

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC064412
Inspector	Emeline Evans
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered manager	Balwinder Randhawa
Date of last inspection	15/01/2014

Inspection date	15/07/2014
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Previous inspection	inadequate progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

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

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	adequate
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Staff are child-centred in their approach and consistently concerned with the welfare of the young people. Young people are clearly settled and comfortable in their environment and it is apparent they benefit from caring members of staff who know them well. The culture of this setting is described by a parent as 'an extended family'. Young people feel safe and have developed positive relationships with staff. These attachments enable young people to discuss issues that are troubling them.

Young people are making good progress since their admission. Good quality personalised care planning ensure staff respond with consistency enabling young people to feel secure in this placement. Young people benefit from activities within the home and the wider community as staff promote their inclusion. Young people benefit from the collaborative working between their parents, the staff team and other professionals.

Shortfalls have been identified and four requirements and six recommendations have been made. Shortfalls were identified in some recruitment records, the Regulation 33 reports and notifications of significant events which have not been sent to Ofsted. There are other deficits in the training of staff be able to recognise signs of drug and alcohol use and exploitation.

The manager is aware of the home's shortfalls and committed to further improve outcomes for the young people and provide a child centred service.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This privately owned home provides care and accommodation for up to six children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/01/2014	Interim	inadequate progress
14/05/2013	Full	adequate
15/01/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress
14/08/2012	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
26 (2001)	ensure the registered person shall not employ a person to work at the children's home unless that person is fit to work at a children's home and all relevant checks and information is obtained as detailed in Schedule 2 (Regulation 26)(3)(d))	18/08/2014
29 (2001)	ensure a record in the form of a register showing in respect of each child accommodated detailing all the information in schedule 4(1) is in place and is reviewed (Regulation 29(1))	18/08/2014
30 (2001)	ensure if any of the events listed in column one of the table in Schedule five takes place, the registered person shall without delay notify the persons indicated in respect of the event in column	18/08/2014

	two of the table (Regulation 30 (1))	
33 (2001)	ensure the independent person provide a copy of the report to HMCI and the placing authorities of children accommodated in the children's home. (Regulation 33 (9)(a)(c))	18/08/2014

Recommendations

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

- review the safeguarding policy to ensure it clearly outlines the procedure staff should follow in the event of an allegation or disclosure; in particular ensure external contact details are included and process for reporting allegations against children (Children Act 1989 Statutory guidance Volume 5, 2.68)
- ensure that there is secure evidence of the safe arrangements for the auditing and recording, of medications (NMS 6.15)
- ensure all areas of the home are comfortable and homely (NMS 10.3)
- ensure that all personnel responsible for recruitment and selection of staff are trained in, understand and operate good recruitment practices (NMS 16.2)
- carry out risk assessments of the children's home environment to identify potential sources of harm. This specifically relates to the propping of fire doors and not having alternatives means to secure these doors (NMS 10.8)
- ensure the staff are equipped with the skills to meet the needs of the children; particular, this relates to training in drug and alcohol misuse and child sexual exploitation. (NMS 18.1)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people are making good progress as they benefit from the structure and consistency of care delivered. Staff describe many examples of how young people progress including improving their ability to sit at the table for a meal, reduce incidents of challenging behaviour and move to more independence within the community. Staff are proud to report on such achievements and how young people continue to develop skills and grow in confidence. Parents report positively with comments such as, 'I am really pleased with how my daughter has progressed,' and 'my daughter is very happy and they go beyond their duty.'

Young people are supported in maintaining contact with their family and others who are important to them. Parents report that they are kept fully informed about their child and encouraged to be involved. Cultural identities are embraced and promoted through food, music and religion. This ensures that young people are supported in celebrating diversity and maintaining traditions that are important to the whole family.

Staff fully support young people's education resulting in good attendance at school and college. They communicate well with schools and attend educational reviews as appropriate. They advocate on behalf of the young people to ensure education establishments are providing the support required. They work closely with teachers to ensure consistency is achieved. They encourage young people to complete job applications and to be involved in voluntary work. They support young people to make decisions in this area and this is further enhancing their self-esteem. Relationships with the staff help young people to be supported in meeting their individual goals.

Healthy lifestyles are promoted. Young people are provided with information as appropriate to their understanding and supported to make decisions in a range of areas, such as the food they eat and in unhealthy habits such as smoking. This is an area the home continues to work on with some of the young people. Sexual health matters are also explained to young people as they begin to mature.

Young people can take part in different activities in the premises which have a good range of indoor and outdoor space. A sensory room provides stimulation with light, sound and texture and this promotes sensory development. Young people engage in activities in the community and are encouraged to learn and try new experiences. The staff ensure young people make good use of age-appropriate local amenities such as bowling, parks and the local shops which gives young people opportunities for further social interaction.

There is now a focus on developing young people's independent skills such as

shopping, self-help skills and cooking: this is contributing to enhancing their self-esteem. These achievements are enabling young people to develop new skills in the preparation for their transition to adult life.

Quality of care

good

The staff team has a very good understanding of the individual needs of young people. Consequently, this has enabled some good relationships to form. These relationships help alleviate unnecessary stress or anxiety for the young people. This is validated by the positive regard that young people hold for the staff who support them and by the young people's parents. Comments from parents include, 'Staff are excellent,' and 'The staff and management have over the years worked really hard at improving her quality of life and experiences.'

Although some of the young people do not communicate verbally, their abilities to contribute to the running of the house are not undermined. For example, personal care routines and menu planning take into account young people's wishes and views. Staff listen to any issues young people may have and action is taken to address these. Parents and significant others are encouraged and supported to advocate and voice concerns on young people's behalf. Good measures are in place for responding to matters raised by parents without the need for a formal complaint.

Placement planning ensures that all key aspects of care are recorded and that targets are identified to promote the development of the young people. This provides clarity for staff on how to provide individualised support. Placement plans take into account the diverse and complex needs of the young people accessing the service including their medical, health and cultural needs and additional support required due to disability. This service works well with other professionals, ensuring a collaborative approach which delivers good quality care to the young people. Staff liaise regularly with school staff, health professionals, social workers and family members. Care plans evidence how the specialist input has been incorporated into the daily care routines of the home including equipment recommended by the occupational therapist.

There is appropriate attention provided to any emerging or on-going health issue or emotional need. Staff encourage and support young people to attend health appointments and work in partnership with health professionals to ensure a consistency of care. Medications are locked in a secure cabinet. The manager has worked with the staff team to strengthen the systems currently in place. There is good evidence that medication is administered safely. However, up-to-date evidence of stock control was not in place in the home. In addition, controlled drugs are not currently being recorded in a specific log; this does not comply with guidance and risks mismanagement through lack of a consistent up-to-date stock record.

The home is situated in a residential area within easy reach of local facilities. The home has appropriate equipment to assist in delivering personal care needs such as ceiling hoists and adapted baths. Young people enjoy a safe and pleasant environment. There are photos of the young people having fun displayed in the home. The bathrooms have undergone some maintenance work in the past. However, there are still problems with rotten bath panels and sealant around the bath going mouldy and a recommendation regarding this is made.

Keeping children and young people safe adequate

The routines and structures in place for the young people support them in feeling safe and comfortable in their surroundings. They are kept safe through on-going supervision of their whereabouts and the retention of high staffing ratios. Staff are trained in safe care practices and supported by policies and procedures. Staff training covers how to recognise and respond to any suspicions or concerns should they arise. However the current policy does not indicate that child protection concerns need to be referred to the local social work office and the contact details are not included in the policy or readily available in the home. It is also not clear on the process to take if an allegation is made against another child which could lead to indecision and delay.

Staff are vigilant in responding to young people's gestures, expressions and unusual behaviours and this has led to no use of restraint since the last inspection. Staff communicate clear expectations regarding boundaries enabling young people to begin to understand the consequences of their behaviour. Young people are encouraged to reflect on their behaviours and how it affects others. Sanctions are now being recorded but are rarely used with only two have taken place since the last inspection. The use of the sanctions has also been evaluated for effectiveness.

Staff are clear about what to do if a young person should go missing. There have been no such instances since the last inspection. The home has protocols with the local police, to ensure there is a prompt response if one of the young people does go missing. Young people benefit from high levels of supervision to minimise the risk of this occurring.

There have been new staff appointments to the home since the last inspection. On one staff members file, gaps of employment were not fully documented and there was no clear audit trail to confirm that the dates of employment had been checked. On another file it is documented the Registered Manager had seen a check from the applicants previous employment however the company had not committed to undertake an check themselves. Documentary evidence of qualifications are not kept on all staff files. There will be a recommendation that personnel involved in the recruitment and selection of staff are trained in and understand good recruitment practices.

The premises provide a safe and secure physical environment where young people feel safe and where they are being safely cared for. Young people are protected by good health and safety routines and the home is appropriately secure. Regular testing of the equipment and risk assessments are undertaken to ensure a safe environment is maintained. The home has been in regular contact with the local fire and rescue service. The emergency escape plan has been revised since the last inspection and now details the correct means of escape. However, on this inspection some fire doors were being propped open and this does not meet regulations.

Leadership and management

adequate

The management and staff team are committed to and focused on improving outcomes for the young people within the home. The Registered Manager has an active role within the home working with the young people and in partnership with parents and outside agencies. She is one of the owners of the company and has been in post for seven years. She holds a social work qualification and has the necessary experience to provide strong and effective leadership. The assistant manager is currently undertaking a level 5 qualification in Leadership for Health and Social Care and Children and Young People's Services.

The managers are aware of the strengths and some of the weaknesses of the service. At the previous inspection, five requirements were made and six recommendations. There has been a significant commitment from the management team to ensure these are met. However one requirement has been re-stated as this has been partially met but not fully. One recommendation has been repeated to ensure the safeguarding policy is further reviewed.

The manager has reviewed and updated the Statement of Purpose to include all the necessary information. The young people, staff and social workers understand the aims and objectives of the home. There is a clear emphasis on working in partnership with the young people, parents and professionals to achieve a consistent approach to meet the needs of the young people. Information given to young people about the service is child-friendly and gives an adequate description of what it is like to live in the home.

The staff team are enthusiastic and work well as a team. They feel supported by the management and each other to ensure young people have the best opportunities for successful outcomes. They have now all been registered on the level 3 Children and Young People's Workforce Diploma. They have also now received annual appraisals. They receive regular training and supervision however, they have not been kept up to date with training in relation to recognising signs of drug and alcohol use and exploitation. Good communication through daily handovers and regular team meetings mean that staff are kept up to date to provide consistent care.

Notifications regarding two recent events have not been received by the regulator

Ofsted. On discussion, the appropriate action was taken by the home in these instances. However there was a lack of transparency and working together with other agencies to ensure best safeguarding practices. There was no clear evidence of internal investigations undertaken by the management following these incidents.

There are now regular visits to monitor the conduct of the home under Regulation 33 of the Children's Homes Regulations. The management team undertakes quality assurance monitoring checks in line with Regulation 34 on a regular basis. These visits include consultation with and observation of young people. However, the Regulation 33 reports are not being sent directly in to Ofsted by the independent visitor and this has resulted in the last two reports not been received. It was also unclear if these are being provided to the placing authorities of the young people accommodated within the home.

Records are observed to be secure however, there is not currently a register in place of young people who have lived or who are living in the home. Therefore it is not possible to refer to this information easily.

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.