

## Inspection report for children's home

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| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC008274        |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 28/11/2013      |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Andrew Hewston  |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | Full            |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>       | Children's home |

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| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 22/01/2013 |
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## Service information

### Brief description of the service

The home is one of five children's homes owned by a private company. It is registered to provide care for two young people with emotional or 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 **outstanding**.

The home has a history of outstanding provision and continues to provide a very high level of care to young people. Young people make exceptional progress in all areas of their lives through a supportive and caring staffing team.

Young people really enjoy being at the home and can describe how their lives have improved while being there. They make great attachments with staff and have a highly personalised plan that is well known by the staff team and supporting social workers. Young people consistently have an input into their own care through regular discussions and decision-making forums.

Young people are safe due to vigorous checks and effective policies and procedures. Risk assessments are robust and help young people to develop, rather than curtail, their experiences of life.

The home is extremely well-managed and excellent use is made of monitoring systems to help further develop the service. Staff play a highly committed and enthusiastic part in the lives of young people, providing positive and caring role models to those in the home.

### Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **outstanding**.

Young people make considerable development in all aspects of their lives. This has

been the case since the last inspection and young people have progressed significantly since the start of their placements. A social worker stated that a young person had, 'thrived while they have been at the home.' They develop a strong awareness of their own situation, their past and are able to look towards plans for the future. They are able to secure very positive attachments with the small staff team. This has helped them to create a high level of emotional resilience to cope with the challenges of residential care. Young people have developed in their ability to be involved with decision making progresses, improving in their input while attending reviews and giving their own views within staff meetings.

Young people improve their awareness of their own health needs. They develop their ability to keep themselves and their environment clean. Young people have also developed self-awareness to an extent whereby they no longer need Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, which have been in place for a number of years. They develop maturity and confidence. This has led to them being able to spend increasing amounts of their time with friends in the community. Young people discuss how they are now involved with an excellent wide range of activities that they had not previously experienced successfully, most notably swimming. Young people try out, and experience, differing experiences including holidays and trips out.

Young people achieve significantly within education, following a move to more appropriate schools. One school stated that a young person had: 'made remarkable and commendable progress within their first year.' This has also been achieved through regular attendance and a supportive staff team that motivates young people, eager to attend and learn. Young people move forward and learn independence skills, such as tidying and ironing. There is a consistent building of independence skills so young people are now able to practice skills such as budgeting and cooking. They enjoy and greatly benefit from contact with family, seeing these occasions as positive. They have support to celebrate their links with their families.

## Quality of care

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

There are strong and effective relationships within the home between the staff and young people. Young people describe the differing positive characteristics of staff, stating that: 'they are great and I really enjoy being with them. They are like my second family.' Staff consistently listen to young people and their views develop and shape the service delivered, through young people's meetings, key working sessions and young people having an input into staff meetings.

Young people have a high awareness of how to make complaints or who to talk to if they are unhappy. Information is available within differing formats although there is an expectation that initially young people to talk to staff. No complaints have been made at the home since the last inspection. There is an appropriate system in place to record and respond to complaints to support young people, as well as compliments, of which there are many.

Detailed placement planning links closely to the statutory documentation completed by the placing authority. Planning consistently allows for young people's development, promoting differing challenges for them to achieve. Planning is updated on a regular basis and is responsive to areas raised within reviews. Strong relationships exist between the home and placing social workers. One social worker states that there is: 'a strong level of communication and professionalism from the staff team.' Young people have an effective awareness of the planning and recording systems within the home. They are fully involved with reading and signing monthly reports, and they record their comments any issues they wish to raise. This ensures they are fully aware and involved with the plans in place for them.

The home consistently promotes a healthy lifestyle, from effective hygiene routines to supporting swimming and trampolining lessons. Young people are involved with developing healthy menus and are able to talk about why they should not eat too many snacks - even though they like them. All staff are trained in medication administration, and robust recording systems ensure young people's safety. Regular check-ups are completed with differing health professionals to ensure that health needs are effectively monitored.

Staff enthusiastically promote education and the choices that this brings. Attendance at school is excellent and young people engage in a range of extra-curricular activities and trips. Staff always attend parents' consultation evenings and personal education planning meetings. This further develops awareness of young people's needs and promotes their development. Young people are proud of their achievements and describe positive elements of school that they enjoy.

Young people experience a wide range of activities that are organised by both the home and the placing social worker. The staff promote all activities and choices for young people, including involvement with children's rights questionnaires; this allows them to be aware of their differing skills. There are very regular trips out and holidays, increasing young people's involvement with the community. Young people support local charities, through the donation of toys and clothes they have grown out of and this results in their active engagement with the local community. The home consistently raises awareness of cultural needs. Equality and diversity forms a standing agenda point within staff meetings and placement planning. Staff promote an awareness of young people's individuality and of those within their school and community.

The home is a pleasant and comfortable environment. Staff and young people are involved in improving the décor and completing repairs, where possible, to allow young people to feel a pride and ownership of their own accommodation. The whole house is geared towards promoting young people's achievements, experiences and family life.

### **Safeguarding children and young people**

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

safe.

Young people feel safe within the home. One young person stated that staff: 'always make me feel safe just by listening to me. It's not just about the door being locked properly.' Effective policies and procedures are in place relating to safeguarding and child protection. All staff are aware of these through regular training and discussions within team meetings. No safeguarding concerns have been raised within the home since the last inspection, although appropriate recording systems are in place should such an instance occur. This helps to ensure that young people are safe at all times.

Risk assessments to promote safe care are clear and show how risk is carefully managed, rather than avoided. Staff promote young people's development, while also maintaining safe structures around them. They adjust their approach according to the needs and abilities of young people and assist them to develop self-protective, independent behaviour rather than encourage dependency. For example, they enable young people to have free time and learn to feel comfortable without staff presence in the community when they are out alone for the first time. Staff have purchased mobile phones for young people, taught them how to use them for reassurance and to keep in touch, so they can practice making decisions independently, but have back up advice at the end of a phone if needed. No young people are involved in specific risk taking behaviours, such as absence without permission, drug or alcohol use. Helpful procedures are again in place should such an instance arise, so that staff are prepared for such behaviours.

Behaviour management systems have a strong and positive emphasis on compliments and improvements, allowing rewards and praise more than sanctions. Young people are able to increase their pocket money through achieving, behaving appropriately and completing chores around the house. Negative behaviours are sensitively challenged and young people have a high awareness of what is expected of them, thus allowing them to develop positive behaviours. Staff are properly trained in the use of restraint and diffusion techniques, although none have been needed since the last inspection.

The home's environment is regularly monitored to ensure that it is safe for both the young people and staff. Fire checks and drills are regularly completed and young people are able to discuss a variety of scenarios to raise awareness of the differing possible responses to fire at the home. Strong recruitment practices ensure that all staff are safe to work with young people. Recruitment records show that all necessary checks are completed and there has also been a development in the checking of references since the last inspection to further enhance the recruitment procedures.

## **Leadership and management**

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

A strong and effective management team ensures that staff consistently strive to support and improve the lives of young people. All staff feel well supported within

the organisation, through both the management structure and by their colleagues. Regular formal staff support structures, such as supervision and appraisal; on-going daily discussions and regular staff meetings, help with developing good practice. Supervision sessions are fully recorded and agenda items include the development of both the young people and the staff themselves. This ensures that all are aware of the needs of young people and how they are being met.

Sufficient staff work in the home and good policies and risk assessments are in place relating to lone working. Staff development is closely linked to the appraisal system, with personal development planning and targets to achieve. All staff are appropriately trained, and their own development plans promote further investigation into differing residential care practices. This is a positive way of improving staff's skills further. The home's Statement of Purpose gives a good awareness of the role of the home and how care is provided within it. Young people have a good guide that gives a wide range of information relating to general rules and guidance regarding the home.

There was one requirement made at the last inspection and the registered person responded to this swiftly, adding children's contact information to their files. The home is aware of its obligations to report significant incidents and to examine practice in the home. Rigorous monitoring systems are in place to develop practice further. The management use monthly checks to examine trends and patterns in service delivery. Monthly external monitoring is completed and forwarded to the necessary bodies. This includes discussions with the young people and gives a good picture of the way that the home is performing. Where aspects of development are highlighted these are quickly responded to and this demonstrates the home's continuing capacity to drive improvement.

The home's development plan is robust and examines areas that are being completed well and also those in need of development. Strands of development then show how the staff or management have responded to these needs. This is an effective way of showing how the home has moved forwards in different areas since the last inspection.

## 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.