

## Inspection report for Children's Home

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| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC029865    |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 03/03/2011  |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Paul Taylor |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | Random      |

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|--------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 30/11/2010 |
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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 outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

## 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 home is owned by My Choice Children's Homes Ltd. It is a detached town house in a residential area. There is a garden to the rear of the house, and communal areas such as a dining room, kitchen and lounge on the ground floor as well as a staff office.

Staff sleeping-in accommodation and the young people's rooms are situated on the first and second floors. The home caters for up to three young people who have emotional and behavioural difficulties from the age of 10 to under 18 years.

### **Summary**

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

At this unannounced inspection the key standards in the area of staying safe were assessed together with how the home has addressed the action and two recommendations made at the last inspection.

The home provides an excellent standard of care to the young people. Rigorous monitoring systems ensure that attention to detail is maintained and the young people's safety protected and promoted diligently. Staff awareness of the young people's vulnerability, together with carefully thought out and sensitive support, ensures that the young people are given every opportunity and close guidance to make positive decisions and to develop their own skills in promoting their own safety and well-being.

The one action made at the last inspection has been addressed. Reports written after monitoring visits are made available promptly to the manager and she outlines how any shortfalls have been rectified in an action plan. One of two recommendations have been addressed. The home's risk assessments outline any measures taken to ensure the young people's safety.

One recommendation remains relating to ensuring that the home continue to ensure that at least 80% of the staff team achieve National Vocational Qualification in Caring for Children and Young People at level 3 or an equivalent qualification.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection one action was made requiring that the manager has copies of reports written after monitoring visits made promptly available to her. This has been achieved. The reports are thorough and outline areas which need to be addressed. The manager in turn makes a record in an action plan of how she has rectified any

shortfalls.

Two recommendations were made at the last inspection. One was in relation to ensuring that any measures, such as removing kitchen equipment for safety reasons, at night, were recorded in risk assessments. This has been achieved and any measures are the subject of detailed risk assessments. Kitchen equipment is no longer removed at night as the risk has been assessed as minimal.

One recommendation was made asking that the home continue to ensure that at least 80% of the staff team achieve National Vocational Qualification in Caring for Children and Young People at level 3 or an equivalent qualification. This ratio has not yet been achieved although the organisation which runs the home has a rolling programme of training which aims to achieve this ratio. The recommendation remains.

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is not judged.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Privacy of the young people is respected and promoted to an excellent standard. Members of staff always knock on the door of a bedroom before entering. Personal issues are discussed in private and telephone conversations are also carried out in private unless there is a clear agreed reason why these should be supervised. Staff practice ensures that the young people's right for dignity and privacy is valued.

The right of the young people to complain about any aspect of their care is valued and encouraged. The culture in the home ensures that they are able to speak to the manager, visiting managers, key workers and other members of staff about their care. Contact telephone numbers for external agencies are contained in the young people's handbook should they feel the need to discuss any complaints with adults not involved in the running of the home.

Systems in the home, close monitoring by the manager and external senior managers combined with high levels of staff awareness, ensures that any issues of concern about a young person's welfare are rigorously pursued. Detailed records are kept of how these concerns have been resolved and what agencies have been involved.

There is a clear message given to the young people that bullying is not accepted. The small size of the young people's group means that dynamics can be easily monitored and any issues or conflict swiftly addressed. Routinely held house meetings ensure that ongoing issues are discussed and that the young people have

an opportunity to voice their opinions in a group. Regular one-to-one sessions with key workers ensure that the young people have numerous opportunities to say if they feel they are being bullied. The home's rigorous and diligent approach ensures that bullying is not a problem.

Each young person has a clear protocol in place which outlines the process for the staff to follow in the event that they are missing from the home. The protocol outlines each young person's vulnerability and this information is shared with the police when they are reported as missing. Records of incidents are clear and include what support is given to each young person when they return. The young people are aware of their individual protocols and know at what stage they will be reported as missing to the police.

Each young person has a detailed behaviour management plan which outlines what situations may trigger distressed or challenging behaviour and what strategies should be used to support them. The plans are regularly reviewed and discussed in team meetings to ensure they are relevant and up to date. Additionally the young people have regular sessions with their key workers to discuss their behaviour and progress and how they feel they are being treated.

Detailed records are kept if a young person has to be physically controlled. These are checked and endorsed by the manager to ensure that the imposition of physical control was appropriate. Records are maintained of any sanctions imposed and these are also checked by the manager to ensure they are appropriate and as agreed in the young person's behaviour management plan. The culture in the home is strongly based on encouraging positive behaviour and offering close support to the young people so that issues can be resolved before they escalate.

Numerous and detailed risk assessments are in place which outline strategies to minimise risk to the young people. The risk assessments cover the environment, activities and behaviour the young people may display. The risk assessments are assessed on a regular basis and updated if any circumstances change. Members of staff are acutely aware that the backgrounds of some of the young people may lead them to take risks or not be aware of how vulnerable they are. The members of staff educate the young people about issues which may put them at risk, such as drug and alcohol misuse and being missing, and give them guidance on how to keep safe.

The organisation which operates the home has a robust recruitment process which ensures that all the necessary pre-employment checks are carried out before a member of staff begins to work at the home. Additionally, the young people are involved in the recruitment process by meeting with prospective members of staff and putting questions to them. They are then able to give feedback to the recruiting managers about the impression given by the applicant. This makes the young people feel involved in the running of the home and that their views and opinions are valued and acknowledged.

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

The provision is not judged.

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

The provision is not judged.

## **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is not judged.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is not judged.

## **What must be done to secure future improvement?**

### **Recommendations**

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

- ensure that a minimum of 80% of the staff team achieve National Vocational Qualification in Caring for Children and Young People at level 3 or an equivalent qualification. (NMS 29.5)