

## Inspection report for children's home

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| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC020576        |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 05/12/2012      |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Susan Mullin    |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | Full            |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>       | Children's home |

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| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 23/02/2012 |
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## Service information

### Brief description of the service

This privately-operated home provides care for up to five male young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties; specifically a specialist service to young people who have a range of complex needs and who can present significant risks to themselves and others. Young people have exclusive access to a registered school that is also managed by the organisation.

### 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**.

Young people receive outstanding levels of care, support and guidance enabling them to make significant progress in improving their behaviour, education and personal development. Positive and meaningful relationships between staff and young people help to improve feelings of poor self-esteem and self-worth. Staff are positive role models and provide a pillar of support enabling young people to express their difficult and challenging emotions in a calm, safe and nurturing environment.

Extremely detailed and individualised care plans have been implemented and are reviewed regularly. As a result, the specific and changing needs of each young person are identified and addressed quickly. The views of young people are sought regularly and these significantly contribute to the safe and positive environment in the home. The safeguarding culture embedded in the home keeps young people as safe as possible while greatly reducing their risk-taking behaviours.

A confident and very experienced Registered Manager puts the needs and well-being of young people at the forefront of the home's practice. He secures improvement by pro-active development planning and shows a clear understanding of the home's strengths and weaknesses. Young people benefit from an environment where staff have high hopes and aspirations for all young people to reach their potential.

Quality of care in the home is subject to thorough and robust monitoring. A stable and committed staff team examine their practice constantly, with a view to improving

the service that they offer to the young people. External monitoring of the service is comprehensive and contributes to assuring the quality of care provided. No requirements or recommendations were made as a result of this inspection.

## **Outcomes for children and young people**

Outcomes for children and young people are **outstanding**.

Young people receive excellent levels of care and make considerable progress as a result, given their starting points on admission to the home. Highly individualised support helps them develop their life and social skills, gain confidence, improve self-esteem and broaden their life chances. Young people form genuine attachments with staff and are able to express their difficult and challenging feelings, in an environment in which they feel safe. A social worker said: 'I am very happy with the placement and this young man has made real progress since he has been living in the home. Staff support him with his hobbies and he gets on well with all of the staff and the other young people in placement. He is now engaging in further education and therapy sessions. His risk taking behaviour has reduced to nil and the communication between myself and the home is excellent'.

Preparation for adult life is on-going and builds on young people's need to develop attachments and trust in adults through positive relationships with the staff. Young people feel listened to and are consulted about all aspects of their care. They are also encouraged to take part in developing the home and the recruitment of staff. This consultation has led to a healthy respect for the staff and the home. Ideas of difference are positively promoted with young people encouraged to appreciate and learn about equality and diversity issues within a wholly inclusive environment. This generates a culture of respect and consideration for others.

Young people learn to have an understanding of key health risks and to take responsibility their own health. They actively learn about maintaining a healthy lifestyle and healthy eating. Young people are learning to understand the nutritional value of eating a good diet. They also have an appreciation of different cultures and a range of international cuisine. They also have lots of opportunities for exercise and outdoor activities. As a result, they are taking much more responsibility for their own health needs and see the benefits of healthy living. There is evidence that some risk-taking behaviours have reduced, notably incidents of being missing. Young people's psychological and emotional health needs are well met. They have the best possible care and support through staff engaging with a variety of other professionals to ensure individual needs are being addressed. Young people meet each week with a therapist to help them to try and make sense of their background and the difficulties they have experienced. As a result young people feel cared for and are much more positive about their future.

Education has as a high priority in the home and young people have excellent support at school, college or a training placement. Their achievement is exceptional, taking into account their starting point at the time of placement. Education and support staff work closely together. Young people's attitude and approach towards

their education is transformed by the home's positive ethos and culture. Young people, who have previously disengaged from education, are now learning academic and practical life skills. A social worker said, 'The home are very good keeping the young person busy and he engages very well in his training placement. He has settled into this home more than any other placement and the staff are doing some excellent work with him'.

Young people have many opportunities to be positively engaged in the wider community. For example, every year the young people raise funds for a charity of their choice. This year they baked and subsequently sold biscuits and cakes and made a sizable donation to their chosen charity. The young people went to the Olympics and saw Team GB play in beach volley ball and ladies football. They also witnessed the Olympic torch as it went past their school and said they had really enjoyed being part of this celebration. As a result, young people became more involved with community activities.

Young people benefit from contact with their families and people who are important to them, in line with their placement plan. Contact is fully facilitated by care staff, who support individuals to receive visitors. Young people have developed a better sense of identity and belonging because they get the support they need for home visits or meeting relatives at a contact centre.

Young people benefit from learning to develop independent living skills and preparation into adulthood. They learn practical life skills and shop and help with cooking and household tasks. Formalised independence plans are implemented depending on the individualised care needs of young people. This increases the chances for young people to be able to live independently. Young people, who have been at the home long-term, have successfully made this transition.

## Quality of care

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

Young people benefit from the implementation of excellent, comprehensive care plans, which clearly identify their individual needs. Robust monitoring enables staff to evaluate young people's progress and to ensure that care plans clearly address the current needs of each young person. This process positively contributes to statutory reviews and means that reports prepared by staff accurately reflect each young person's progress. Young people attend their reviews and are involved in their plans. They are happy in the home and one stated, 'I have never had to make a complaint. If I am worried about anything I go and talk with my key worker'. There have been no complaints from any source since the last inspection.

Young people benefit from meaningful relationships with staff that are based on trust. A residential support worker said, 'We have a stable and very experience staff team, who work very well together. We make sure that the young people benefit from our consistent support and care. We respect each other'. The young people's views are encouraged and acted upon; for example, menu changes and activity

sessions. There are numerous forums, both formal and informal, for young people to voice their feelings and opinions. Additionally, each young person's identity is valued and any diverse needs, such as cultural requirements, or specific needs related to mild learning difficulties, are well known and addressed fully.

The opportunities for exploring young people's emotional and psychological health are central to care planning processes. Young people engage in new activities and try different challenges. They focus on activities that help meet their identified needs. For example, some young people go to the gym to improve their fitness and feel better about themselves. Staff have excellent knowledge of young people's health needs. They arrange and facilitate contact with professionals. Young people make informed decisions about whether they wish to take advantage of the routine health appointments, assistance and support offered. Young people benefit from carefully planned health care.

Education is highly valued and promoted in the home. There is an established culture that all young people attend school, college or a training programme. A robust staff structure and individually planned personal education programmes underpin this approach. This means there are exceptional attendance rates and excellent educational achievements given the starting point of each young person when they move in. Close liaison between the home and school assists with agreed strategies for young people to engage in their education and learning, such as work experience.

Young people say that they enjoy living in their home. They appreciate the space and privacy it affords, which includes a lounge, separate dining room, a games room and a quiet room, which are all young person focused. The large garden is highly valued and the furnishings and décor are of very good quality. Young people are able to personalise their bedrooms to reflect their hobbies and interests, which gives them a sense of identity and belonging. Young people also engage in the things that interest them outside the home such as football, a variety of outdoor activities and trips to the cinema. The opportunities to participate in group activities, such as accessing an outdoor activity centre for their annual holiday, are taken up with enthusiasm. This really improves young people's social skills and they learn how best to interact with other outside of their placement.

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

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

Young people confirm that they feel safe in this home. They appear confident and comfortable in this environment and especially around the staff. They say, 'The house is safe', 'staff look after you', and 'they would sort out bullying'. Staff are acutely aware of any feelings of fear and anxiety which may be worrying individuals. They provide constant verbal reassurance which is further underpinned by the supportive care practice of the team. Young people experience high staffing ratios, well-planned activities and safe routines. Staff hold a first aid qualification and know

how to deal with medical emergency and to protect young people's welfare.

All staff have undertaken child protection training and know what to do to safeguard the welfare of young people, should there be any evidence or suspicion of abuse. The Registered Manager ensures that all the relevant agencies are informed of any safeguarding issues. This ensures that strategies and plans can be developed in the event of any concerns being identified. However, there have been no safeguarding issues in the home since the last inspection.

The home implements behaviour management policies through careful planning and review. Young people understand the behavioural rules and expectations of the home. Staff confidently manage situations which may challenge these expectations. They set clear boundaries, which if not respected, result in appropriate sanctions should the need arise, in line with good parenting. Young people quickly become familiarised with more appropriate techniques to achieve their goals, such as negotiation, compromise and being richly rewarded for positive conduct. The use of approved sanctions and physical restraint techniques noticeably reduces quickly for individuals. All the staff are trained in restraint techniques should these be needed to avoid serious injury, or damage to property. There has been a significant reduction in the use of restraint since the last inspection.

Young people benefit from a stable staff team. The home has a robust recruitment policy which ensures that only adults who are suitable to work with young people are employed. Numerous risk assessments and safety checks of the premises and fire equipment ensure that the young people are able to take calculated, acceptable risks within the home's environment. Fire drills happen at regular periods to ensure everyone is up to date with emergency procedures. As a result, young people and staff live and work in a safe environment.

## **Leadership and management**

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

A consistent and highly effective management team provides excellent leadership. Placing authorities comment very positively on the overall running of the home and the significant progress made by young people. The needs of young people are central to care practice, planning and development with all decisions focusing on their best interests. The Registered Manager is very experienced and clearly understands the needs of young people and the support and guidance that staff require to meet them. He is fully aware of the most up-to-date legislation and guidance. Staff morale is high. Young people benefit from a culture that is vibrant, energetic and centred around their needs.

An experienced and well-trained staff team cares for young people. A training matrix is in place demonstrating that all staff take part in essential training on a regular basis. Additional training supports specialist knowledge around many aspects of looking after young people with challenging behaviours. All staff are expected to have a childcare qualification and those in management positions are supported to

pursue management and care qualifications at a high level. Regular supervision of an effective quality has been provided and all staff have an annual appraisal. Staff are extremely positive about the management support they receive. Young people benefit from an experienced and competent staff team who are deployed effectively to meet their individual needs. The staffing complement ensures that there are always sufficient staff on shift to be able to respond to young people's needs. The low staff turnover and the stability of the staff team ensures that the young people benefit from consistent care by a motivated staff team.

The home offers care and accommodation for young people in line with its Statement of Purpose. This document informs young people, parents and placing authorities about what to expect. The young people's guide also gives clear details of what to expect, the care provided and the rules and routines. It also gives contact details of people and agencies young people may wish to contact such as Child Line, the Children's Rights Director and Ofsted. Recently, the home has developed a children's guide in DVD form. Easy access to independent agencies ensures young people can raise any concerns with people independent of the home, which helps to protect them from risk of harm and abuse.

Quality assurance visits play an important part in protecting young people and ensuring the care provided is effective. A person, who is independent of the home, completes monthly monitoring visits on behalf of the registered individual. These reports are sent to Ofsted and demonstrate thorough and detailed monitoring of the service, which includes engagement with young people and other stakeholders. The Registered Manager completes quality of care monitoring reports and sends these to Ofsted; these help to ensure young people receive individualised care and support in a safe manner. The robustness of the checks also helps to inform future developments at the home.

Senior managers recognise the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. The Registered Manager shares information transparently, such as notifications and placing social workers confirm that they receive regular comprehensive updates. This means that incidents are dealt with appropriately and in consultation with other professionals. Records are maintained that captures the past, current and future needs of each young person and these are reviewed regularly. All young people participate in their reviews of care and are able to express their views easily. Extremely detailed reports are provided for statutory reviews and minutes of reviews being held on file. All documentation conveys an up-to-date and accurate picture of each young person's life in the home and the impact that care is having on them. Such records are stored securely so confidentiality is maintained. There is a clear system in place to notify appropriate authorities of all significant events relating to the protection of young people living at the home. This helps to further promote young people's well-being and protect them from harm.





## 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 children's homes.