

Inspection report for children's home

---

<b>Unique reference number</b>	SC039213
<b>Inspector</b>	Sandra Jacobs-Walls
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Full
<b>Provision subtype</b>	Children's home

---

<b>Registered manager</b>	POST VACANT
<b>Date of last inspection</b>	22/01/2014

<b>Inspection date</b>	18/06/2014
------------------------	------------

Previous inspection	adequate
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

<b>This inspection</b>	
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>adequate</b>
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	inadequate

## Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	<b>adequate</b>
-------------------	-----------------

The leadership and management outcome area is judged to be inadequate. This is as a result of the provider's inability to identify and put forward a manager, to be registered with Ofsted within the specified 26 week period. In line with revised Ofsted guidance, under these circumstances leadership and management can only be judged as inadequate. This outcome has a direct bearing on the judgement for the home's overall effectiveness, which is rated as being adequate.

Young people are making good progress while living at this home. Some young people are engaged in education and all live healthy lifestyles. Staff ensure young people receive personalised care that meets their needs. Young people's views are well respected and they have influence on how the home operates. Staff assist young people to develop sound independent living skills.

Young people enjoy mutually trusting relationships with the staff group, who in turn enjoy helping young people with their personal development. Young people are protected by the service and feel safe. They know that any issues or concerns will be dealt with appropriately by staff and they receive clear information about making complaints. Bullying does not occur at the home. Some young people are absent without permission or are deemed missing frequently. However in recent months, this trend has been in decline. The home's premises are comfortable, well-furnished

and appropriately maintained.

The last inspection resulted in no requirements or recommendations being issued. This inspection notes some shortfalls. These relate to the absence of a Registered Manager, staff training, revision of the home's medication policy, and the quality of regulation 34 reports.

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

This is a privately run children's home. The home provides care, support and accommodation for to up to six young people of either gender. The service accepts referrals for young people who have emotional or behavioural difficulties.

Currently the home does not have a Registered Manager. The previous manager left some six months ago and the home's recruitment efforts have failed to secure a new manager. During the course of this inspection, the provider promoted a senior member of staff to the permanent manager post.

### Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/01/2014	Full	adequate
16/01/2013	Interim	good progress
22/06/2012	Full	adequate
10/01/2012	Interim	inadequate progress

### 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
8 (2001)	ensure that the home has in place a manager who is registered with Ofsted. (Care Standards Act 2000; Section 11)	01/09/2014
34 (2001)	establish and maintain a system for monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 at least once every 3 months. (Regulation 34(1)(a))	01/08/2014

## **Recommendations**

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

- ensure that children's physical needs are promoted. In particular ensure that there is written guidance available to staff about the use of homely remedies. (NMS 6.1)
- ensure there is a good quality learning and development programme which staff are supported to undertake. (NMS 18.1)

## Inspection judgements

### Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people live in a secure and caring environment and they describe their experience of the home as being positive. Outcomes for young people improve as their placement progresses. This is demonstrated in some young people's renewed engagement with education and the reduction of incidents where young people are absent without permission or are deemed missing.

Young people feel they are listened to and have very good opportunities to share their views and feelings about the service. For example, young people consistently attend the home's weekly residents' meeting where they discuss a wide range of issues including service operation. Additionally, key work sessions routinely explore young people's opinion about placement issues and how well their needs are being met. Young people grow in confidence and have a better understanding of their background, and their identity needs are well addressed. For example young people are encouraged to attend their chosen places of worship and have relevant holy books purchased. Young people are encouraged to display pictures of friends and family members on their bedroom walls and in photo albums.

Young people benefit from having their health needs well met and they maintain a healthy lifestyle. All are registered with primary health care services and attend key appointments. They have good access to specialist health care services such as psychotherapy and medical services to address issues such as enuresis. Young people enjoy healthy, well-balanced and varied meals that are to their liking and in accordance with cultural needs.

Most young people make good educational achievement, while for others, their learning outcomes are poor. Young people who are engaged and committed to furthering their educational attainment, do so and, with the support of staff, have made good progress. For other young people however, their refusal to engage in educational activities results in poor learning outcomes. Young people have access to educational provision that meet their specific needs including participation in home tuition.

Young people benefit from the home's flexible approach towards visitation at the home. Young people are able to develop and build upon existing positive peer relationships and staff discourage relationships that are not in young people's best interests. Young people benefit from the communication that staff have with their parents, this is particularly the case when young people are absent without permission. This consistent communication is important so that all parties are kept informed of placement issues and have an opportunity to work collaboratively to resolve difficulties and support progress. Young people enjoy flexible contact with their families and friends and are aware of any restrictions on contact that have been

imposed by the placing authority.

Young people develop good self-care skills while in placement. Tasks include young people getting involved in meal preparation and shopping, as well as managing their own laundry and keeping their bedrooms tidy. Young people understand the importance of being able to complete these tasks independently. Some young people need support and supervision in maintaining adequate personal hygiene standards. Where this is the case, such issues feature in support plans and are discussed in key work sessions.

## Quality of care

**good**

Young people enjoy and benefit from the stable, nurturing and supportive environment the home provides. Staff demonstrate a strong commitment to young people's development. One staff member comments, 'The best thing? I love working here, I love being with the kids'. As a result, staff share mutually trusting relationships with young people, which young people appreciate. One young person comments, 'I give the home a 9.6 out of 10. The staff here are nice. Most are flexible. If there is a situation most will go out of their way to help you'. A good illustration of this is a recent occasion when staff members stayed up late into the night with one young person, providing reassurance to the young person who was anxious about another young person's absence from the home.

Young people have good opportunities to share their views and feelings about the service. For example, staff ensure young people engage in regular 1:1 discussions, primarily through key work sessions. The home also facilitates weekly residents' meetings that offer young people a forum to share their views about a range of issues. Young people feel that staff are interested in their opinions and take what they say seriously. Staff manage complaints sensitively, effectively and in accordance with written guidance. The service has received one complaint from a neighbour since the last inspection. The issue was resolved satisfactorily.

The home's referral process is well-managed. Its placement and care planning processes are consistently implemented. Young people's files contain good background information about young people and their placement needs and issues. The service ensures that placement planning meetings are held and staff contribute well to statutory Looked After Children reviews and encourage young people to do the same. This is important to ensure that staff, young people and others are clear about how individual care needs are being met by the service.

Staff encourage young people to live healthy lifestyles while in placement. The home ensures there are appropriate systems in place to facilitate young people's registration with primary care services and any required specialist services. Young

people have 'priority status' at the local GP practice. They receive prompt medical appointments, advice and treatment as required. Staff ensure young people's immunizations are up to date and that annual health medicals are scheduled and kept. They are available to accompany young people to appointments if they so wish. Staff health care practices are largely supported by clear written guidance. The exception to this however is the home's written policy in relation to the administration of medication.

The home's current guidance with regards to medication does not include information about the use of homely remedies. This is important to ensure all staff are clear about the home's expectations and practice in relation young people's access to homely remedies. Staff maintain good records of young people's medical and health care needs and how these are to be addressed. Staff periodically receive relevant health focused training, such as first aid and food hygiene, which helps them to support young people to maintain healthy lifestyles. The home's provision of food is very good and young people enjoy a healthy, varied diet which is nutritious and to young people's liking. One young person comments, 'The food here is nice; they cook what I like and on Mondays we have takeaway'.

The educational achievement for young people is variable. Some young people make good progress educationally, from the starting point of the placement. For some others, their educational outcomes less positive. Young people's educational objectives are well highlighted in placement plans and staff regularly address individual education needs with young people. This is particularly the case for key work sessions. Staff work closely with educational professionals in an attempt to encourage improved school attendance. For example staff will provide and supervise homework, escort young people to school, maintain communication with teachers and support the visits of educational welfare officers. Despite the keen efforts of staff and other professionals, some young people still do not engage with services offered and their educational prospects remain poor.

Young people have access to a choice of recreational activities, which the home funds. Typically these include ice-skating, swimming, bowling, DVD nights and trips to the cinema. Staff encourage young people to identify their preferred leisure interests although some young people regularly decline to participate in organised recreational activities, preferring to spend personal time with their friends or on their own playing electronic games in the home.

The building premises are appropriately located, designed and well-maintained. Young people are very positive about their surroundings. The home is comfortable and meets well the accommodation needs of young people in placement.

**Keeping children and young people safe** good

Young people feel safe and share trusting relationships with the staff group. One young person comments, 'I do feel safe here. They go to all extremes - they don't even have a letter box in case anyone wants to slip anything in! There is CCTV and staff have our best interests at heart'. Good relationships with staff contribute to young people's feelings of safety and security. The home's practices in relation to safeguarding young people are sufficiently robust in ensuring that they are adequately protected from harm, neglect and abuse.

Staff receive child protection training and have access to clear written guidance. This helps inform their care practices, so that they are alert to signs that indicate young people may be at risk. Staff regularly speak with young people about the dangers of their risk taking behaviour. As a result young people are mindful of the impact such behaviour may have on their safety and there has been a reduction in the risks they take. There has particularly been a reduction in how often young people go missing. Staff document clear risk assessments that highlight the behavioural patterns of young people and how the home intends to address and minimise such behaviour. Young people's welfare and safety is promoted by the home. Since the last inspection there have been no referrals of a child protection nature or any allegations or complaints made against staff.

The staff team have access to good written guidance that addresses young people who are deemed missing or who are absent from the home without authority. Young people are aware of such protocols and understand they are in place for their own protection. Staff maintain meticulous records of all instances where young people are absent without permission or are deemed missing. These records show that, for some young people, the frequency of absences is high, but reflect a pattern of absconding which is historical. Staff continue to speak with young people about the risks posed while absent, both in key work sessions and periodically during the weekly residents' meetings. Liaison with local police teams is effective both while young people are absent and upon their return home.

Young people are generally well behaved. They enjoy each other's company and report that bullying does not occur in the home. One young person comments, 'It's a nice place to live. No bad energy, good vibes. We all get along. Sometimes we argue and next we are best friends'. Staff have access to behaviour management policies and devise individual behaviour management plans tailored for each young person. These are drawn up in accordance with placement plans and in consultation with social workers. The home's behaviour management strategies are largely effective. These include the appropriate use of sanctions when behaviour is of concern, and incentives to promote positive behaviour. All staff have recently received training in physical intervention. No young person has been restrained by staff since the last inspection.

Young people are protected by clear recruitment systems. These ensure only suitable people are employed in the home. The home's premises are physically safe. There are good fire precaution measures in place and staff routinely complete general

health and safety checks. Appropriate risk assessments are in place and the home's use of CCTV provides additional security to the premises.

## **Leadership and management**

## **inadequate**

Leadership and management are judged to be inadequate. This is a result of the provider's inability to appoint a permanent manager, who should be registered with Ofsted within the specified 26 week period. This is in breach of the Children's Home's Regulations.

In light of the provider's on-going difficulties in securing a Registered Manager, during the course of the inspection, the provider proposed that an existing senior member of staff be promoted, with immediate effect to the position of manager. The provider indicates an intention to put forward the home's newly appointed manager to be registered with Ofsted as is legally required.

The home has no outstanding requirements or recommendations from previous inspections. The service is financially viable and there is an adequate development plan in place. The home's Statement of Purpose clearly outlines the aims and objectives of the service, so interested parties are informed of the home's function and the services provided. The children's guide enables young people to know something about the home and the people who will be caring for them. Staff recording is clear and young people's case files are in good order. Case files contain detailed information which gives young people a clear understanding of their background and of their time spent at the home. Recorded information is kept securely locked.

The home employs a sufficient number of support staff to ensure the needs of young people are met. Additional staff are made available to work in the home to increase the level of supervision required to keep young people safe. The staff group are experienced. All staff hold the necessary formal child care qualifications as specified in the National Minimum Standards for Children's Homes. This is to ensure their care practices are safe and of a good standard. Two senior staff members are about to embark on NVQ training at level 5.

The staff group have access to a range of basic training opportunities, primarily offered by the host local authority. Much of this training has already been completed by long-serving staff. Training records do not evidence a comprehensive training programme or accurately reflect training undertaken by staff. Team members acknowledge that they have completed limited training in the past six months. The home's staff training records do not indicate training opportunities are meeting the individual needs of staff well. This is important if staff knowledge and skills are to be enhanced and service provision is to improve.

Team members receive good support. Supervision is regular and meaningful and staff performance is annually appraised to ensure care practices are of a good standard.

Independent personnel complete monthly unannounced visits to assess the standard of care in line with Regulation 33. Subsequent reports provide adequate insight into the home's weaknesses and strengths and offer some remedy in addressing shortfalls. The home's consultant also produces Regulation 34 quality of care reports. However these reports do not comment on all matters as outlined in Schedule 6 of the regulations. This is important to ensure monitoring reports are sufficiently robust in reviewing the home's quality of care and support the service's continual improvement.

## 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.

© Crown copyright 2014

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.