

Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	SC431806
<b>Inspector</b>	Stephen Collett
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Full
<b>Provision subtype</b>	Children's home

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<b>Registered person</b>	SWAAY Child and Adolescent Services Limited
<b>Registered person address</b>	132 The Street West Horsley LEATHERHEAD Surrey KT24 6DB
<b>Responsible individual</b>	Gerard Colin Berry
<b>Registered manager</b>	Elise Anne Baggs
<b>Date of last inspection</b>	11/02/2014

<b>Inspection date</b>	23/10/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

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

## Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	<b>good</b>
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Young people living at the home benefit from receiving a good quality of care. This enables them to develop a sense of security and stability that has often been lacking in their lives. As a result they become more emotionally resilient and begin to come to terms with past traumatic experiences. The needs of the young people are well understood by an experienced and effective registered manager, who motivates the staff to provide consistently good levels of care.

Placement and behavioural management plans take into account the individual needs of young people, and this results in them receiving personalised care. Staff are familiar with the contents of these plans and therefore consistently apply agreed strategies in their day to day interactions with young people. Consequently, young people develop a improved sense of stability.

Overall, young people express high levels of satisfaction with the care they receive. They participate fully in the running of the home and this approach enables them to express their views with confidence. Young people therefore discuss any concerns they have with staff, and feel reassured that leaders and managers will respond effectively.

Young people make excellent progress towards meeting their goals, and all have

experienced positive outcomes in many aspects of their lives. They are motivated to do well at school, appreciate the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and show a commitment to addressing their individual difficulties by engaging in therapeutic programmes provided by the organisation.

Generally, there is a good standard of practice at the home in relation to safeguarding. However, there has been a shortfall in the overall good standard when some agency staff have worked in the home. This has led to young people occasionally feeling unsafe.

The home is managed well and any emerging difficulties are quickly recognised and responded to by the registered manager. However, there has been a breach of the organisations policy in relation to keeping information safe, by an employee not directly working in the home. This shortfall in good practice has had a negative impact on one young person living in the home. This has been addressed by senior managers, and there is generally a good understanding by leaders and managers of the strengths and weaknesses of the home.

This inspection has resulted in two requirements and two recommendations being made, to further improve practice.

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

The home is owned and operated by a private organisation that specialises in the assessment and treatment of male adolescents who have experienced some form of abuse and have subsequently been involved in perpetrating abusive behaviour themselves. The overall aim of the service is to offer four young people the opportunity to embark on specialised educational and therapeutic training programmes within a safe, supportive and nurturing environment.

### Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/02/2014	Interim	good progress
04/10/2013	Full	good
25/02/2013	Interim	good progress
12/06/2012	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 a person shall not work at the children's home unless that person is fit to work in a children's home; specifically, ensure that staff employed as waking night staff do not sleep while on duty. (Regulation 26 (1) (b) (2))	31/12/2014
28 (2001)	maintain in respect of each child who is accommodated in a children's home a record which is kept securely in the children's home so long as the child to whom it relates is accommodated there;	08/12/2014

	specifically, take steps to ensure that all staff follow the organisations policy and procedures relating to the security of young people's personal information. (Regulation 28 (3) (a))	
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## Recommendations

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

- ensure the home assists the child to put forward their views, wishes and feelings in each review process; specifically, ensure that young people's views on how they have progressed towards meeting their goals, are recorded on the young person's placement plan. (NMS 25.4)
- ensure all staff have their performance individually and formally appraised at least annually; specifically, the registered managers annual appraisal and personal development plan. (NMS 19.6)

## Inspection judgements

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

All young people at the home are making excellent progress and achieving good outcomes. They feel stable and secure and are building positive attachments with care staff. Consequently, young people experience improved self-esteem and confidence and increasing levels of emotional resilience. They begin to understand and come to terms with some of the negative experiences and trauma they experienced prior to admission.

The educational achievement of young people improves over time, and there is a culture that values young people's achievement embedded at the home. All the young people attend the organisations school, and attendance is good. End of year school reports and personal education plans indicate that young people have made good academic progress and demonstrated a commitment to improving their grades.

Young people at the home recognise the importance of living a healthy lifestyle and take a pro-active approach to keeping fit. Some young people have obtained specialist advice regarding healthy choices, particularly relating to diet and nutrition, but others have been more reluctant to speak to health experts. Young people do not smoke or abuse substances or alcohol, and risk taking behaviour in terms of keeping healthy is kept to a minimum.

When young people experience anxiety or distress related to childhood experiences, they are able to discuss this with carers or the organisations therapists. Consequently, young people who may be experiencing mental health difficulties promptly engage in therapeutic programmes to address the issues. Most young people make very good progress in the therapeutic programmes delivered by the organisation. Where this has not been possible, young people have fully engaged in more individualised therapeutic plans.

Young people are fully engaged in decisions regarding the day to day running of the home, and all participate in decisions regarding more complex areas of their lives. Young people contribute towards their placement and behaviour management plans, and also review and comment on the risk assessments that are in place to keep them safe. Consequently, young people feel that their opinions are valued and respected.

Incidents of young people putting themselves at risk through unsafe behaviour are rare, and when this does happen young people are able to reflect on the underlying causes and the possible negative consequences. They feel able to discuss unsafe behaviours with staff and learn from the experience.

Young people engage in many local community activities and attend a variety of external clubs and organisations. This includes sports clubs, sea cadets and

engagement on the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. These activities are enabling young people to gain social skills and increased levels of self-esteem.

Young people develop a range of independence skills while living at the home. All young people are able to undertake age appropriate domestic chores, and many have improved their budgeting skills in preparation for when they leave care. Young people take turns in preparing meals for the group and encourage one another to make a success of this.

### **Quality of care**

**good**

Young people benefit from receiving a good quality of care and enjoy positive and supportive relationships with the staff. One young person commented that this was 'the best placement I have ever had'. They feel valued by the staff who take an interest in their achievements and encourage them to do well. Relationships within the group are generally good, although tensions and conflict sometimes occur. Young people feel confident in the ability of staff to manage these situations, and appreciate the contribution of the manager and senior managers in resolving issues. Young people therefore feel that any bullying would be quickly recognised and dealt with appropriately.

The home is on a modern housing estate, and all local amenities are nearby. Young people have sufficient space for group living, and all necessary domestic appliances are provided. The home is well furnished and decorated, and there is a games room in the house providing young people with a range of indoor leisure activities. There are many photographs of young people displayed around the home and also certificates of achievement. This ensures young people feel valued and experience a sense of belonging. Young people's bedrooms are well furnished, and personalised to meet individual tastes.

Behaviour management plans in place for the young people recognise individual needs, and strategies are adapted accordingly. Young people are consulted and involved in the development of these plans and are therefore able to relate to the issues identified as needing to be improved. Relationships with others are a key theme of the behaviour management strategies and this assists young people to develop tolerance and consideration for others in the home.

Placement plans are comprehensive and set realistic and achievable goals for young people. This enables the manager to measure outcomes for young people. Young people make a full and valued contribution to the placement plan, and are provided with their own adapted copy of the plan which is discussed in key work sessions. Young people's progress towards meeting their goals is monitored and evaluated, but occasionally this progress is not fully recorded.

Staff take a pro-active approach towards supporting young people's education.

Young people are supported to prepare for school, and time is set aside for young people to complete homework, with the assistance of staff if necessary. Supervised access to the internet is available for young people needing access to complete homework. Young people are able to communicate concerns and difficulties they are having in school, and staff have responded by communicating the issues to teaching staff. In one case, a young person has been offered additional one to one lessons to aid his learning.

Individual interests are encouraged and supported by staff, so that young people have the best opportunity to reach their potential. Carers have liaised with teaching staff to ensure young people can engage in vocational courses where this would be beneficial, and young people have accessed one day 'taster' courses at college, to assist them in making informed choices about their future career plans.

All young people are familiar with the home's complaints procedure, and they are encouraged to make complaints when they are dissatisfied with any aspect of their care. Young people therefore have confidence in the complaints procedure. Despite this, lessons have not always been learned from addressing young people's complaints, and this issue is addressed in the safeguarding section of this report.

Young people's views are taken seriously and they have a significant impact on how the home is run. Young people are involved in the recruitment of new staff, and young people express the view that their opinions count in the process. Regular young people's house meetings take place, and young people make a significant contribution towards the agenda. Consequently, young people develop negotiation skills and can express themselves confidently and coherently.

The individual cultural needs of the group are recognised, and steps are taken to ensure young people can practice their religious beliefs freely. Young people in the home are tolerant of the cultural identity of others in the group, and a healthy respect for difference is embedded.

Staff work effectively with other agencies and maintain regular communication with placing authorities. There are particularly good working relationships with the police and the youth offending service. This has resulted in staff accessing external training opportunities, such as in restorative justice, and this has helped the home and the organisation develop its practice in this model of working.

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

Practice in the home is generally effective in ensuring young people are kept safe. Overall, young people feel safe and are confident that management and staff can manage young people's challenging behaviour at times of high anxiety. However, a recurring problem relating to the competency of agency waking night staff has resulted in young people feeling unsafe at times.



Since the last inspection there have been three occasions when agency waking night staff have been found sleeping while on duty. This has resulted in young people feeling vulnerable, given the particular individual needs of the group. It has also meant the organisations own procedures and commitment to keeping young people safe has been compromised. Young people have been encouraged to make complaints after each incident, but this has not been an effective way of resolving the issue.

The registered manager has taken steps to address the issue, and has reported these matters to the employment agency concerned, and the local authority designated officer for safeguarding. At the time of the inspection, the home was still using the agency to hire occasional waking night staff, but the registered manager was actively trying to recruit sufficient permanent staff to avoid using agency staff in the future.

After each occasion when an agency waking night staff were found to be asleep, young people have been consulted and given individual support to address their concerns. All young people are able to identify a member of staff they would speak to if they were worried about anything, and this has helped to minimise personal anxieties.

Other areas of safeguarding practice are more robust. There has only been one incident of a young person going missing from the home since the last inspection, and the action taken by management and staff to secure the young person's return was excellent. Staff took a pro-active approach to working with the young person's placing authority, police, parents and the young person's known associates. When the young person returned to the home, high levels of support were given, and this gave the young person the confidence to talk openly about the issue. The written records relating to this missing episode are of a high quality, and provide detailed information relating to the actions taken and support given to the young person concerned, and the other residents in the home.

Staff at the home receive training relating to young people going missing from care and the risks of sexual exploitation, and all staff spoken to during the inspection were able to describe how this had enabled them to work effectively with other agencies and the young person during the missing episode. The regulation 33 visitor to the home described the home's response to this issue as 'exceptional'.

The home has an effective behaviour management policy which seeks to reward positive behaviour through incentives. Young people respond well to this and this means sanctions are far outnumbered by rewards. Overall young people feel that sanctions are fair, although one young person expressed the view that sanctions are not always applied consistently across the group. There have been no incidents of restraint since the last inspection and the home has an effective way of recording incidents if such an intervention becomes necessary.

Recruitment records for the home were not examined on this occasion, but a review of the organisations recruitment documents has been undertaken in recent weeks as part of the inspection for another of the organisations homes. Documentation reviewed indicates that the organisation implements safe recruitment procedures and undertakes appropriate checks to ensure unsuitable individuals are not employed in the organisations homes. The references for potential employees are verified, and all gaps in a candidates employment history are examined.

The registered manager maintains effective communication with other professionals when any issues relating to safeguarding young people's welfare arise. Any recommendations made by the regulation 33 visitor regarding safeguarding are promptly acted upon, and this has recently resulted in a team meeting focusing on the guidance given in 'Working Together 2013' about the reporting of concerns relating to an individuals practice.

Young people live in a physically safe environment, where all necessary maintenance checks on domestic appliances and installations are undertaken at regular intervals. Young people are familiar with the home's emergency evacuation plan, and take part in fire drills. Health and safety risk assessments are reviewed and updated when necessary.

## **Leadership and management**

**good**

The registered manager has been in post since June 2012, and she holds the national vocational qualification level 4 in children and young people's health and social care, and the national vocational qualification level 4 in leadership and management. All requirements and recommendations from previous inspections have been acted upon.

The home is effectively managed, and there is a motivated staff team in place who feel well supported. Four staff have left the home since the last inspection, although two of these have remained working within the organisation. The registered manager has worked effectively with the organisations human resources team to ensure vacant posts are filled by suitable individuals at the earliest opportunity.

Within the home, young people's records are generally kept up to date and they are stored securely. However, there has recently been an incident where electronic information held by a member of the therapeutic team was removed from the organisations premises, and subsequently stolen. The device containing the information had not been encrypted. The stolen information contained minimal personal details, but could potentially identify a young person.

This matter has resulted in a disciplinary investigation taking place and appropriate action being taken. The police were notified as the information had been stolen, and other relevant agencies, and the young person's parents, have been informed. The

organisation recognises that there was a breach of internal policy regarding the removal of information from company premises, and has taken steps to avoid a similar occurrence in the future.

The registered manager has a thorough understanding of the needs of the young people at the home, and demonstrates a commitment to ensuring the young people achieve the best possible outcomes. She is a positive role model to the staff and young people in the home. The registered manager is familiar with the strengths and weaknesses of the home and has a detailed development plan in place to ensure continuous improvement. There is a recognition that the plan will be further improved by adding timescales and named individuals for progressing actions, and the registered manager is committed to introducing these.

The statement of purpose clearly identifies the aims and objectives of the home, and the services provided ensure that consistent good progress is made towards meeting these. Young people also have a good understanding of the purpose of their placement, and how they will be supported to overcome the disadvantages they have faced.

Staff benefit from receiving regular supervision and participating in informative team meetings. New staff feel well prepared for their role, and are given good opportunities to learn from more experienced colleagues during their probationary period. The organisation provides a comprehensive training programme, which focuses on the particular vulnerabilities of the young people cared for by the organisation. The registered manager also receives appropriate support from more senior managers, but her annual appraisal and personal development plan have been delayed.

Regulation 33 visits take place within the statutory timeframe, and young people are consulted as part of the process. Regulation 33 reports are subsequently received by Ofsted on time. The registered manager regularly reviews and evaluates young people's progress and has systems in place to evidence progress made over time.

The home is well maintained and sufficiently resourced to meet the needs of the young people, and all health and safety requirements are fully met. The organisation provides a maintenance person, so that any repairs required to the property are promptly undertaken.

Leaders and managers maintain good relationships with external agencies. Partnership working is well established and this helps ensure a holistic approach is taken to meeting the needs of young people. The registered manager takes a pro-active approach to ensuring placing authorities provide information in a timely manner, but continues to experience some delays in receiving necessary documentation.

## 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.