

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC022448
Inspector	Shaun Common
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Secure Unit

Registered person	Nugent Care
Registered person address	99 Edge Lane Edge Hill Liverpool L7 2PE

Responsible individual	David Michael Ballard
Registered manager	Marie Theresa Higgins
Date of last inspection	30/10/2014

Inspection date	28/01/2015
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Previous inspection	adequate
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

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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Young people receive good quality of care leading to good outcomes. Young people say they feel safe and well cared for and have no concerns. Attaining young people's views and consulting them about their care and routines is part of daily life and has a positive impact on how the home functions.

Safeguarding is a priority and staff develop, understand and implement risk assessments to help keep young people safe. Staff and managers understand the home's processes and procedures well and implement them to support the safety of young people. There are good relationships between staff and young people. This leads to young people developing positive attachments. Managers have generated a positive culture with consistent boundaries, praise, reward and mutual respect that leads to young people developing improved behaviour, self-esteem and self-worth.

Care planning is effective. Plans are robust, detailed and individualised leading to good outcomes for young people. Regular reviews that include young people ensure plans are up to date and are reflective of current needs. Education attendance and achievement is improving, as have the range of activities that young people engage in that supports their wellbeing, health and enjoyment.

Management and external line management of the home has improved with

monitoring that is having an impact and there is a clear commitment to delivering high standards of care for young people. Young people are looked after by a well-trained, qualified, motivated and committed staff team.

This home has greatly improved standards of care with all requirements and recommendations made at the last inspection being fully met. Three recommendations are made. These relate to ensuring that sanction, restraint and single separation records are tamper-proof, that debriefs with young people following physical restraint are always carried out by someone not involved in the incident and that the bullying policy is revised to include interventions to be carried out with perpetrators.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The centre is operated by a voluntary organisation. It is registered as a secure children's home and is approved by the Secretary of State to provide secure care and accommodation. Education is provided on site and facilities include outdoor exercise areas and a sports hall.

The centre can accommodate 12 young people of either gender from 10 years to seventeen years of age in two purpose built living units. Admission of a young person under 13 years of age requires the approval of the Secretary of State.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/10/2014	Full	adequate
16/04/2014	Full	adequate
22/10/2013	Interim	good progress
17/04/2013	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):

- ensure that records of sanctions, restraint and single separation are kept in formats that cannot be tampered with after the event - e.g. bound numbered records or electronic entries that are then "barred" so that they cannot be amended at a later date (Volume 5, Statutory Guidance, paragraph 2.91)
- review and revise the bullying procedure to set out the work to be carried out and actions to be undertaken with the perpetrator of any bullying incident (Volume 5, Statutory Guidance, paragraph 2.84)
- ensure that any child who has been restrained is given the opportunity to

be debriefed by a responsible adult who has not been involved in the restraint and to talk through their experience within 24 hours. (Volume 5, Statutory Guidance, paragraph 2.104)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people learn appropriate ways to manage their behaviours as a result of the concentrated efforts of the skilled and experienced staff team. Consequently young people enhance their future life opportunities. A social worker wrote, 'Staff input has been critical and they have all helped to shape her care plan.'

Young people make good progress in developing an understanding of their backgrounds and how past experiences have impacted on their lives today. As a result young people recognise their positive qualities enabling them to form caring attachments with staff. The confidence young people gain in simple achievements; for example, winning the best bedroom competition, enhances their self-esteem and feelings of self-worth. A staff member said, '(Name) had some amazing outcomes. She's won the bedroom competition which she takes real pride in and likes the incentives from that.'

Young people's health improves steadily during their time at the home. All health needs are met as they are fully supported to consistently engage with appropriate health professionals and services. Young people's physical health improves as a result of the daily physical activities that they engage in. Food provided for young people has improved since the last inspection and is good. Young people are also encouraged to try different foods. The menu provides healthy choices and establishes a healthy eating pattern leading to a healthy lifestyle. A young person said, 'The food is better. I'm a vegetarian and they make different foods I can eat, not just salad and that really means a lot to me.'

Young people develop an insight and understanding of their psychological, physical and emotional health needs. Staff and relevant professionals support them with these needs, enabling them to make progress in all aspects of their lives. A social worker reported, 'She has acknowledged that her use of alcohol and drugs helped mask the reality and contributed to putting herself at risk. Because of the direct work and progress around sexual health and health and nutrition she has concluded that she does want a fresh start.'

Young people's attendance in education improves steadily as they engage with the care in the home and feel more settled and secure. The head teacher said, 'The percentage of attendance is going up. Last month it was 74%, which was up from 65% in October and 69% in November.' Consequently young people are supported to achieve and enhance their future prospects. A staff member said, 'She is going to education now and will attend five, six and seven classes a week. Huge step for her.'

Young people's improved self-esteem and confidence enables them to engage in inclusive positive activities within the home. For example, choosing the soft

furnishings, colours and wallpaper for shared lounges as well as making suggestions for the purchase of items to benefit all. This has included a blender to make 'fruit smoothies' which has also assisted in improving young people's health outcomes. Young people are also actively involved in the landscaping and improvement of the outside spaces. These positive contributions and activities provide young people with a sense of belonging and purpose while having the added benefit of enabling them to learn new skills.

Young people's community links and understanding of their background and culture are maintained by the regular contact they have with family and friends, in line with their care plans. These positive relationships are effectively facilitated benefitting young people now and maintaining avenues of support for their future independent lives. Young people have access to a telephone when they wish, and this further supports their links with family members and people important to them. An independent advocate stated, 'They are thorough in allowing young people to have safe, private contact on the phone whenever they want.'

Young people receive tailored preparation for transition to other facilities or for independence and adult life. When agreed and when they are ready, young people engage in planned mobility outings. As a result they gain confidence, skills and develop their self-esteem. A young person said, 'I have a plan for every day with education and activities and preparing for independence. I can budget now and shop, and keep my room clean and wash and iron. I have reasons to get up in the morning now because I know what I will be doing and there is a purpose.'

Quality of care

good

There has been a clear recognisable improvement in relationships between young people and staff since the last inspection. Consistent and clear expectations regarding acceptable behaviours provide young people with a sense of security. As a result, once young people settle into the home and accept that staff genuinely care for them and about them, they build nurturing and trusting relationships. This enables young people to learn more appropriate ways of expressing their unhappiness and any frustration. A young person said, 'Things are much better and I am happy now. I wish I had come here earlier because I feel I would have developed those skills earlier. But being here has made that difference for me.'

Robust care planning covers all aspects of young people's individual and diverse needs. The proactive staff team work together with young people and professionals to assess needs, risks and to identify gaps in young people's development. Plans incorporate young people's cultural background and identity which ensures that all needs are identified and met. Young people make significant progress as a result of the day-to-day care provided to meet these assessed needs. A social worker said, 'I was quite impressed with the level of care and commitment to her in working with the plan and alongside the other professionals supporting her. From what I've seen

its very child focussed.'

The resilient manager and staff team plan ahead and work in a consistent manner to ensure that young people have access to specialist professionals in order to meet their assessed psychological, psychosocial and emotional needs. Young people develop an understanding of the benefits of this support enabling them to engage in specialist intervention and attain positive outcomes. A social worker wrote, '(Name) has never previously engaged with any such work but has on the whole engaged in these sessions.'

Young people are provided with a variety of purposeful and enjoyable activities. Formal planned events are held after education and in the evening. These include physical activities in the gymnasium, playing football, badminton or gardening. Being able to get fresh air on a regular basis in the secure outside areas has a beneficial impact on young people's sense of well-being. Indoor activities include baking, preparing information for the home's notice boards, completing arts and crafts or participating in quiz nights. Young people learn new skills while having fun. A young person said, 'Considering how much I am missing (name), it is alright here.'

Young people confidently express their wishes and feelings sure in the knowledge that they will be listened to. They use their targeted key worker sessions and young people forums to express any views and opinions about their care and the running of the home. Staff sensitively explain if requests cannot be granted and why, and work with young people to make positive changes. For example, in purchasing more games and art materials for leisure activities. In addition, the manager formally responds to all requests made through the young people's forums so young people know that she is as actively involved in their welfare with the staff team. Young people feel listened to and valued. One young person wrote in the meeting minutes, 'We enjoyed the wall activities.'

Much improved complaints processes are in place. Young people have free access to relevant information and forms. Records evidence that young people's complaints are appropriately and robustly responded to, including ascertaining whether young people are happy with the outcome of their complaint. Young people have confidence in the home's system and feel able to express their views and develop negotiation skills as a result.

Staff provide consistent routines that encourage young people to participate in educational and vocational opportunities. As a result of improved partnership working between care and education staff, young people's engagement in education has improved and they are able to identify and take part in enriching and vocational activities. For example, sitting together as a group to work on scrapbooks, poetry and art, or working together with the home's gardener on the horticulture programme. This has helped young people to identify a subject or interest they are particularly good at thereby building skills and self-esteem. The head teacher said, 'The communication in the morning and the evening is really good because you get a

proper picture of the child.'

Young people enjoy living in a home which has greatly improved since the last inspection. A programme of refurbishment is underway to improve the doors to young people's en-suite bathrooms and has ensured that outside spaces are accessible to young people. In addition, living areas have been redecorated and enhanced by the addition of brightly coloured rugs and soft furnishings. Young people take pride in their home and there has been a dramatic reduction in the amount of damage as a result.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Young people feel safe and staff provide an environment that supports young people and helps them to stay safe. Young people did not report any concerns. The home has a bullying policy that staff implement. However the policy does not describe the work that will be undertaken with any perpetrator to address the behaviour. There are occasional incidents of bullying and these are managed effectively and fully recorded to show the action taken. Records show the work that is undertaken with the perpetrator and the support provided to the victim, therefore the shortfall in the policy does not have any impact.

A young person's vulnerability is assessed upon admission. A plan is then developed to address any concerns that emerge from the assessment. The plan is very regularly reviewed throughout a young person's stay at the home to ensure any new concerns are included. There are staff handovers, including for night staff to ensure consistency of care and recognition and awareness of any prevalent risks. All staff understand the vulnerabilities of young people well and implement plans to support young people to stay safe.

The home has a child protection procedure that is known and understood by staff, which helps to keep young people safe. There has been one child protection concern since the last inspection. This matter was dealt with fully and appropriately in line with the home's procedures. Records are well kept showing all relevant information and the action taken. The home liaises with the local authority and placing authorities regarding any safeguarding concerns. The Registered Manager has good links with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and is a member of a sub-committee developing practices around child sexual exploitation.

There has been three incidents of absconding since the last inspection. All incidents have involved young people absconding when out on planned and agreed mobility. The home has a clear procedure and protocol with the local police and local authority. Procedures were followed in all cases and a coordinated approach implemented with the relevant agencies to ensure young people are found. Full records are kept of all incidents showing all actions taken.

There is very regular searching of communal areas and young people's rooms in line with the home's policy. Searching takes place to ensure the home is safe and secure for young people. Records are kept of all searches, anything found and any action taken. Individual searches of young people also take place where there are concerns over safety and security. Searches are risk-led and fully recorded. No 'full' searches, which involve young people removing clothing and wearing a dressing gown, have taken place since the last inspection. All searches have been carried out using a 'pat down' or electronic wand. The risk-led approach balances well security and safety with the promotion of young people's dignity.

Physical restraint is used at the home in line with procedures. Since the last inspection there has been an increase in the use of restraint. This is due to the nature of the young people being looked after at the home and their highly complex needs and in some cases significantly challenging behaviours. The use of restraint is closely monitored by the Registered Manager who scrutinises records and closed-circuit television to ensure practices are appropriate and plans reviewed to minimise incidents. The use of restraint is now beginning to reduce as the mix of young people has changed and staff have worked hard to attain consistent practices, work closely with young people and develop positive relationships and attachments that have an impact. Records are kept of all physical restraints as required and these records contain all required information. However, records are not tamper-proof and therefore do not fully protect young people's information. All staff and young people are debriefed after every incident of restraint which is good practice. However, on some occasions, staff who have been involved in the incident have undertaken the debrief with the young person. The reasoning for this was explained in that staff try to ensure the relationship with the young person remains positive. However these two processes need to remain separate in the interests of best practice, and so that young people feel able to talk freely about any concerns they may have.

The use of single separation has also increased since the last inspection due to the nature of young people resident. Single separation is used in line with government guidance and very detailed records are kept of each incident. However, these are also not tamper-proof and therefore do not fully protect young people's information. Incidents are closely monitored by the Registered Manager to ensure practice is appropriate. Again as per physical restraint, the numbers of single separation incidents are beginning to reduce.

Staff encourage positive behaviour through setting consistent boundaries and expectations of young people and through role modelling and clear routines. An incentive scheme is in place that young people understand. They can earn rewards and privileges for improved behaviour and this in turn encourages and develops positive social skills. Where behaviour is inappropriate, sanctions are used. These are fully recorded and relevant to the misdemeanour. However, records are not tamper-proof and therefore do not fully protect young people's information. Restorative practice is used well and supports young people to understand what they have done wrong and encourages them to put things right and repair relationships. The

manager monitors sanctions to ensure they are having the desired effect of stopping negative behaviours.

Robust recruitment procedures are effectively implemented. The required range of checks are carried out that ensure the right people are employed to work with vulnerable children. Health and safety matters are managed well with regular checks and maintenance carried out; for example, on gas installations, electrical appliances and with fire drills undertaken regularly. These matters ensure young people's safety is promoted.

Leadership and management

good

The manager of the home is registered with Ofsted. She is appropriately qualified and has extensive experience. The organisation has recently appointed a new Responsible Individual who is the external line manager for the home and has extensive experience in managing children's services and in secure accommodation.

Since the last inspection, managers and staff have demonstrated commitment to improvement for the benefit of young people. All five statutory requirements and eight recommendations made have been fully addressed. This had meant improvement in a range of areas such as the environment, food provided, monitoring processes, activities, records and more consistent staffing.

The home has a Statement of Purpose, which has recently been revised and updated. This document sets out the aims and objectives of the home and the services available for young people. There is now good and accurate information for parents and placing authorities about the range of service the home delivers. A children's guide is also available for young people. This provides young people with good information about the home and helps young people understand what the home is like and what they can expect. Both the Statement of Purpose and children's guide can be translated into different languages to meet the needs of parents and young people.

Staff present as dedicated and committed to the home and the young people they look after. There are always a sufficient number of staff on duty to provide appropriate and consistent care to young people. The amount of agency and temporary staff used has reduced since the last inspection with three new care staff being recruited to complement existing staffing numbers, and further recruitment being considered. Most staff have a relevant qualification and those that do not are undertaking a relevant course. New staff will complete relevant induction and foundation training before undertaking a relevant qualification in the near future.

Staff demonstrate a good understanding of young people's needs. They are knowledgeable about the home's procedures, processes and systems so they can provide good quality of care to young people and help to keep them safe. Levels of

formal supervision for all staff have improved and they receive good support from line managers. Joint team meetings take place lead by the Registered Manager and staff report that this is helpful and supports the provision of consistent care to young people.

External monitoring of the home takes place each month by an independent person under regulation 33 of the Children's Homes Regulations. Reports are provided to the home and Ofsted of such visits. Visits identify the strengths of the home and identify areas for improvement. This supports the manager and staff to improve the quality of care provided to young people. The Responsible Individual has clear plans in place to work with the visitor to further improve the process and the overall quality of the function.

The manager has a clear system for monitoring the home's records and practices. Checks are very regular and reports identify the home's strengths as well as identifying any shortfalls. Action is taken quickly to address any areas of weakness that impact upon the quality of care provided to young people.

The home has a development plan in place that sets out how positive outcomes will be achieved for young people and the quality of care improved. The Registered Manager, Responsible Individual and other external managers demonstrate a clear commitment to the service. They show a willingness and determination to improve the service and the quality of care for the benefit of young people.

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.