

Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	SC381531
<b>Inspector</b>	Maria McGranaghan
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Full
<b>Provision subtype</b>	Children's home

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<b>Registered person</b>	Young Alliance Limited
<b>Registered person address</b>	60 School Lane Bamber Bridge Preston Lancashire PR5 6QE
<b>Responsible individual</b>	Edward Peter Nixon
<b>Registered manager</b>	Stephen Eyre
<b>Date of last inspection</b>	15/01/2014

<b>Inspection date</b>	27/06/2014
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Previous inspection	good
Enforcement action since last inspection	There has been no enforcement action taken against this home.

<b>This inspection</b>	
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>good</b>
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	<b>good</b>
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Young people make progress in a home that is dedicated to improving their emotional and mental health. Effective multi-agency collaboration ensures that young people receive a high standard of therapy, support and counselling that assists them through their journey to better emotional wellbeing.

Young people's safety is suitably protected. Effective partnerships with external agencies coupled with strong and supportive relationships with staff ensure risks are appropriately assessed and managed.

Consultation with young people is the foundation of the care planning process within the home. Young people work together with a range of professionals to assist in formulating their individual care package. Consequently, young people feel a sense of control in their lives which is an essential first step towards regulating their complex emotional wellbeing.

The home is suitably managed with an emphasis of providing a quality therapeutic environment for young people. Good monitoring systems ensure that all aspects of the home are suitably scrutinised and the appropriate action taken to enhance performance within the home.

Despite these strengths, there are areas for development. While relationships are formed with the local authority designated officer, a lack of regular liaison means that information sharing is limited. Furthermore, in the event of a young person being admitted to hospital the manager has not been notifying Ofsted in accordance with Regulation 30. As a result, two recommendations are made at this inspection.

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

This home is a specialised children's home that is provided by a private residential childcare provider in partnership with an independent mental health community service. The service provides residential care for children and young people who have experienced moderate to serious mental health problems. The home is registered to care for five children at any one time.

### Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/01/2014	Full	good
12/06/2013	Interim	good progress
14/02/2013	Full	good
22/05/2012	Interim	satisfactory progress

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

#### Recommendations

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

- ensure significant events such as the admission of a young person to hospital notified in accordance with Regulation 30 (NMS 24.1)
- ensure concerns about staff members are reported by the designated person the LADO. This includes concerns that on the face of it may appear relatively insignificant (NMS 20.6)

## Inspection judgements

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

From their initial starting point, young people make suitable progress in the home. They build positive relationships with staff. One young person said, 'Staff are sound, they listen to me and I can talk to them about anything.' Likewise, young people are proud of their achievements in the home. One young person said, 'I hadn't been to school in years and now I have a diploma, I used to break things all the time and I haven't done that in ages.' Young people understand and acknowledge their progress and this assists to build individual self-esteem and confidence.

Young people's views and opinions are consistently sought in both the preparation for placement and the care planning process. They benefit from access to an independent advocate, regular keywork consultation sessions and counselling services. A young person said, 'I like it here because I know they are helping me. They listen to me and understand me, even when I feel like I don't understand myself.'

Young people's complex emotional needs are thoroughly assessed and prioritised in the home. As such, education is planned in accordance with the individual coping mechanisms of young people. On the whole young people make progress. For example, they begin to attend school after extended periods of absence and undertake formal examinations such as a diploma in Access to Employment and GCSE examinations. A young person said, 'I now feel like I can do something with my life when I am older, this was something I used to worry about.'

Young people are supported to live and lead healthy and active lifestyles. Daily consultation with therapeutic services, supported by counselling sessions and keywork support ensures young people are provided with the most appropriate tools to manage their emotional wellbeing. Young people benefit from a 24 hour helpline directed to a specialist team of therapists should they require additional emotional support. As a result, young people begin to recognise changes in their emotional wellbeing and seek appropriate support that assists them to manage this.

Young people take part in a range of exciting activities such as feeding the sharks, visits to theme parks, weekends away and horse riding. Some young people undertake individual activities such as attending a singing academy or helping out at the local farm. As a result young people begin to take on challenges and overcome fear. One young person said, 'It was amazing I was really scared but the staff kept telling me I could do it and eventually I did. I am so proud of myself.'

Young people benefit from suitable contact with family. On the whole, staff maintain essential links with families and involve them where appropriate in the overall planning of the young people's care. Clear placement planning ensures contact only

takes place with only those whom it has been agreed and arrangements are reviewed regularly.

Young people benefit from a knowledgeable and enthusiastic staff team who are skilled in enhancing young people's life experiences including independence. Young people have individual plans that enable them to take small steps such as visits to the shops and purchasing food and clothing of their own choice. They enjoy helping to cook meals and preparing the weekly menu. Consequently, young people are supported to undertake tasks comparable to their peers. This person centred approach assists young people to continually develop self-esteem and confidence while preparing for adulthood.

### **Quality of care**

**good**

Young people are suitably placed in a home that provides a good standard of care and support. Staff demonstrate a strong commitment to young people, resulting in trusting relationships being firmly established.

Young people know how to complain. Information is provided in the young people's guide and organisational complaints documents. Regular visits by an independent visitor ensures young people are provided with an opportunity to raise concerns independently from the home. Likewise, consultation and counselling sessions provide young people with additional routes for complaint should they be unhappy about any element of the home. The positive relationship with staff ensures that the young people's views are valued and that they feel confident to raise matters. A young person said, 'I can talk to anybody really. If I say I am not happy with something they will always try to sort it out.'

Young people benefit from well-developed placement plans that clearly capture individual need. Effective partnerships with the in-house therapeutic provision enable young people to begin to address difficult matters in their lives. Likewise, suitable relationships are formed with external agencies such as, education, health and community police. The care planning process and risk management work together in order to suitably meet the individual and complex needs of young people. A member of staff said, 'The home is a very therapeutic environment for young people and the services they receive are brilliant. I have seen how young people progress and it is amazing.'

Young people's individual health needs are holistically assessed with input from a range of medical, psychological and therapeutic professionals. Health care plans work together with individual therapy sessions and in-house support groups. This enables young people to learn about the health risks associated with risk taking behaviours. Consequently, young people begin to understand the advantages to good health and emotional wellbeing and develop self-help skills in order to manage their complex emotions.

Young people benefit from care that enriches their personal development. The staff consistently generate new opportunities for young people to experience, from short break holidays to trying out new and exciting activities. As a result, young people begin to flourish in a home that strives for their individual success.

Young people living in the home have a history of prolonged educational disruption as a result of complex emotional instability. Staff work in partnership with mainstream and alternative educational providers in order that young people are placed in the most suitable setting. Care is taken to evaluate young people's abilities in order to plan education at a pace they can successfully manage. Consequently and taking into account their initial starting point, young people make progress and are successful in their undertaking of college courses and GCSE examinations.

Young people are supported by staff that understand the importance of equality and diversity. Regular group sessions assist the young people to learn about different cultures, religions and colonial histories whilst enabling them to celebrate their own identity. The home demonstrates a commitment to ensuring that young people are afforded opportunities to understand their diverse nation.

Young people live in a spacious, well maintained home that blends into the residential area. Young people are central to making the house into their home and proudly display photographs, drawings and comments around the home.

### **Keeping children and young people safe    good**

The safety of young people is rigorously assessed within the home. Good working relationships with external agencies combined with up-to-date risk management plans ensure that young people are provided with a suitable level of support in order to maintain their safety. Young people participate in training sessions addressing risk taking behaviours, such as being missing, cyber relationships and the use of illegal substances. Training at this level assists young people to understand why behaviours can lead to a safeguarding concern and why action is taken to secure their safety. Consequently, young people learn about the impact of risk taking behaviours on themselves and others and begin to develop strategies that minimises potential risk.

Young people are supported to live together and respect each other as individuals with different life experiences, needs and opinions. Likewise, young people are enabled to learn about behaviours such as bullying both from a victim and perpetrator perspective. Keywork sessions and young people's meetings take place regularly and this empowers young people to recognise the impact of bullying and take the appropriate action to make it stop. A young person said, 'We don't have bullying here, we all try to get along. Sometimes we argue and fall out, but we always make up.'

Young people's safety is prioritised in the home. Staff are appropriately trained in order to recognise and respond to concerns and this is supported by targeted risk assessments. The assessments suitably highlight specific risk factors for young people and the strategies in place in order to reduce them. Likewise, suitable partnerships are formed with external agencies to ensure safeguarding procedures are up-to-date and effective in maintaining young people's safety. As a result, young people do not go missing from the home.

Young people are encouraged to demonstrate socially acceptable behaviour. Individual behaviour management plans work together with in-house therapeutic services in order to identify triggers for negative behaviour and effective strategies for positive behaviour management. Similarly, methods such as star charts and instant reward systems enables young people to work towards specific goals and recognise positive and helpful attitudes. This has proved successful as there are few behaviour management issues and no instances where physical intervention has been required in the home.

The home employs a good recruitment procedure that ensures young people are looked after by staff who are appropriately checked in order to work in the home. Visitors are appropriately vetted and this helps to make sure that young people are protected while in their home.

Staff promote young people's on-going protection by undertaking regular fire drills and service tests, making sure that all faults are suitably addressed. Good monitoring systems are in place and include the safe administration of prescribed medication.

## **Leadership and management**

**good**

The Registered Manager has been in post since March 2012. He brings to the role a wealth of social care experience and two years' experience as the Registered Manager. He is suitably qualified to undertake his responsibilities, with a Certificate of Qualification in Social Work, a Degree in Applied Social Studies and Social Administration and a Diploma in Management.

Young people live in a home that is suitably managed. The home meets the aims and objectives of the Statement of Purpose and young people, their families and placing authorities are clear about the service the home provides.

Internal and external monitoring is thorough. Clear and detailed reports include the action taken by the manager to address any matters raised as a result of the monitoring. Likewise, the organisational development plan demonstrates how the service is to be strengthened with the employment of a deputy manager and temporary residential posts becoming permanent.

On the whole, any concerns or complaints raised by young people, families or other



individual are suitably addressed and where necessary include referrals to external agencies such as local authority designated officer and children's rights. However, on occasion where a concern has been raised and investigated by the home, this is not always done in partnership with the local authority designated officer. Although these concerns do not meet the threshold for a safeguarding referral, information sharing and consistent liaison with external agencies supports safe care practices in the home.

The manager is aware of the procedure for notifying the regulator Ofsted of serious incidents in accordance with Regulation 30. This practice ensures that information is shared with the regulatory agency in order that actions and outcomes for young people can be suitably assessed. However, because of the complex needs of young people living in the home, there are occasions where some young people require hospital treatment including admission. Although it is required in the regulations, these matters are not routinely notified to Ofsted.

Young people are looked after by caring and supportive staff with suitable skills and experience. Young people benefit from an individual senior care co-ordinator and one to one staff. Consequently, young people benefit from a consistent approach to their care including sufficient numbers of staff on duty to meet their individual needs in the most suitable way.

The majority of staff are trained at NVQ level three and access a suitable training programme that serves to enhance the skills and knowledge required in their work with young people. Staff receive a good level of support and supervision from the manager and therapeutic services in order to maintain the good standards of care practice in the home.

The home is set in a small village close to local amenities and transport links. It offers spacious well-presented accommodation with ample interior space and well maintained exterior grounds for young people to access. The young people benefit from a homely and relaxed atmosphere which aids to support their stability in the home.

The manager has made good progress in addressing the two recommendations from the last inspection. Young people are now placed in appropriate educational settings and receive a high level of support in order to maintain their placement. Overall consultation with parents, social workers and reviewing officers has improved. Weekly reports provide an up-to-date overview of young people's progress and invite comment and suggestions with regard to care practice in 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.