

Island Lodge

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Joanna Heller
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

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Date of last inspection	08/04/2013

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Service information

Brief description of the service

This is a privately owned residential service for up to five young people with a diagnosed learning disability.

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**.

The house is comfortable and welcoming. Staff provide a stable, secure and happy environment in which young people flourish. Placing authorities say 'phenomenal progress' is made by some young people. Young people's individual growth is demonstrated through improvements: in their ability to keep themselves safe; improvements in their educational achievements and the reduction in challenging behaviour.

Children and young people receive individualised child focused care. Staff demonstrate consistent commitment to young people and focus on developing young people's communication skills. Staff continually consult and engage with young people in planning their daily routines and activities. The therapeutic work that staff undertake has helped young people trust staff and begin to understand their personal histories. The safety and well-being of young people remains at the forefront of service delivery.

This is a well-resourced home and leadership and management of the service is strong. The staff team are reflective and are constantly looking to develop the home and improve the quality of care.

Although young people's individual needs are well met, there are some shortfalls in effectively documenting some risk assessments and evidencing agreements about the locking of the front door. The manager has also been asked to review the effectiveness of sanctions and to ensure that staff are provided with sufficiently regular supervision.

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
23 (2001)	ensure that any activities in which children participate are so far as reasonably practicable free from avoidable risks. In particular; develop clear risk assessments which review safety arrangements for those high risk activities children undertake. (Regulation 23(b))	14/03/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure that sanctions and rewards for behaviour are clear, reasonable and fair and are understood by all staff and children. In particular; review the effectiveness and relevance of sanctions (NMS 3.8)
- ensure staff know and implement the home's policy in relation to children going missing. In particular; ensure individual missing from care risk assessments are sufficiently clear and define when a child is to be deemed as missing from care (NMS 5.2)
- ensure physical restrictions on normal movement from the home are not used unless this is necessary to safeguard children and promote their welfare and development. Such measures are only used where agreed with the responsible authority and parents. In particular; ensure there is evidence that parents and placing authorities are in agreement with, and have consented to, the locking of the front door in order to safeguard children (NMS 10.4)
- ensure risk assessments of the whole children's home environment are carried out, to identify any potential sources of harm to the children are recorded in writing and regularly reviewed. In particular; review the fire risk assessment (NMS 10.8)
- ensure there is an emergency escape plan that all staff and children are familiar with. In particular; ensure that a personal emergency escape plan is developed for each child (NMS 10.9)
- provide staff with regular supervision by appropriately qualified and experienced staff. (NMS 19.4)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Outcomes for young people are good and young people make strong progress. This is demonstrated through their increased awareness of how to keep themselves safe, developments in their communication and reductions in challenging behaviours.

Young people are healthy and live healthy lifestyles. Young people have a good range of meal choices that takes into account their individual preferences.

Young people's learning is promoted by the service and young people of school age have excellent school attendance. This is demonstrated through some young people, who prior to placement had not attended school for some time, achieving 100% attendance. Young people enjoy active and varied lives participating in a range of onsite and offsite activities.

Young people develop skills that promote their independence. For example, young people are able to develop self-care and travel skills. Young people's developmental targets are set in accordance with their known ability and individual support plans.

Quality of care

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

Education is consistently positively promoted and geared at levels appropriate to the needs of the young people. Staff acknowledge that learning is something that is constantly occurring and help young people gain an understanding of the world around them through daily activities in the home. Staff ensure that young people maintain excellent regular school attendance. Young people enjoy school and are progressing well. Staff attend all school events and meetings in partnership with parents as appropriate. Staff are aware of the educational abilities and goals of each of the young people. Staff ensure that young people have activities available either inside or outside the home.

Equality and diversity is threaded through the service with young people enjoying highly individualised care in accordance with their particular needs. For example, one young person spoke about how staff do a special wake up dance to make them laugh and get up in a bright mood, they then have a calming lullaby song at bedtime to help them settle. Each young person has a detailed plan of care which includes all key areas of need and details of their routines. Staff have an in-depth awareness of each of the young people and how they communicate.

Good communication between staff means that adults supporting the young people in their day-to-day lives are aware of essential information and changes. Young people have established strong relationships with staff. Staff double check with young people what they say to ensure staff fully understand young people thoughts wishes and feelings.

Placing authorities refer to a committed and resourceful staff team who ensure young people are very well supported. Placing authorities refer to the strong therapeutic style of working that underpins the positive relationships between young people and staff. Young people who find it difficult to verbally articulate their thoughts are supported to do in various alternative ways. Together these form the base for young people to trust staff, and begin to understand and come to terms with, their personal histories.

Young people enjoy healthy lifestyles and are supported to access medical professionals, such as, doctors, dentists and opticians as appropriate. Staff work well in partnership with specialists, such as, educational psychologists and mental health professionals in order to support young people's healthcare and development.

Staff ensure young people enjoy active and varied lives. Young people actively participate in theme nights where they look at different cultures and try out new foods. Young people also enjoy regular pampering sessions and in house parties. Staff support young people to pursue their interests though participating in community based clubs. Young people also enjoy getting involved in community events, for example, raising money for children in need. Young people continue to enjoy appropriate teenage activities, such as, using their tablet computers and playing with their games consoles.

Staff are strong at building partnerships with families and supporting young people maintain contacts which are important to them. Families reflect on how staff help support the whole family.

The home provides young people with clean, well decorated and maintained, homely accommodation which they are proud to welcome their family and friends into.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Most young people feel safe, secure and well cared for all of the time. Where young people do express feeling unsafe, staff are thorough in exploring this. Staff demonstrate good empathy for young people and their understanding of the world. Staff appreciate how historical experiences impact on young people's understanding of feeling safe. Staff have undertaken in depth individual pieces of work with young people exploring issues, such as, their likes and dislikes as well as good and bad touch. This enables staff to have a better understanding of young people and their individual needs.

Staff are aware what to do should an allegation of a child protection nature be made. Safeguarding vulnerable young people remains at the forefront of all practice. Parents and placing authorities say that young people are safer as result of living at the home. Young people demonstrate they feel safe through reductions in self-harming and obsessive compulsive behaviours. Clear detailed risk assessments and

behaviour management plans are in place to guide staff. These plans are reviewed continually as situations arise ensuring staff have clear and current guidance on how to manage complex behaviours.

Restraint is used only by competent trained staff, in order to prevent harm. No prohibited sanctions are used, however, the effectiveness and relevance of sanctions is not always reviewed. This means that sanctions applied may not always be understood by the young person and have little effect on changing behaviour.

Young people are highly vulnerable and would be at risk if leaving the home unplanned and unsupervised. Appropriate security arrangements are in place, as are high staffing levels, to ensure young people are effectively safeguarded from going missing. However, it is not clear that all parents and placing authorities are aware of, and in agreement with, the locking of the front door to maintain young people's safety. Young people's individual missing from care risk assessments are not always sufficiently detailed and on occasion do not contain key information. For example, one young person travels a familiar route to college independently and may also go to the local shop. These factors are not incorporated into their individual missing from care risk assessment. This means that staff may be unclear of when the young person is to be identified as missing.

Young people are safeguarded from unsuitable people gaining employment in the home through robust vetting practices.

Robust systems are in place to ensure the on-going safety of the building. For example, regular checks are undertaken and effective systems are in place to regularly service fire prevention equipment. However, the fire risk assessment does not accurately reflect how the home operates, nor are individual evacuation plans developed for each of the young people. This means that staff may be unaware of how to respond effectively and swiftly in the event of an emergency. Risk assessments for specific activities, such as, swimming and climbing are not sufficiently detailed as they do not contain information regarding children's needs or staffing levels required. This means that there is potential for activities to not be effectively planned and resourced, which in turn has the potential to undermine the safety of the activity.

Leadership and management

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

Leadership arrangements have recently changed. The deputy manager has been promoted to manager this has ensured continuity for both staff and young people. The manager has submitted an application to Ofsted and their application is currently being processed. The manager leads by example and has strong expectations for staff care practice. Staff feel that one of their strengths is that they work well together as a team to ensure young people are nurtured and flourish.

Families and professionals say that the home performs at a high standard. Parents

have confidence in the managers to respond to any issues of concern. Staff are proactive in sourcing independent advocates, this means that young people who find it difficult to articulate their feelings have an independent person to support them.

The setting is well resourced to ensure that young people receive good levels of support in line with the home's Statement of Purpose. The home is well staffed ensuring that young people's individual needs are well met. For example, some young people have a minimum of two staff to support them throughout the day, with a third staff when they go out in the community. Waking staff are on duty each night, this ensures that young people have staff support available at all times. Staff are competent in the roles they perform and establish positive relationships with young people, parents and other agencies.

Staff do not receive formal individual supervision sufficiently regularly to meet the home's own policy. For example, one staff had received individual supervision once within the past five months and one new member of staff had received one formal supervision within the two months that they have been employed. The potential impact of this undermining staff performance is minimised through informal support from the manager, group case discussion and team meetings. When issues arise, staff are resourceful in finding solutions. For example, staff in partnership with the psychologist, developed a trust plan to help a young person manage specific compulsive behaviours in a safe way.

Staff are competent and well trained. Investment in staff training means that staff feel valued and are able to confidently and competently perform their role. Staff have benefitted from training in core areas, such as, first aid, safeguarding, diversity, restraint and medication. All relevant staff are undertaking or have completed the diploma in caring for children and young people. The majority of staff have undertaken further relevant specialist training in areas, such as, child sexual exploitation, self-harm and drug use.

The manager ensures that all significant events are notified to the relevant authorities and that appropriate actions are taken following an incident. Staff maintain good quality recording and case file management.

The manager has ensured that the recommendation set at the previous inspection has been met. This has led to improvements in the standard of accommodation. The organisation undertakes regular quality reviews which identify and drive forward improvements within the service. For example, the recording of restraint improved following feedback from a quality review. This enables the manager to more clearly identify any patterns and trends emerging.

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.