

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC441080
Inspector	David Morgan
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Bryn Melyn Care Limited
Registered person address	2 High Street Dawley Telford Shropshire TF4 2ET

Responsible individual	Melissa Johnson
Registered manager	Darren William Edwards
Date of last inspection	17/07/2013

Inspection date	01/07/2014
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Previous inspection	satisfactory progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	There has been no enforcement action since the last inspection.

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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Since opening in 2011 this service has a history of achieving satisfactory and adequate judgements. This has been exacerbated by substantial changes in manager and team members. However, the current inspection finds that this pattern has changed and a good standard of care is now occurring. The outcomes for some young people are excellent in several areas. This is due to very effective management and much improved consistency of staff.

Progress of the service overall is occurring in a systematic way that is evident in the substantial achievements of young people. The recommendation made at the last inspection has been addressed and staff now receive regular supervision. Incidents and issues of concern are minimal and young people feel secure with staff. The behaviour management techniques used to good effect by staff reflect the company's therapeutic model. The educational progress of young people is also particularly effectively supported.

This inspection finds no breaches of regulations but makes three new recommendations to foster further improvement.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This children's home is operated by an independent provider who also operates a large number of other children's homes and schools. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for three young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. Packages of care may include therapy and education.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/07/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress
01/05/2013	Full	adequate
08/01/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress
02/05/2012	Full	adequate

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):

- help children understand their health needs, maintain a healthy lifestyle and make informed choices about their own health. This is with regard to keeping accurate records of snack intake in order to fully promote healthy eating (NMS 6.2)
- demonstrate that the company consistently follows good recruitment practice, statutory requirements and guidance, in staff recruitment selection. This is with regard to having sufficient evidence on site (NMS 16.2)
- implement effective procedures for monitoring and controlling the activities of home. This is with regard to all such procedures identifying patterns and trends and evaluating them as part of a process of improvement. (NMS 21.1)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

The outcomes for young people are good. They now benefit from a high level of staff continuity, which allows them to establish meaningful relationships. Such relationships are the basis of their clear progress. Some young people have experienced the uncertainties caused by substantial numbers of managers and staff at the home. However, they now have confidence that that period has passed. One young person reported, 'It's the best children's home I've lived in.' Young people see the impact of their views on a day-to-day basis around the house and in the activities they undertake.

The small scale of the service and one-to-one staffing levels mean that young people experience a good level of personalised care that has very few institutional features. Their individual needs are promoted well through a variety of positive adult role models. Social issues are explained so that young people have opportunities to revise their own views, for example on topical issues such as immigration. One result of this is that young people are increasingly supportive of each other and can see the point of view of other people; they also acknowledge that this insight is not always easy to act on. Meal times, for example, are sociable occasions and young people often help with or undertake the cooking. Excellent cakes have been made for other people.

Young people make marked progress with their emotional health in particular. This means they learn to reflect on their own behaviours and increasingly manage themselves appropriately. As a result, for example, they are more able to make positive use of the contact they have with their families. Also, the frequency of negative incidents has fallen substantially. Consequently, more free time is used in constructive and interesting activities. At the time of inspection, both young people were on school holidays and had been away; this included a canal boat trip. Young people play an active role in the planning of such events. Their involvement in a range of activities is evident around the house too. A variety of posters, games and other pastimes are on show. The involvement of young people in the local community occurs at a pace that suits them, their previous experiences and risks. They undertake new challenges that maximise their integration.

Effective and highly personalised packages of education are undertaken. All young people show good progress and their achievements in some areas are remarkable. This includes, for example, the production of animated films and the attainment of certificated academic awards in very short periods of time. They experience a high level of integration of care, therapy and education, which facilitates their clear progress and improved self-confidence.

Quality of care**good**

The stable staff team of mostly qualified staff provides a good quality of care. The individual needs of young people are prioritised, whether they arise from their backgrounds or their personal needs. This is reflected in the emotional progress young people make, as shown in their improved contribution to the home and keeping their rooms presentable. There is a good range of consultation exercises, including weekly community meetings, and the findings are considered regularly as part of placement planning. Young people feel free to express their views without worrying about negative repercussions. There have been no complaints since the last inspection. Imaginative alternative and less direct means, such as modelling, are used when necessary to elicit young people's views. These are in line with the therapeutic service described in the Statement of Purpose. Frequent consultations with the therapists ensure that planning and direct input are adjusted accordingly and that staff are fully familiar with the needs and wishes of each young person.

In addition to the good attention to young people's emotional and psychological health, their general health is also carefully monitored. Any difficulties in engaging young people are promptly addressed by clear alternative strategies. This process takes into account the team's understanding of each young person. Effectiveness is demonstrated, for example, by the cessation of smoking. Nutritionally balanced diets are promoted and young people enthusiastically engage in baking and other types of cooking. However, this is compromised somewhat by staff not recording the consumption of snacks on food intake records. This means that it is not always possible to assess whether or not young people take a sufficiently balanced diet.

The home has had relatively few admissions and discharges, which is another contribution to young people's progress. Admissions are usually planned and as a result are well-received by both new and existing young people. The matching of young people with each other is good. This helps young people to settle into the home and avoids undue tensions.

The property itself is well maintained and presented throughout; this too is a significant improvement. There are few institutional features and plenty of space both indoors and outside. Use has been made of patio pots to plant herbs, vegetables and other plants for aesthetic and educational purposes. There are lawns around the house that are used for ball games and trampolining. The home is in a farming community with easy access by car to local amenities; there are very few neighbours. Young people have personalised their bedrooms well. They have appropriate privacy locks and the bedroom door alarms are only used when necessary. This ensures that the privacy of young people is only infringed when absolutely necessary.

Keeping children and young people safe**good**

Young people usually feel safe in the home. This is affected somewhat by factors outside the control of staff, including whether or not young people feel vulnerable (realistically or otherwise) to adults they knew previously. In these and other cases where young people's safety is involved a high standard of safety is provided. The actual number of incidents is particularly low now. This is another improvement in the service generally and in outcomes for individual young people. Incidents of young people being absent or missing and of physical interventions are almost nil since the last inspection.

Behaviour management follows therapeutic guidelines and the manager provides clear and consistent leadership in this area. As a result, both staff and young people feel secure in the decision-making process. Young people feel that all the staff are 'fair'. Compromises are discussed on a daily basis and are an important part of young people's education. One result of this is that young people feel less need to isolate themselves, which then leads to them making the most of the opportunities available. Another benefit for young people is that they learn to relate to others appropriately and learn to receive appropriate physical contact. Staff receive direct, professional guidance on dealing with the special needs of each young person so that progress is as fast as possible. Consultation with external agencies occurs promptly when it is required although the number of notifiable incidents since the last inspection has been low.

As indicated above, the property and its location provides very few risks to young people. Routine servicing of equipment and appliances occurs. Fire safety measures are kept under review as a matter of course and in response to any new information. Young people learn to respond quickly to the fire alarm and how to behave safely in the kitchen. One young person who has completed a car mechanics course verified that staff undertake comprehensive weekly checks on the two company cars.

Senior staff are trained to undertake safe recruitment of new staff. Improvements have occurred in this area. In particular, candidates are tested more thoroughly as part of the interviewing process. As a result, the manager considers that a higher calibre of applicant is recruited. This has meant a lower turnover of staff. However, the on-site records are not sufficiently comprehensive and do not demonstrate all the steps that are actually taken.

Leadership and management

good

The manager was registered for this home in January 2014 and has suitable qualifications and experience. He also has extensive experience of managing other children's homes for this company and has brought substantial stability to the home and staff team. Both the manager and the organisation understand the importance of a permanent manager and a settled team in providing a good standard of care to young people. This is demonstrated by the progress made by young people and identified during this inspection. The manager also uses his clear understanding of

the therapeutic model to facilitate consistent decision-making.

The capacity of the team to continue to improve is good. The vast majority of staff are qualified and there is an appropriate balance of genders and ages. The appointment of a permanent deputy manager in the near future is another important developmental step. The last inspection raised one recommendation. Subsequently, full attention has been given to the regular supervision of staff. This is an important ingredient in maintaining their commitment to the home and young people. Shortfalls in the performance of team-members are addressed thoroughly and clearly. The manager also maintains an extensive development plan for the service, which shows progress in achieving targets. This is an important tool in his aspirational agenda for improvement.

Staff training is ongoing and is carefully monitored. All staff have personal development plans, which form the basis of their professional progress. Other monitoring by the manager, a representative of the company and the area manager, occur regularly and ensure that standards are maintained. In some cases, such as the manager's monthly reports, there is insufficient analysis and evaluation of the patterns and trends that the data describes. This means that some opportunities to link emerging issues with the improvement of the service are missed.

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.