

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Gwen Buckley
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Date of last inspection	04/07/2013
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This children's home is run by a private company. The home is registered to provide a service for up to eight children or young people, male or female with learning 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 **adequate**.

This was the first inspection of the home since it was Registered in July 2013. Young people benefit from living at the home and make positive progress. Professionals speak highly of the service and praise staff on the quality of care and support provided to young people. Staff help all young people who have complex needs to improve their social, self-care and independence skills although not all the details and progress made is recorded in care planning documents.

Child focused transitions into the home involve family members which helps young people settle. Monitoring of the home takes place regularly but is not robust. Young people's views are highly valued and they are given choices in many ways. Staff are dedicated to ensuring they are able to communicate with all young people effectively.

Young people are happy in the home, their behaviour and progress at school has improved significantly. Consistency of care is achieved by effective partnerships between staff, parents and professionals involved with the young people.

The areas for development arising from this inspection relate to the quality of recording. There is a need to develop care planning, fire safety, measures of control records and monthly monitoring systems.

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
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, restraint or discipline in a children's home, a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose. This must include all the information required for sanctions (Regulation 17 (3))	28/02/2014
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, restraint or discipline in a children's home, a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose. This must include all the information required for restraints (Regulation 17 (3) and (4))	28/02/2014
32 (2001)	ensure that the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and any regulations made under it, except for article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home. This relates to night time fire drills (Regulation 32 1 A)	28/02/2014
33 (2001)	provide a copy of the report required to be made under paragraph (4) to HMCI (Regulation 33 (5) (a))	28/02/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure children receive personalised care that promotes all aspects of their individual identity. This specifically relates to the religious needs of young people and include strategies found to minimise self-harming in care planning. (NMS 2.1)
- ensure children develop skills and emotional resilience that will prepare them for independent living. This specifically relates to the need to reflect the children's ability and development needs in care planning (NMS 216)
- ensure all staff's work is consistent with the Regulations and National Minimum Standards, the homes' policies and procedures. This relates to the monitoring of actions raised in monitoring reports and the quality of care planning. (NMS 21.3)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people gain increased confidence and improved social skills at the home. This means that they are better able to integrate in the community successfully and their school attendance and educational achievements have improved. External professionals praise staff for the young people's improved outcomes. One saying 'in the short time at the home (name of child) is no longer introverted to the same degree and can now make choices. As a result of being at the home, the young people are making good to outstanding progress at school.'

Young people with complex social difficulties form positive friendships with staff and their peers. They are confident and learn to be autonomous. Young people enjoy living at the home where disability is not seen as a barrier to enjoyment. This increases their social inclusion. External professionals praised the opportunities the young people have to enjoy a wide range of new experiences and feel social inclusion is consistently promoted. Young people regularly attend various activities in the home and in the community providing them with a wide range of positive experiences that are new to them. These include holidays, attending disco clubs, shopping and eating in restaurants.

Young people enjoy their time at the home. Contact with family members is encouraged and well managed. Staff work well with the placing authority to ensure visits to or from family members are positive experiences for the young people. Various social media resources, such as face-time effectively support young people to maintain contact with family members whether they are in this country or abroad.

Young people are given time and support from staff and family members ensuring a smooth transition into the home. They are introduced to the home gradually with many visits of differing lengths according to individual needs. Transition planning for when they leave is considered as early as possible and staff work with others to find the best solutions for young people.

Young people gradually learn a range of practical skills that help them develop self-reliance and preparation for adult life. These include basic domestic duties and self-care skills. Staff are committed to helping young people achieve optimum independence when they move into adulthood. However, the work staff are undertaking and the progress made by the young people is not clearly identified in care plans and reviews. This means decisions made when reviewing care are not undertaken from an informed basis as they do not fully evidence how young people are developing their independence skills.

Young people, including those with existing medical conditions enjoy healthy lifestyles to promote improved physical health. They participate in regular activities and are encouraged to eat healthy food. Young people help to develop the menu plans for the week and when safe to do so young people help prepare meals. Young people enjoy meals from their own country and parents assist by provided recipes. Young people expand their diet choices by trying new foods that previously they would refuse.

Quality of care

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

Young people receive one to one support and staff know the young people in their care well. Staff report they are always learning from the young people which helps them understand their needs and develop effective communication methods. This ensures young people have people who know them well. These effective relationships promote young people's participation in life at the home.

The strategies found to manage the complex needs of young people are not always written into care plans. Details of a strategy found to divert a young person away from self-harming behaviour was not written in the care plan or risk assessment. This does not ensure needs are consistently met.

Well trained staff dispense medication safely. Parents feel they are involved in the life of their child and informed of any issues as they arise. They have confidence in the staff who care for their children.

Staff are skilled and use well thought out communication tools to support young people interact with and be understood by others. This helps young people have a say and enables them to influence how they are cared for. At times staff will undertake some basic tasks for the young people, which young people could manage themselves. This includes staff putting a young person's slippers on which young people could, if given time, manage by themselves. As a result, independence skills are not consistently maximised.

Young people's views are highly valued. Staff continually encourage young people to make choices which they respect and act on. External professionals consider that staff take time to listen, ensuring individual needs are met and they respect young people's views and those of the people they work with. These good working relationships benefit young people as they provide consistency of care between school and the home.

Social workers, family members and young people know how to complain, but do not feel the need. No complaints have been made since the home opened.

The home provides a warm and pleasant environment for young people. The home and gardens are exceptionally well maintained. The furnishings are bright and of good quality and pictures on the walls include photographs of young people. Equipment and fittings are adjusted to meet the needs of young people while still providing a safe environment for all. This gives young people a sense of belonging and being respected.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people who historically presented with challenging behaviours are well

supported. They quickly learn to manage their behaviours better. Young people develop self-control, develop social skills and an understanding of the consequences of their actions. Risk assessments are in place that consider the needs of young people with complex behavioural difficulties. Staff successfully use behaviour management strategies which promote safe care. The strategies used identify triggers and how staff support young people to avoid these. As a result, young people with complex social difficulties form friendships and access the community safely.

Staff work very well with teachers and parents ensuring consistency of care when young people are in other environments. A teacher reports that in relation to improved behaviour and school achievement '(name of child) has made an exponential leap as a result of being at the home, I wish all facilities were as good. The staff have a gentle sound approach to care and (name of child) is getting an exemplary service.' This supports vulnerable young people to stay safe.

Measures of control are rarely used. Staff rarely use physical interventions, demonstrating the efficient behaviour management of young people. One restraint has taken place since the home opened. This was to keep the young person safe in the community. An incident record and debriefing notes reflect what took place and how further episodes could be avoided and social workers were quickly informed of the incident. However, the restraint log does not contain all the information required by Regulation. Information not contained is the young person's name and whether they were offered the opportunity to see a GP or medical practitioner. Behaviour is managed well and sanctions rarely used. One sanction has been used since the home opened and records kept are not in line with Regulations. The log did not contain the behaviour that warranted the sanction. This lack of detail in the measures of control logs does not protect young people.

Staff have a good knowledge of child protection procedures and actively promote the safety of young people. They are clear about their responsibility in preventing and challenging any bullying. Many young people who access this service are unable to acknowledge when they are in dangerous situations. Staffing levels are high and additional staff are used for outings. Staff are aware of the actions to take should a young person go missing, but no young person has gone missing since the home opened.

The home environment is safe and kept free from hazards that pose potential dangers to young people. Regular checks of emergency safety equipment and daytime fire drills take place. This has meant that the young people, are able with staff support to evacuate the building during the day. There has not been a night-time fire evacuation drill to inform night-time risk assessments and procedures. This does not ensure the safety of young people.

Leadership and management

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

The home is newly registered and this is the first inspection. External professionals praise the manager and staff team on the quality of care the young people receive. They consider the young people quickly benefit from being at the home and say, 'Staff provide consistency of care in a calm nurturing way. Staff set boundaries that young people respond well to.'

An independent visitor regularly monitors the home although reports from these visits have not been sent to Ofsted. The visitor raises recommendations for the manager to address following these visits the visitor normally monitors progress at the next visit. This system is not sufficiently robust, as actions were not effectively monitored following one visit.

The Registered Manager undertakes monthly internal monitoring. An overview of these findings has started and the manager states a report of this will be with Ofsted within the expected timeframe of six months. The Registered Manager does not have a written development plan. However, he is clear that the priority for the home is to ensure the current children are settled before accommodating others.

The staff team consists of male and female cares, staff with different experience, cultures and backgrounds. This means the young people have good role models of both genders.

The manager has completed a professional management course and care staff receive on-going training to support their professional development. Staff are competent and fee they are very well supported and trained for the work they have to do. Care staff have or are registered on relevant Level 3 training. They are supported to obtain further training and there is agreement for two staff to undertaken Level 5 training. Staff receive regular supervision which they stated is supportive and team meetings that help them to reflect on practice which supports them in caring for young people.

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.