

Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Inspector</b>	Joanna Heller
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Full
<b>Provision subtype</b>	Children's home

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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	20/11/2012
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## Service information

### Brief description of the service

This is a privately owned service which provides care and accommodation for up to four young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The service houses a specific facility of education in an independent school linked to the house.

### 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**.

The relationships between staff and young people are sound and this helps young people make good progress from their starting points. Staff are successful in reducing risky behaviours, such as, missing from care. Young people and placing authorities are positive about the home and feel the young people are well supported.

Young people are encouraged to live healthy lifestyles, however, some continue to make poor choices. Young people feel safe and staff are clear on their responsibility to ensure young people are safeguarded. Young people have confidence that any concerns they may have will be responded to. Staff are proactive in identifying and addressing group dynamics ensuring that bullying is swiftly identified and addressed.

Young people's case records are well maintained. Young people's individual needs and aspirations are identified and staff work to ensure these are met. Record keeping in relation to incidents of restraint and the securing of external doors are not sufficiently robust.

There have been a number of changes in the staff team during the past six months which has included a new acting manager. The potentially negative impact of these changes have been minimised by the additional senior management support and input which has been provided to the new manager. The impact on children and young people was also reduced because the changes happened when there were changes in the group of young people living at the home. Staff feel well supported. However, an impact of staff changes has been that not all members of staff have

received updated training in core areas in line with the company's policy and best practice and not all staff who should have done so have undertaken the diploma in caring for children.

Monitoring arrangements in the home have not been sufficiently robust. Recent improvements have been made, however, reviews of the quality of care are not conducted in line with regulation 34.

## 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
5 (2001)	Keep under review and, where appropriate, revise the statement of purpose; notify Ofsted of any such revision within 28 days (Regulation 5 (a) (b))	18/11/2013
17A (2001)	subject to paragraph (2) a measure of restraint may only be used on a child accommodated in a children's home for the purpose of preventing injury to any child (including the child that is being restrained) and property (Regulation 17 (1) (a) (b))	11/11/2013
27 (2001)	ensure that all persons employed receive appropriate training, supervision and appraisal (Regulation 27 (4) (a))	25/11/2013
34 (2001)	establish and maintain a system for monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 and improving the quality of care provided in the children's home. In particular; conduct the review in line with statutory timeframes and supply a copy of the report compiled in respect of the quality of care review. (Regulation 34 (1) (a) (b))	25/11/2013

### Recommendations

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

- ensure that there is an emergency escape plan that all staff and young people are familiar with and have practiced so they know what to do in an emergency (NMS 10.9)
- ensure that the home is not using its premises for the purpose of providing care in a setting which restricts the liberty of a child (Children Act 1989 Guidance and regulations Volume 5 (2.109))

- evidence telephone enquiries are made as well as obtaining written references (NMS 16.1)

## Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people are making strong progress from their starting points in this placement which is relatively new to each of them. This is most clearly demonstrated in areas, such as, educational progress, reductions in missing from care incidents and the development of self-care skills.

Young people have good opportunities to enhance their learning and benefit from the onsite education which is successful in engaging their interest. This means that young people have good educational attendance and are making strong educational progress. For example, one young person who has not previously attended school regularly now has nearly over 90% attendance, as well as high engagement.

Young people receive individualised care that meets their needs. Young people are encouraged to live healthy lifestyles, however, some continue to make poor choices, particularly in relation to smoking. Young people have effective access to primary health care services and any specialist services required. Young people enjoy healthy diets and participate in a range of physical activities that facilitate exercise, such as, football, walks and horse riding.

Young people are able to benefit from supportive relationships with staff. The provision of staff from a variety of backgrounds, age and gender provides young people with a homely style of interaction and ensures a broad base of interest. Young people are able to articulate their thoughts and views, and feel staff listen to them. Young people enjoy the time spent with staff playing board games and say their favourite time is 'snuggling up on a Saturday night in their onesie' with staff to watch a popular talent show. This helps young people to develop a positive self-view and emotional resilience.

Young people have clear contact arrangements with their families, subject to any restrictions imposed by court, this ensures parents remain active in young people's lives.

Young people develop skills that promote their independence at a level which is appropriate to them, such as, doing household chores and cooking meals for themselves.

## Quality of care

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

Staff are committed to supporting young people meet their full potential. Young people enjoy the high levels of attention paid to them by staff, and are learning how

to maintain positive relationships. Individual behaviour strategies are in place. Staff are effectively supporting young people to develop tools which help them self-regulate their behaviours. Young people are involved in making decisions about their care, this is particularly evidenced through the development of their own placement plan. Young people are well supported by staff. Young people are making good progress in understanding that it is not always possible to act on their wishes in all cases, particularly where this impacts on their safety and wellbeing.

Staff are effectively guided on how to support young people through comprehensive placement and care planning processes. Young people develop their own care plans identifying what they want to achieve, what they can do to succeed and what help they need. The manager ensures that detailed care plans are developed from these in addition to the local authority placement plan. Together these form the core guidance for staff on how to support young people, and contain information on all aspects of the young person's strengths, cultural identity, risk factors, needs and aspirations. The manager keeps these placement plans under regular review to ensure that changes in need or risk factors are effectively communicated. This means that the manager ensures the service continues to meet the young person's needs.

Staff spend ample time with young people to ensure interaction is meaningful and allow relationships to develop naturally. Although all staff get to know each of the young people, each young person is assigned a key worker who is responsible for the co-ordination of care. Key workers take the lead in undertaking individual discussions with young people around those issues which are affecting the child, helping them to reflect and understand their life history.

Complaints information is presented in the children's guide. Complaints have been dealt with positively ensuring effective resolution. This means that the young people are aware of the complaints procedure and have faith in the home to address any concerns.

Staff work in the school supporting young people and teachers. This ensures close collaboration and means that staff have a good awareness of young people's educational progress. Staff commitment to education is strong and this has meant that young people have significantly increased their school attendance and are making good educational progress.

Young people have access to a range of individually supported, paid activities of their personal choice. These include enjoying playing pool, shopping, cinema, horse riding and attending community groups, such as, army cadets.

Young people are encouraged to live healthy lifestyles and each young person has a detailed health plan. Staff keep good records of all health care and medical issues, ensuring that appointments and treatment outcomes are clearly documented

The home is located in a highly rural area and young people require staff to drive them to the local town. The location of the home is felt to be helpful in reducing

young people's motivation to go missing from care. The accommodation is homely and suitably maintained. The manager has plans to enhance some of the communal areas within the next six months. Young people are particularly proud of the large street art murals they have painted to brighten the lounge and give a clear sense of their style.

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

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

Young people feel safe and well cared for, and placing authorities highlight that staff have been competent in keeping young people safe. The home has been successful in reducing identified risks, such as, missing from care and child sexual exploitation. Staff are proactive at addressing keeping safe issues through regular keyworking sessions and a 12 week programme on building self-esteem and awareness. This is intended to help young people understand appropriate relationships and identify those which may place them at risk. Young people are developing trusting relationships with the staff group whom they value. Young people say they like the staff and identify a particular person whom they can talk to about anything which is worrying them.

Staff encourage young people's positive behaviour through regular praise and reward. Staff focus on restorative measures and addressing the consequences of behaviour through key work and group discussions. Young people are able to identify the behavioural changes that they are choosing to make, and how staff are giving them the tools and reflection skills to become more self-aware. Young people feel that they are being helped to mature, understand the impact that their behaviours have on others, and how they themselves are perceived. Staff are keenly aware of the importance of using sanctions which are consistent and proportionate to the impact of the behaviour. Sanctions used are clearly recorded and monitored for their effectiveness.

Staff have completed appropriate child protection training. However, some staff who have been employed in the organisation for some time, have yet to undertake training updates in line with the organisations own procedures. The impact of this is minimised as staff continue to be aware of their safeguarding responsibilities.

Young people, despite often being placed with high patterns of missing from care, rarely go missing at this home. High staffing levels mean that staff are able to effectively monitor young people's whereabouts during the day. Staff have a strong commitment to keeping young people safe, however, on occasion the balance of safeguarding and personal liberty has not been managed appropriately. The majority, but not all incidents of physical intervention or restriction of liberty meet legal threshold, as being in response to a clear and immediate risk of harm. For example, one incident of restraint occurred when staff physically escorted the young person back to the home when they left without permission. A second incident involved staff locking the front and rear doors of the building when a young person became challenging. This means that on occasion young people have been

restrained and/or had their liberty inappropriately curtailed.

Positive relationships with local police have been established and the home works well in partnership with them, particularly in relation to young people who are considered at high risk if they were to go missing.

Whilst young people state that as a group they are getting along relatively well, this has not always been the case. Staff have responded robustly to incidents of bullying in the past and send a clear message that bullying is not tolerated. Staff remain vigilant to any signs of bullying ensuring that addressing and preventing bullying remains high on the agenda. Young people are helped to manage conflict through appropriate channels, such as, house meetings and are proactive in calling these when incidents occur. This means young people feel that they are able to raise any issues of concern secure in the knowledge it will be addressed.

Young people are safeguarded from unsuitable people gaining employment in the home through sound vetting practices. The organisation ensures that no staff are employed until all checks on their suitability are in place in line with the regulations. However, best practice in staff recruitment is not always followed as the organisation does not evidence that references sought for prospective employees are always followed up with a telephone call. Effective systems are in place to ensure that visitors are appropriately monitored.

The home's premises are safe and all required safety checks on electrical and domestic appliances have been carried out. Due to significant recent changes in the staffing team some staff have not undertaken a fire evacuation drill. Staff not being fully conversant with emergency escape plans has the potential to place both them and young people at risk. This undermines the otherwise comprehensive fire precaution arrangements in the home.

## **Leadership and management**

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

The registered manager left in May and an acting manager has been in place since that time. An application for registration of this manager is currently being processed. The manager was previously the deputy manager, and this has ensured continuity of management for staff and young people. Senior managers are providing support to the manager on a weekly basis to guide them and provide regular professional supervision.

The organisation provides a wide range of useful training for staff such as, care focus philosophy, managing contact and working therapeutically and all staff have received initial training in key areas such as child protection and restraint. However, there has been an impact on ensuring staff's training remains up to date in line with the home's policy as a result of changes in the staff group over the last six months. The majority of staff have not yet completed health and safety or food hygiene training.



When staff have not received appropriate training or received the necessary updates this may affect their professional awareness and potentially their competence.

New staff have received a good induction process, including shadowing staff on shift. This has helped these new staff gain skills and confidence prior to taking on their new role fully. Staff support and supervision is consistent and staff feel well supported.

Staffing levels are suitable to meet the needs of the young people, with a staff member allocated to support each young person throughout the day. Staffing includes waking night staff, this provides young people with support during the night should they need it.

The home is suitably resourced to ensure that the service meets the aims and objectives as set out in the Statement of Purpose. The Statement of Purpose has not been updated to reflect current management arrangements, nor has a copy been sent to Ofsted. This means that information provided to stakeholders is not accurate and up to date. All young people benefit from the clear information provided in the children's guide, including how to complain and access outside support.

Visits to the home in accordance with regulation 33 have been historically of limited quality, however, recent improvements to these have been made which aid strengthened monitoring of the home. These monitoring systems now help identify strengths and weaknesses of the service and assist service development and improvement.

The manager has conducted a review of the quality of care under regulation 34 which gives a detailed overview of young people's progress. However, this has not been conducted in line with the time frames set out in statutory guidance, nor has a copy been sent to Ofsted. The manager ensures that the views of key stakeholders are regularly sought, but these have not been incorporated into the review of the quality of care. No requirements and recommendations were set at the previous inspection.

## 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.