme and either have, or are working towards, an appropriate level 3 qualification or higher.

External monitoring reports are comprehensive and give a good overview of the conduct of the home. The visits include discussions with the young people and an honest reporting of their comments. The reports highlight weaknesses in recording systems and provide helpful information to the manager on staff compliance with recording, file maintenance and meeting regulations and national minimum standards. Reports are regularly submitted to HMCI.

Internal monitoring occurs but is not systematically recorded and reports are not completed regularly. Furthermore, reports are not sent to HMCI regularly, are not completed as a summary of activity, lack detailed information and do not cover all required areas. In particular the home has no analysis of health and safety risk assessments, complaints, restraints or incidents of young people going missing. Consequently the reports fail to provide useful analysis and evaluation of the activity of the home necessary to aid the improvement of the service and the care of young people.

The home is well maintained and the manager endeavours to ensure that all health and safety requirements are met. He maintains a health and safety risk assessment of the building which he supports by daily audits. The audits are not formally recorded leading to some potential oversights such as checking of fire points. The risk assessment was current but due for review and update.

Ofsted is not always notified as required of significant events. The home makes telephone contact with relevant parties but reporting is not always in a timely manner. This potentially places children at risk.

The Statement of Purpose was not clear, accessible or comprehensive and was updated during the inspection by the responsible individual.

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.