

Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	SC010090
<b>Inspector</b>	Graham Robinson
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Full
<b>Provision subtype</b>	Children's home

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<b>Registered person</b>	Partners in Care
<b>Registered person address</b>	Rouse House, 2 Wyther Lane Kirkstall Leeds West Yorkshire LS5 3BT
<b>Responsible individual</b>	Luiz Miguel Guilherme
<b>Registered manager</b>	Sharon Lisa Mecklenburgh / POST VACANT
<b>Date of last inspection</b>	25/02/2014

<b>Inspection date</b>	01/12/2014
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Previous inspection	satisfactory progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

<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	adequate

## Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	<b>good</b>
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The home has experienced a challenging period up to the early summer months of this year. Staff changeover was high. The long standing manager of the home resigned. A new manager was identified, but did not remain in that position for long and was not registered with Ofsted. A new manager was appointed and this, along with greater stability within the staff team, has led to the home enjoying a more stable period, where progress has been made.

Young people are now receiving a greater consistency of care from a stable staff team that understands their needs and has the ability to form strong relationships with them. The relationships are used appropriately to guide and support young people through difficult periods in their lives.

Young people speak well of staff and the home when discussing their placement. This includes one young person who is soon due to move. They recognise boundaries and understand their significance, which gives them some feeling of security. Young people are well informed and consulted about the plans and strategies in place to address their specific needs. The home works collaboratively with other relevant stakeholders to ensure young people's needs are being met. As a result, the overall and collective outcomes experienced by young people, based on their starting point from when they first came to the home, are deemed as good.

The low judgement outcome given to leadership and management of the home, is a reflection and acknowledgement that since the previous inspection, there have been management issues that needed to be addressed. It takes account of a difficult period which has now changed for the better. At the time of writing, the registration of the current manager has been delayed due to unforeseen circumstance.

However, the organisation and management of the home has improved considerably over recent months. A detailed three month development plan was put into place by the current manager to raise standards and the consistency of care, as well as a range of physical improvements made to the fabric of the buildings.

Apart from the issues raised under leadership and management which are being addressed, the inspection has not raised any major areas of concern. One formal recommendation has been made linked to improving the evidence held on site to show that any new staff have the right to work in the United Kingdom and any associated steps taken with this.

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

The home is run by a private company and provides care and accommodation for up to four young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

### Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/02/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
31/10/2013	Full	good
16/01/2013	Interim	good progress
21/09/2012	Full	good

### 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):

- improve the retention of evidence held on site to show that any new staff have the right to work in the UK and that where a person has lived outside the UK, further checks are considered when obtaining a DBS disclosure that may not be sufficient to establish suitability to work with children. (NMS 16.3(e)(f))

## Inspection judgements

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

Young people are at different parts of their journey through the home. For example, one is due to leave feeling they have grown out of the placement. However, they confirm they have no issues or concerns about staff or the home in general. Another young person based on their previous history and starting point in the home, is experiencing positive outcomes in all areas of their life. One young person says; 'This home is ace.'

A more settled staff team allows for relationships and trust to be developed. This benefits young people as staff get to know and recognise the issues that affect them and can put in the appropriate supports and strategies to help young people through times of difficulty. Managers understand better the skills and abilities of the staff team and are prepared to take tough decisions to ensure that the ever changing needs of a complex group of young people can be met effectively either in the home, or if necessary, away from it.

Contact arrangements for young people can be complex and for some, stressful. Distance can also be problematic. However, young people confirm they are supported and encouraged to maintain contact with appropriate family members, with suitable arrangements put into place by staff to facilitate this. Young people have the opportunity to see independent advocates if they wish to do so. As a result, young people's contact needs are being met.

The young people currently living in the home have full-time educational arrangements at a community based special school. Attendance has been mixed recently. For example, one young person is achieving 100% attendance which is a significant improvement for this young person. Another had until serious personal issues impacted on them, a high level of attendance. The attendance levels reflect the level of educational progress being achieved. This is appreciated by a parent who writes; 'It is the only place our child has been placed where they are happy in school and settled.'

The individual health needs of young people are being assessed and met. They register with community-based health services, giving them day-to-day access to health support. Links are in place for more specialist input to be accessed, if required. For example, with mental health services and with a consultant psychologist who is employed by the organisation operating the home.

Young people are continually encouraged to adopt and engage in healthy lifestyles. For example, through improved diet and exercise, as well as having direct access into services providing for sexual health, drugs, alcohol and smoking cessation. This develops young peoples awareness regarding their own health as well as managing

their lifestyle more appropriately. As a result, young people are well informed, giving them the opportunity to take decisions about their own health and lifestyle.

Currently, none of the young people accommodated are of an age where either formal independence programmes or pathway plans, have been introduced. However, they are encouraged to take some responsibility and contribute to the homes daily functioning by keeping their own bedrooms clean and tidy, assisting staff in planning, shopping and meal preparation. This expectation which forms part of the homes daily routine helps to develop practical skills that will be of use as they journey towards greater independence.

The home has well established links into the local community, making full use of the facilities available. Staff encourage and promote a range of community based activities and leisure interests that are designed to meet individual need. For example, one young person has developed an interest in cycling.

### **Quality of care**

**good**

The quality of care given to young people is good. The improved stability experienced in the home in recent months, has enhanced the strength of relationships between staff and young people, as well as improve the consistency of care. Young people feel safe in the home, which is reflected by one young person who responded directly to a question about being safe by saying; 'I am alright here. It's the best (children's) home I have been in.'

Young people recognise the structure of the home and the boundaries laid out for them to operate in. Although they will at times break these boundaries, they mostly adhere to them, giving them a feeling of security and a message that staff care for them. Difficulties, challenges and periods of upset are worked through supportively rather than punitively. For example, a large staff group were observed debating what their response should be to an incident that had occurred over the weekend. Rather than opt for a standard sanction, a long discussion took place looking at ways of managing the issues being thrown up by this young person, in a supportive way. Staff were looking at fresh alternatives to manage the incident without reverting to what the young person was used to or expected.

Young people understand the complaints system and indicated they are confident to activate it, if they felt it necessary. Records show complaints are taken seriously and acted on in a timely manner. Information about complaints and young peoples rights, along with contact details of appropriate external agencies, is freely available. This helps to show young people that their views are taken seriously and that by following a formal process, most issues can be amicably resolved. None of the young people raised any issues, concerns or complaints during the inspection.

Young people confirm they are satisfied with the levels of consultation that are

on-going in the home. Formal meetings take place weekly where young people plan for the week ahead, make choices and suggestions about daily living in the home. Young people also have regular meetings with their key worker which are designed to be a consultative exercise. The high levels of communication witnessed during the inspection between young people and staff greatly aids the process of consultation.

The individual needs of young people are reflected in a series of planning documents and risk assessments that combine together to meet those needs. This an area of improvement since the last inspection with the introduction of a more child-friendly format with regard to care plans. Care plans are now being updated on a monthly basis, with individual areas risk also updated when required, which keeps them current. Young people demonstrate good insight into their own plans, confirming they have their own thoughts and views incorporated into them. This gives them a sense of direction, ownership and a greater understanding of the plans in place for them.

The home provides a warm, domestic environment which blends into the surrounding area. The standard of repair, décor, fixtures, fittings and furnishings have improved since the previous inspection. Young people were observed as being at ease in the home, moving around freely and demonstrating ownership of the house they live in. Service contracts coupled with risk assessments which are current, ensures that young people and staff are living in a safe environment.

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

The arrangements to safeguard and protect young people are good. Incidents of a potential safeguarding nature are being referred appropriately, following and adhering to locally agreed multi-agency protocols. Staff understand their role and responsibilities in promoting young people's welfare and in keeping them safe. Training opportunities for specific needs, such as self-harm, is an area of development and improvement.

Young people confirm that bullying is not an area of concern for them. They confirm staff will quickly intervene should an incident occur, which gives them a feeling of security and general safety within the home. Staff are aware of a persons ability to bully or be bullied and managers have shown since the previous inspection, they are prepared to make tough decisions to ensure young people live in an environment where bullying is not tolerated.

Staff work pro-actively to stop young people from going missing and have a good detailed knowledge of each young person in their care. On occasions, this helps them to retrieve young people without them becoming a missing person. Risk assessments are kept updated. The home is signed up to and follows local multi-agency protocols linked to dealing with young people who go missing.

Behaviour management is being addressed with greater consistency. Any challenging or unsafe behaviour displayed by young people is being well managed, with young people being kept safe. Young people are referred appropriately to specialist services, whose advice regarding the management of unsafe behaviour is sought and acted on.

Physical intervention is recognised by staff as a last resort. Incidents are monitored and evaluated. Staff training is up to date. Young people raised no issues or concerns directly with the inspector on this matter, or in completed surveys returned to Ofsted. For example; one says; 'Yes the rules are followed in my home. I understand that sometimes I have to be restrained for my behaviour.' Another writes; 'I have been restrained before, I understand why this happens.'

Young people are benefitting from having a staff team that is more stable, with a greatly reduced turnover. Appropriate recruitment and clearances procedures are in place, with longer serving staff being re-checked every three years. This is recognised good practice. However, although recruitment procedures and practice are sound, retaining some areas of evidence on site, is an area highlighted for improvement. This is with particular reference to evidencing a person's right to work in the United Kingdom and when a person has lived away, what further checks were thought necessary.

Young people are protected through a range of risk assessments, which have been recently revised and updated. These include both activity risk assessments along with assessments of risk in and around the home. Regular fire drills take place to ensure young people can safely exit the home if needed. Regular checks to maintain a safe environment are taking place.

## **Leadership and management**

### **adequate**

Based on the period since the previous inspection, the leadership and management of the home is deemed as adequate. This takes account of the high turnover of managers and staff during an initial period following the previous inspection. During this phase, it impacted negatively on the home.

However, the organisation, functioning and overall management of the home has significantly improved with the appointment of the current manager in the summer, coupled with greater staff retention. The registration of the manager with Ofsted has yet to be completed, due to the unforeseen circumstances beyond everyone's control, that interrupted the process.

The staff team which now has a far greater permanence about it than previously, is supportive of the new manager and with the changes being brought in. They are conscious of the need to work collectively to give young people a consistency of care. Based on observations made at a team meeting, staff are child-focussed and have a

good understanding of the needs of the young people in their care and how to address those needs.

Since the summer, the formal staff supervision programme is being delivered with greater consistency and with an agenda that promotes accountability and responsibility. The programme for appraisal is at an advanced stage of completion and is to include the views of young people. This is deemed to be good practice.

The numbers of staff on duty at any one time meet with the specific staffing ratio agreed for each young person living in the home. All staff, apart from the two still on their probationary periods have either gained or are about to gain, a recognised professional qualification. Staff confirm they feel well supported and have good opportunities to attend training events which gives them new skills or refreshes existing ones.

Staff meetings are taking place regularly and have been re-structured to include learning modules. For example a recent meeting had a LAC nurse giving information on self harm, another had the Police missing from home co-ordinator giving details around the revised multi-agency policy for missing children. This is helping to ensure that young people are being looked after by a staff group who are kept well informed and have the skills to meet the diverse needs of the young people they look after.

Both the internal and external monitoring of the home are areas where improvement has been noted. New arrangements for the external monitoring of the home were recently introduced. Reports from these visits are focussed and evaluative. There is evidence to show that actions highlighted in these reports are being addressed. The internal monitoring of the home is taking place consistently and is more evaluative than previously noted. The manager demonstrates an understanding of the strengths of the home and areas that need to be addressed. This is reflected in the detailed written development plan that was put into place in July 2014.

The report from the previous inspection contained one requirements and two recommendations. They have all been addressed leading to improvements in the quality of written records, in the detail and frequency of updating risk assessments and care plans and in ensuring staff have the skills required to address the needs of young people in their care.

Other areas where development and improvements have been made following the introduction of the current manager include; an upgrade to the fabric and décor of the home, the introduction of new medication sheets, the instillation of new computers for young people and staff and the introduction of an e-safety file.

Since the previous inspection the home has gone through a transition with regard to management, staffing and its working practices. An initial period of disruption has been followed by a period of stability, which is reflected in the areas of progress being made. The issues affecting the home in the period after the previous inspection

can not be ignored and are now part of the homes history. However, positive changes have been made and the home now needs a period of stability, which should allow it push on further and develop improved practice. If this occurs it should be to the benefit of the young people living 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.