

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	13/09/2013
Inspector	Linda Leeder
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	14/12/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This children's home is privately owned and provides placements for children on behalf of local authorities. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three young people of either gender who have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

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

Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be **good**.

Dedicated and caring staff work effectively with young people, including some young people with challenging behaviour. Some young people go missing from the home, the majority doing so to see family and friends in the area. Good working relationships with the police ensure that, if they are deemed to be putting themselves at risk, action is taken to return the missing young people to the home. Young people have excellent relationships with the care staff and feel they are well cared for.

Young people take part in a good range of activities in the home and in the community. Visiting professionals are positive about the standard of care provided and feel the staff are doing a good job in caring for the young people. Resourceful staff encourage and support young people to attend education.

Young people say they are happy living in the home and enjoy the time they spend with staff. The staff place young people's well-being at the centre of their practice. The home uses positive behaviour strategies which benefit the young people. The strategies encourage young people to manage and change their own behaviour so that they can use this in other situations as they move into adult life.

Areas for improvement relate to: the evaluation of training provided to staff, particularly the quality of training courses completed online; the ability of the service to identify patterns and trends through regular performance; and ensuring that Regulation 34 monitoring reports are sent to Ofsted.

Areas for improvement

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
34 (2001)	ensure that the registered person shall supply to the HMCI a report in respect of any review conducted by him for the purposes of paragraph (1) of the regulation. (Regulation 34 (2))	16/11/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the learning and development programme is evaluated for effectiveness at least annually and if necessary is updated (NMS 18.2)
- ensure that the manager regularly monitors, in line with regulations, all records kept by the home to ensure compliance with the home's policies, to identify any concerns about specific incidents and to identify patterns and trends. (NMS 21.2)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people are developing positive self-esteem, emotional resilience and understanding and confidence in their skills. Young people have realistic plans for the future and want to better themselves; they want to attend college, return home to family and move into their own accommodation. This positive attitude within the home provides young people with the ability to progress in their lives and achieve good quality outcomes.

Staff are effective in encouraging young people to engage in education. Despite the fact that some young people have had a history of missing significant periods of schooling, there is marked success in supporting them to do well and achieve while in placement. Young people have made significant progress. For example, young people are able to attend vocational training in areas they particularly enjoy and have an interest in. A young person said 'I am proud that I go to college, I have got my act together'. Young people's attitude to education has improved since their placement in the home; this means they are they are able to try different

opportunities and develop new skills. Young people feel good about themselves as they are consistently congratulated on their achievements.

Although young people do engage in some risk-taking behaviours, the home has reduced the number of times that young people go missing since being placed at the service. Young people are proud of the improvements that they have made in respect of their behaviour and this has increased their self-esteem. Young people are consistently encouraged to make good choices in relation to their own behaviour and this promotes positive outcomes.

Young people's health, including their physical, emotional and psychological health is actively supported. Young people demonstrate an increasing awareness of how to live a healthy life; they eat healthily and take regular exercise. Young people are encouraged to develop self-awareness of the benefits of good personal hygiene. Young people engage with services that increase their emotional resilience and help sustain positive relationships. This helps to increase young people's self-esteem and self-image.

Young people experience a wide and varied range of activities. These include attending the theatre, visits to places of interest such as castles and museums, trips to the seaside and raising money for a local charity. Young people also engage in sporting activities such as tennis, swimming and walking. These activities improve the self-esteem of young people, encourage physical exercise and help involve them in the community.

Young people benefit from appropriate contact with family members and other important people in their lives. Individual contact arrangements are facilitated effectively by the home's staff. This ensures young people are supported to maintain positive relationships with significant people in their life.

Staff encourage young people to maintain their own rooms, do their own laundry and do some shopping. Individualised independence programmes and outreach work provide young people with the necessary skills to move into their own accommodation and gain the knowledge and understanding needed to cope with moving on to independence and adult life.

Quality of care

The quality of the care is **outstanding**.

Young people comment positively on their experiences of living at this home, A young person said that staff 'are not afraid to let you know that they care and give you a lot of attention. They are good at listening and telling you that they understand'. Relationships between staff and young people are friendly and supportive. Staff consult young people on a daily basis which has had a direct impact on the quality of care provided. For example, young people's views are sought about managing their behaviour, achievements and future plans. This has influenced practice within the home.

A wide range of highly stimulating and engaging activities are provided by the home. Young people engage very positively in these activities. Young people take part in activities that are specifically tailored to their own interests and skills. The broad range of activities undertaken by the young people ensures that they make constructive use of their time and can grow in confidence as they engage positively in the community. Young people have also had the opportunity to travel and experience different cultures. Care plans reflect the broad range of needs that stem from each young person's culture, religion and personal identity. As a result, the individual needs of young people are identified and addressed well.

Young people particularly value their relationships with their keyworkers. Because key working is of such a high standard, young people feel that their individual needs and wishes are fully respected. Confidence and self-esteem are boosted because young people know that staff are there and 'interested in me'. Positive relationships mean that empathy and understanding are balanced with high expectations and high aspirations.

There are very few complaints at this home. Young people report that staff listen and respond to their concerns if they have any. Parents are aware that they can make a complaint if they are unhappy with the service. When complaints have arisen the home has dealt with them efficiently and effectively. This is a home that takes all concerns seriously and as a consequence complaints are rare.

Staff enthusiastically support and encourage young people with their participation and achievement in education. Social workers report that the home has helped young people to look at education in a positive light and this has given young people the confidence to feel positive about the future. Parents comment that young people have improved since they have been at the home. One parent said staff 'know how to encourage him without making it feel that they are pushing him too much'.

The home is appropriately located and well maintained. Décor, within the home has recently improved and now looks more homely. This has encouraged young people to take pride in their surroundings and consequently damage caused by young people is minimal.

Safeguarding children and young people

The service is **good** at keeping children and young people safe and feeling safe.

Young people are safe and feel safe in the home. They are confident about expressing concerns and know who to speak to if they are worried or feel at risk. There are no bullying incidents between young people however staff are aware of the risks associated with bullying and make sure that young people know that staff will take swift action if there are any concerns. Close supervision further ensures that bullying is quickly identified and addressed.

Staff are trained to safeguard young people and take appropriate action in response

to any concerns. Investigations into allegations or suspicion of harm are handled fairly, quickly and consistently. This means that the home provides effective protection for young people.

The staff have very good interpersonal skills and communicate well with young people. As a result restraint is rarely used. The home ensures that staff are trained in safe handling techniques that minimise the risk of injury or trauma to the young people. When young people go missing from home, staff go to great lengths to ensure their safety and comply fully with local missing from home protocols.

Safe recruitment processes reduce the risk of the home appointing inappropriate adults to work with the young people. Visitor records demonstrate that unchecked adults are appropriately chaperoned when on site. This practice further reduces the risk of abuse.

Risk assessments are comprehensive and frequently updated in response to identified risks. Staff are aware of the home's risk assessments and, because they adhere to them fully, the risk of accident and injury is minimised. Fire safety systems are effective and appropriately monitored by the manager and staff. Periodic testing of heating and electrical systems ensures that the risks to young people and staff are minimised.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of the children's home are **good**.

The home is effectively and efficiently managed. There is demonstrable evidence of improvement in the quality and ability of the staff, and in outcomes for young people. The provider meets the aims and objectives in the Statement of Purpose, and young people, staff and placing authorities are clear about the aims of the home and the services it provides.

Recommendations from the previous inspection have been addressed. There is now a written development plan in place and this is reviewed and updated by the Registered Manager and used to improve the care provided to young people.

Management systems are effective. Staff make positive comments about the manager's strong and supportive leadership. They feel supported and are all aware of significant developments in their own personal and professional confidence and competence. Staff say they are supported with consistent and regular supervision. They are given good opportunities to formally discuss their roles, professional development and the impact on them of working with young people with challenging needs. For example regular staff meetings provide a forum for staff to share best practice and develop strategies to meet the needs of the young people. However there are concerns about the quality of training that staff receive to equip them with the skills to meet the needs of young people. The majority of the training provided by the service is through online training courses and the quality of these courses has not been evaluated. This has minimal impact on young people at present, but could

affect the quality of care provided for young people in the future.

All significant events are reported to Ofsted and the placing authority as required. Records are stored securely and contribute to a history of the young person's life at the home. Records are well maintained and information easily found. This will assist young people in the future to understand the reasons for staff actions and help them understand and make sense of their life in the home should they wish to view their files.

The manager monitors practice in line with Regulation 34 on a monthly basis and immediate action is taken to address any issues identified through monitoring. However the monitoring reports are not used in a cumulative way to identify patterns and trends within the home and the manager has not always sent the completed Regulation 34 reports to Ofsted.

The home works effectively with other agencies and is proactive in chasing reviews and visits from responsible authorities. Social workers report that the home provides regular, clear and comprehensive written information which benefits young people and supports the successful advocacy it provides for them.

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 *Inspections of children's homes – framework for inspection* and the evaluation schedule for the inspection of children's homes.