

Inspection report for children's home

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| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC007290     |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 8 June 2010  |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Sharon Lewis |
| <b>Type of Inspection</b>      | Key          |

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|--------------------------------|-----------------|
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## 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.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

## The inspection judgements and what they mean

|               |                                                               |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Outstanding:  | this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality |
| Good:         | this aspect of the provision is strong                        |
| Satisfactory: | this aspect of the provision is sound                         |
| Inadequate:   | this aspect of the provision is not good enough               |

## Service information

### Brief description of the service

This is a privately run children's home. It provides accommodation and support to four young people of either sex, aged between 11 and 18 years old. The home is registered to care for young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties and young people with a mild mental disorder. The home is situated in a residential area, close to shops, transport networks and local amenities. At the time of this inspection two young people were living at the home. Both young people provided positive feedback, regarding their care.

### Summary

At this unannounced full inspection, all key standards were inspected. Young people benefit from a good service with outstanding features. Young people receive excellent support which is tailored to their individual needs. Staff work on young people's strengths and succeed in helping young people maximise their potential. The home works well with young people who may have exhausted previous care provisions.

Young people receive care from a caring, committed, experienced and stable staff team. Young people benefit from the professional staff team which consists of social workers, teachers, a nurse and expertise in child psychology. The organisation is a centre of learning and provides placements to social work students. This enables the home to keep up to date with current social care practice.

The only shortfall is regarding a minor maintenance issue. Recommendations are made to further enhance the service. These relate to the electrical installation certificate and records of residents' meetings.

The overall quality rating is good.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

### Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the home was required to address two actions and three recommendations. The home has addressed all shortfalls effectively. Young people benefit from the home's commitment to modernising the accommodation. The stained carpet has been removed from one of the bedrooms. This has been replaced with laminate wooden flooring. Young people receive greater protection from the home's food hygiene practices. All staff now have training and have documentary proof of their qualifications.

Recommendations were made to further enhance the service. Young people are better safeguarded by the implementation of these suggestions. Files now contain a photograph of each young person and medical consent to emergency treatment. Staff also now record any discussions regarding fire safety.

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Young people benefit from the home's proactive approach to health care. Staff encourage self-responsibility in all areas of young people's lives. This includes cooking, shopping and menu planning. Young people receive a generous food allowance each week for their groceries.

Young people enjoy writing their own shopping lists and devising their individual menus. Young people demonstrate a sophisticated palate and are adventurous in their cooking. There is a desire to cook meals from a variety of cultures. Staff supervise where necessary. The conservatory has a dining area, where young people eat their meals. All staff have food hygiene certificates. Young people can help themselves to fresh fruit and are aware of the need to eat a good diet. Their shopping lists include evidence of good nutritional choices. Staff provide an excellent series of teaching on nutrition. They also purchase cookery books, which enable young people to further develop their culinary skills.

The home meets the holistic health needs of young people effectively. Staff usually register young people at the local health centre. If young people refuse to attend the initial registration appointment, the home has a system to address this. The home has an exceptional special arrangement with the surgery. This enables staff to complete documentation with young people within the home. Young people receive encouragement to attend their health appointments. This includes regular visits to the optician and dentist. Staff are aware of the need for appropriate health insurance when travelling abroad. This includes assisting young people to apply for their European health insurance card.

Staff monitor young people's physical and emotional health. Health plans cover emotional well-being, love deprivation, mental health, isolation, drug use, personal hygiene and sexualised behaviour. Young people are able to further explore these issues in their key work meetings. The home also makes arrangements for drugs counsellors to visit young people within the home. There is an acknowledgement that numerous young people have undiagnosed mental health needs. The home aims to provide a specialist service which addresses mental health issues. The home has their own specific mental health practice guidance. This manual highlights carer intervention and focuses on positive outcomes for young people.

The home has effective medication arrangements. Young people benefit from a nurse being on the staff team. Staff securely store medication in a locked cabinet and accurately maintain medication administration records. The medication policy, procedure and practice guidance address the use of non-prescribed medication. The home now routinely obtains written consent to administer medication and first aid.

## **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Promoting the welfare of young people is an integral part of working practices. The home's core values highlight the need for respect, trust, honesty and the overarching commitment to young people. Young people confirm there is a culture of mutual respect. Young people feel that staff instil 'good boundaries' and there are no issues regarding privacy. Staff securely store personal information and appropriately maintain confidentiality. Staff are very approachable and succeed in creating an open atmosphere. Young people easily approach staff members with their concerns. Young people know how to make a complaint. The home provides them with a list of external agencies and personnel who they can direct their complaints to. Young people have not, however, had to use these procedures.

The home has a good understanding of the wider issues relating to safeguarding young people. Government guidance forms the basis of their home's safeguarding arrangements. These include comprehensive bullying, absent without authority and child protection policies. Staff benefit from annual safeguarding training. The strong links with the Local Safeguarding Children Board

enable the home to obtain regular training and updates. Young people relate well with each other and there are no problems with bullying. Staff follow a robust procedure when young people are absent without authority. This involves notifying placing authorities and the police. The latter routinely visit the home to discuss absences with young people. When young people are absent they keep in good contact with staff via their mobile phone. The majority of absences are due to young people returning home late, after curfew hours. Young people tend not to stay out overnight, and view the home as a stable base.

Young people receive ongoing assistance to develop self-responsibility. Individual behaviour plans address going missing, violence, truancy, substance misuse and other socially unacceptable behaviours. A key feature, however, is that plans also detail young people's strengths. Staff consistently work with young people to make them understand the consequences of their behaviour. Staff believe young people can change. Young people respond well to positive reinforcement. Young people appreciate the warm, professional manner in which staff relate to them. Staff rarely restrain young people and there is limited use of sanctions. Disciplinary measures include writing warning letters to young people and negotiating reparative action. Young people acknowledge that this approach helps them develop greater maturity.

Young people reside in a home which is physically safe and secure. Staff undertake daily health and safety checks. There are good fire safety arrangements. On admission young people receive information in relation to the fire and emergency procedures. Staff undertake weekly fire alarm tests and young people participate in regular drills. There are certificates which confirm the safety of the gas and electrical supplies, the electrical and fire safety equipment. The only issue is that the electrical installation certificate has the wrong interval date. This is a mistake by the electrician and does not have an impact on the health and safety of young people.

Young people benefit from the home's ability to retain staff. The majority of staff have worked at the home for approximately 10 years. This provides a stable, experienced and committed workforce for young people. A robust recruitment procedure is available, should there be a need to employ additional staff. Young people receive protection from the home's close monitoring of visitors. Staff maintain a record of all visitors. They also ensure visitors do not have unsupervised access to young people.

## **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is outstanding.

Young people receive excellent individualised support. The home's care principles include the wish to nurture the spirit and celebrate individuality. Staff work exceptionally well with young people who may have exhausted other provisions. Staff succeed in building up young people's confidence and helping them turn their life around. Young people respond well to the consistent encouragement from staff. This contributes to greater maturity and self-belief. Young people state: 'It is good here, compared to other homes. They know what they are doing.' Young people appreciate the boundaries and are able to highlight their areas of personal growth.

Young people have an assigned key worker, who they meet with regularly. Young people engage exceptionally well during their key work meetings. Young people are setting and achieving their goals. They also focus on their self-development. This includes addressing their behaviour, life skills, nutrition, education and identity. All young people are very happy at the home and are making remarkable progress. There is a decrease in being missing without permission and

young people demonstrate greater social skills. Of great importance is the fact that all young people have realistic plans for the future.

The home goes beyond their duties to support young people. This includes providing a prison outreach service. This has great significance for young people, as in some cases staff were the only people who visited them. During this difficult time staff were able to provide clothes, money and music for young people. They also take on a strong advocacy role ensuring young people have appropriate representation. The home is able to undertake specific pieces of work for the placing authorities. An example is completing pathway plan documentation where young people are not engaging.

Young people benefit from the home's commitment to enhancing their lives. Staff encourage young people to have high aspirations. The home greatly values education and the nurturing of individual skills and talents. All young people are applying for further educational courses. They also receive assistance to apply for their provisional driving licence. Staff share their interests with young people. Young people are currently learning skills which will assist them in adult life. This includes cooking, baking and cushion making.

Staff work in partnership with educational professionals to achieve the best outcomes for young people. They undertake introductory visits to educational establishments and gather information in relation to the curriculum, coursework and expectations. This enables staff to support young people effectively. If necessary staff will escort young people to school. The environment is conducive to learning. Young people have access to their own computer and a small library of books. Young people benefit from a staff team which includes qualified teachers. The home is also able to provide homework and tutoring support.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Young people benefit from good care planning which highlights their specific needs. One of the home's strengths is their close liaison with placing authorities. The home believes effective care planning is the foundation for building successful placements. Prior to moving into the home staff arrange an initial planning meeting. It is the expectation that the allocated social worker and the young person attend. This enables all parties to focus on agreed outcomes. The home's care plans complement the placing authority placement plan. Plans highlight the cultural, religious, health, emotional, social, educational, behavioural and life skill needs. Monitoring their intervention is an ongoing element of the home's way of working. Staff undertake monthly reviews and produce detailed progress reports. This information positively contributes to the statutory review process.

Young people are able to maintain contact with their family, friends and professionals. Young people can use the office phone to contact their relatives and other agencies. Friends are able to visit the home, however, they are not allowed in young people's rooms. It is the expectation that placement plans detail contact arrangements. Staff are able to provide a supervised contact service. The home believes in building good working relationships with relatives and involved professionals. Part of the admission procedures includes sending an introductory letter to family members. This details the home's involvement and encourages relatives to play a meaningful role in young people's lives. Staff support young people, both emotionally and practically, to make contact with their relatives. Young people are also able to keep in touch by telephone. They have their own payphone in the hallway and receive an allowance for calls.

The home wish to provide a harmonious environment. Prior to a new placement being agreed, staff carefully consider the impact on the current young people in addition to their ability to meet the proposed young person's needs. The home is able to offer both planned and emergency admissions. The home's procedures ensure young people move into and out of the home in a sensitive manner. Staff maintain a register of all placements. Staff carefully follow an admission checklist to ensure placements consistently promote good practice. On leaving the home young people may go out for dinner with their key worker. They also receive a gift. If they are moving into independent living, this may be a starter pack containing household items. Staff also complete a discharge report. This provides a good summary and evaluation of the placement. This report clearly details if proposed outcomes have been achieved.

Young people are able to influence the home's way of working. Staff encourage young people to have a voice throughout all decision making. Prior to admission young people are able to participate in the initial planning meeting. Young people additionally express their views in admission meetings, key work sessions, one-to-one discussions and residents' meetings. The home regularly schedules residents' meetings; however, a record is not always kept of meetings. Young people do not highlight this as an issue.

## **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people report that staff, 'help you to become more independent'. The home has developed their own specialist semi-independence programme. Young people receive individualised training in the practical and personal skills they needs for adult life. Staff act as positive role models. They encourage young people to realise their self-worth and be an effective member of their community. An example of this is young people joining police cadets and youth associations. Young people enjoy the autonomy of having their own food budget. They plan menus, shop and cook their individual meals. Young people also take responsibility for their laundry and cleaning their rooms.

Young people enjoy living at the home. They state: 'It's like living in a family.' The property blends into the residential area and is not identifiable as a children's home. There are good public transport links. A range of culturally diverse shops and amenities are within walking distance. Young people are able to relax in the main lounge, where they can watch television. The bright, airy conservatory has dining and computer facilities. They also have access to a rear garden, which has a lawn, patio and fruit trees.

Young people have their own lockable bedrooms, which they can personalise. There are three bedrooms on the first floor and one on the ground floor. Each room has appropriate furniture and furnishings. To encourage an independent lifestyle, young people also have their own television and fridge in their rooms. If a young person is unable to climb stairs, accommodation is available on the ground floor. There is also a shower and toilet located here. Another bathroom is on the first floor. All flooring is appropriate. The carpet which had burn marks and stains has been replaced with laminate wooden flooring. The home is clean, comfortable and reasonably maintained. There are plans to continue to modernise the property. The main issue is the kitchen worktop. This has several chipped marks, which detracts from the otherwise satisfactory living environment.



## Organisation

The organisation is good.

Young people state that 'everything is good' at the home. The home has been in operation for over 12 years, has a consistently good reputation and strives to provide high quality care. Young people, relatives and involved professionals can gain an overview of the service from the home's website. This provides up-to-date information regarding the vacancies and a concise summary of the service. Written information is also available for adults in the Statement of Purpose. Young people have their own handbook. All documentation meets regulatory requirements.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The home's documentation and care practices incorporate anti-discriminatory practice. Staff additionally receive specific training in this area. Equality and diversity is also part of other training; an example is the safeguarding training. This included specific reference to race and racism. The home is able to care for young people from a range of cultural, racial and religious backgrounds. Young people receive support to develop a positive self-identity. Staff work hard with young people to steer them away from stereotypical thinking. Staff encourage young people to consider the wide range of options available to them. There is an overarching wish for young people to lead fulfilling lives. The home also teaches a respect and appreciation of other cultures. Young people enjoy eating a range of international dishes. They also receive support to cook meals, which are culturally reflective. Care planning effectively addresses any disability, vulnerabilities, racial, cultural and religious needs.

Young people receive care from a small, relatively stable, competent staff team. The home's owners are professionals, who are former foster carers. One of the home's strengths is their ability to attract and retain a mainly professionally qualified staff team. This includes qualified social workers, teachers, a nurse and other graduates. Young people receive support from a home which consistently reflects on their practice. The organisation is a learning centre and benefits from the input of current social work practice. The home has an ongoing relationship with universities and offers placements to social work students. The owner is also the Registered Manager. This individual is a qualified social worker, experienced practice teacher and lecturer. Their qualifications includes a masters degree in advanced social work and they are planning on pursuing a doctorate in this area.

The organisation demonstrates a commitment to staff training and has an accredited quality assurance award. National vocational training for staff is ongoing. Senior staff are undertaking the management qualification which contributes to an effective management team. The staff training programme equips staff with the skills needed for their role. The annual programme includes safeguarding, disciplinary measures, health and safety, mental health, legislation, risk assessment, complaints and team building. The home now maintains a central record of staff training. This provides a good overview of staff training and competence to meet the needs of young people.

Young people benefit from the home's wish to provide a consistently good service. The home monitors records in accordance with regulations. Every year staff reflect on their overall achievements at the annual away day. There is a wish to build on past success and make future plans. This includes reviewing their marketing strategy, business plan and training programme. Staff appropriately maintain young people's files. Files have checklists to ensure they contain all required information. Each file has designated sections, which makes it easy to find pertinent

information. Young people's photographs are also on file. This helps with easy identification if a young person is absent without authority.

## What must be done to secure future improvement?

### Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, The Childrens Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

| Standard | Action                                                                 | Due date       |
|----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| 24       | ensure the kitchen worktop is well maintained. (Regulation 31 (2) (e)) | 1 October 2010 |

### Recommendations

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

- request an electrical installation certificate with the correct interval information (NMS 26.4)
- keep a record of residents' meetings. (NMS 8.3)