

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC408714
Inspector	Joanna Heller
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Able Health Care Limited
Registered person address	45 Wolsey Road NORTHWOOD Middlesex HA6 2ER
Responsible individual	Aruna Kukadia
Registered manager	Anthony William Gill
Date of last inspection	18/07/2013

Inspection date	08/05/2014
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Previous inspection	adequate
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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The home has been in transition over the past eighteen months, experiencing two new managers and some changes in staffing. The staffing and management arrangements in the home are now embedded and this is having a positive impact on the home as a whole. Strong leadership has enabled the staff team to develop their skills and be clearer as to the ethos of the home.

Young people make strong individual progress and are effectively safeguarded. Young people and their families rate the home as good to outstanding. Placing authorities' comment on the strong individual progress children have made. The manager maintains good communication with parents and placing authorities, ensuring young people remain at the centre of care delivered.

Relationships between staff and young people are positive and young people feel able to talk to staff about things which worry them. Young people's risk taking behaviours have reduced. Behaviour management within the home is strong, with clear and consistent boundaries. Young people are learning to self-regulate their behaviours. This means that the use of sanctions and restraint is minimal.

Although young people's individual needs are well met, there are some shortfalls in staff training and record keeping.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is privately owned. It is registered to look after a maximum of six young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. There are education facilities within the grounds of the home.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/07/2013	Full	adequate
24/04/2013	Full	inadequate
17/12/2012	Interim	inadequate progress
26/09/2012	Full	adequate

What does the children's home need to do to improve further?

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
27 (2001)	ensure that all persons employed receive appropriate training. In particular; ensure that all staff receive core training, such as, health and safety and first aid (Regulation (27 (4) (a))	27/06/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure there is a system in place to monitor the quality and adequacy of reco

keeping and take action when needed. In particular; ensure suitably accurate and detailed records are maintained of sanctions and incidents within the home which evidence the actions staff take. (NMS 22.1)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

The home provides young people with a stable, secure and happy environment in which they can grow and develop. Young people benefit from individualised child-focused care. Young people enjoy living at the home and grade the home as 'brilliant'.

Young people make good individual progress in key areas such as, keeping themselves safe, self-regulation of behaviour, personal care skills and reduction in offending behaviour. Young people's experiences of the home are positive and they have made good individual progress. Young people are developing strong attachments with staff who nurture them to develop their emotional resilience.

Young people are able to maintain and build upon relationships with people who are important to them. Young people are involved in the daily running of the home and decisions made about their care.

Young people are healthy and are developing awareness of how to maintain healthy and active lifestyles. Young people develop self-care and independence skills appropriate to their age. Young people are making some improvement in their commitment to education and are benefitting from a wealth of informal learning activities.

The building provides young people with good quality spacious accommodation that meets their needs.

Quality of care **good**

Staff have a clear ethos as to what they want to achieve. Young people are able to experience a stable environment where they are nurtured, which, in turn, helps to develop their emotional resilience. Placing authorities and families rate the home as good to excellent. Parents' comments include 'they are very good at interacting with 'x', it's a really good place'. Placing authority comments include 'it's been a really good placement for 'x', they have achieved more than was expected'.

Young people rate the home as brilliant and say there is always someone to talk to when they need them. Young people enjoy a full schedule of activities including army cadets, police cadets, football and going to the gym each week. Young people have fun with staff, playing cards and outdoor games such as manhunt.

Care is child focussed and staff are sensitive to how young people process

information and are best communicated with. For example, staff have on occasion clarified verbal discussion with appropriate written reinforcement, to enable young people to read and process key information at their own speed. Young people know how to complain and have confidence in the manager to respond to any issues of concern which they may raise.

Placements are well planned which means that no inappropriate placements are made. Staff support young people to have a positive end of placement experience and are sensitive to the emotional well-being of young people. Some young people who have moved on continue to keep in touch. Staff are guided on how to support young people through good placement and care planning processes. Young people are involved in the development of these plans and are able to express their goals and aspirations.

The manager proactively advocates for more robust formal educational arrangements where these are lacking. Staff promote a constant learning environment using the home's music studio and multimedia suite to provide home based learning opportunities. For example, young people are encouraged to write their own songs and make animated short films. Young people spoke about how they have enjoyed learning the guitar. The song writing helps young people express themselves and explore their histories, as well as providing an opportunity to improve literacy skills. Young people are also offered the opportunity to try new experiences, such as, going to the theatre. Regular discussion regarding current affairs challenges young people to gain a wider awareness of the world. Furthermore, young people are encouraged to utilise this improved awareness to engage in activities that have a positive impact. For example, writing to soldiers in combat.

Staff consult young people on all aspects of their lives and provide highly child focused care and support. Staff assist young people to understand their personal histories, and how this affects them. Staff are flexible in responding to young people's needs and reflect on how young people's life experience may impact on how they perceive the world around them.

Staff positively support young people to build successful relationships and have good memories. One parent reflected that their relationship with their child had significantly improved as a result of them coming to the home. For example, staff enabled the young person to play an active role in a key family event through good preparation and support.

Young people are healthy and are encouraged to live healthy lifestyles. Staff offer young people who smoke support to give up. Young people have access to appropriate health services such as doctors, dentists and opticians. Staff seek specialist health services where required. On occasion there is not a qualified first aider on duty. This means that if a young person were injured, staff potentially do not have the skills to competently administer first aid.

The home is appropriately located, spacious and homely.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Young people feel safe, secure and well cared for. Young people develop strong relationships with staff who provide consistently clear boundaries whilst maintaining a calm and relaxed atmosphere.

Young people say they like living at the home and that they like the staff. Young people feel they can talk to the caring staff about any problems they may have. One-to-one discussions take place regarding making positive choices, sexual relationships and about keeping safe.

Good quality risk assessments and management plans guide staff effectively with how to prevent and manage risk. Staff reflect on the key issues for young people and what may trigger incidents within the home or missing from care occurrences. Young people rarely go missing from care and this has been a particular area of growth for one young person. Staff are however, clear on what to do should a young person go missing.

Staff are successful in engaging young people in positive activities with the aim to reduce antisocial behaviour. Staff are proactive in engaging with both local and national organisations regarding effective safeguarding and the prevention of offending. Partner professionals say that young people are safer as a result of being at the home. Positive engagement with the police means that young people feel confident to talk to their local officer and are well supported should they become a victim of crime.

Staff have good systems in place to promote positive behaviour through regular praise and reward of positive actions. This helps young people feel valued and builds their self-esteem. Young people are encouraged to make reparation when an incident occurs, helping them to take personal responsibility for their actions. Staff are clear on the threshold for physical intervention and no incidents of restraint have occurred within the home in the past twelve months. Sanctions, when required, are applied appropriately, however, the records of sanctions are not always sufficiently clearly recorded. In addition, the recording of one significant incident is not sufficiently detailed to demonstrate clearly how staff managed a situation.

The manager ensures good systems are in place to ensure the safety and security of the building. Fire precautionary arrangements in the home ensure young people and staff are safeguarded from fire in line with current good practice.

Leadership and management

good

The home has experienced significant change during the past eighteen months with two changes in manager and some staff changes. The current management arrangements are now embedded and the manager has overseen significant improvement within the home. The manager keeps up to date with changes in legislation and guidance. Young people, parents and placing authorities rate the home as good to excellent and outcomes for young people are good.

Staff display a strong commitment to ensuring young people have the best life outcomes possible. The manager leads by example and staff refer to 'now having a clear understanding of what good looks like'. New staff have received a thorough induction process which has helped these new staff gain skills and confidence prior to taking on their new role. Staff are well supported through regular supervision and team meetings.

The manager ensures a wide range of useful training for staff is provided, such as, sexual exploitation, challenging behaviour and attachment theory. Further training on the model of care used, is planned to be delivered to all staff within the next two months. However, some staff have yet to complete core training in health and safety and first aid. Staff professional awareness and competence has the potential to be undermined where key training has not been undertaken.

Staffing levels are suitable to meet the assessed needs of 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.

Records management within the home is generally strong, however, there are some instances when records do not fully evidence care provided, or are not sufficiently accurate. For example, in relation to sanctions.

Staff maintain positive relationships with the local community and other agencies, such as, the police and youth offending teams. One complaint has been received by Ofsted in relation to the home since the last inspection. This has been investigated and the home continues to meet regulatory requirements.

The manager provides good quality notifications of all significant events to the relevant authorities and takes appropriate action following any incident. The home is suitably resourced to ensure that the service meets the aims and objectives as set out in the Statement of Purpose. The manager has ensured that all recommendations set at the previous inspection have been met. Quality monitoring processes at the home are robust and the manager has a clear vision for the home.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
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.

Information 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 framework of inspection for children's homes.