

## Inspection report for children's home

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| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC033817        |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 30/05/2012      |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Julian Mason    |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | Full            |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>       | Children's home |

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| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 01/03/2012 |
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## Service information

### Brief description of the service

This home is privately owned and is registered to provide residential placements for up to four children with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

### The inspection judgements and what they mean

**Outstanding:** a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

**Good:** a service 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 home provides a very good standard of care overall. There is effective leadership, which contributes to a well-organised staff team that has a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The home has a good focus on meeting young people's individual needs because care and support is planned, coordinated and delivered to a consistently high standard. The home can adapt and adjust quickly in response to changing needs and risks, which makes the service very responsive to each young person's circumstances.

Young people's views and needs are central to everything that happens in the home. Relationships between managers, staff and young people are consistent, caring and supportive, young people are safe and feel very safe. Staff are keen for young people to do well in their education or training. Monitoring of the home is detailed and ensures that the provision continues to develop. One requirement has been made in relation the home's policy on young people who go missing from care but this has little impact on the current service being provided.

## 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 |
|------|-------------|----------|
|------|-------------|----------|

|              |                                                                                                                                                                 |            |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 16<br>(2001) | ensure the home's absence without permission procedure has regard to the relevant local authority or police protocol on missing children. (Regulation 16(4)(b)) | 30/06/2012 |
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## Recommendations

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

### Outcomes for children and young people

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

Overall, young people are making good progress in comparison to their circumstances when they first arrived at the home. Young people have well-established relationships with their carers who know them well. The staff group is stable and constant, which has helped sustain young people's attachments. The Registered Manager and staff team use their extensive knowledge of young people's backgrounds and histories to provide practical and sensitive help. Staff want young people to do well in all areas of their lives and have a positive approach in support of this aim. Where young people continue to place themselves at risk, staff work in partnership with placing social workers and other professionals so care and support is matched to individual circumstances.

Young people's needs in relation to their well-being and health are being comprehensively met. Staff actively engage young people in a range of awareness raising activities and health education sessions. Young people are well informed about important matters that can affect their good health and emotional well-being. The Registered Manager ensures that there is a range of information available that promotes effective and preventive practices. Young people benefit from an informed, coordinated and planned approach to meeting their needs, which includes successful partnerships with other health services and helping agencies.

Young people are well supported through their education, vocational training and work experience placements. Staff have access to detailed information about individual needs and abilities and this helps them provide the right support for each young person. The staff team work in partnership with education and training providers and are enthusiastic about promoting young people's learning and development. Young people's education and learning arrangements are diverse. This is because staff have taken the time and energy to listen to each young person and shape arrangements according to individual aims and aspirations. Young people are making good progress from their starting points.

Young people's family contact arrangements are well known; these include necessary and agreed limits or restrictions on arrangements. Family visits and phone calls are well supported because staff understand the importance young people place on

these arrangements. Staff show a clear commitment to agreed arrangements even though contact may sometimes be challenging and difficult for young people to manage.

Young people participate in a range of leisure and recreational activities that help them enjoy their free time. Staff actively consult young people about what they would like to do. The home is well staffed so young people can do different things at the same time if they wish. Access to community facilities and services are good and this helps widen the choices for young people.

Young people learn about how to look after themselves in preparation for leaving care and adulthood. The home's approach is not only to help develop practical life skills but to build a young person's self-esteem and confidence. Staff carefully balance the need to ensure young people are safe against their need to move towards being more self-sufficient and independent.

### **Quality of care**

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

Young people receive very personalised care and support that matches their continuing needs. Staff know young people well, relationships are supportive and trusting. Young people and staff frequently talk about aspirations and future plans and this helps the home focus on where young people want to be in the future. The home's written information provides staff with key information about young people's identity, culture and other specific needs. This information is communicated successfully because staff treat young people with respect and understanding.

The Registered Manager pays particular attention to planning and coordinating young people's support to ensure that positive progress is achieved. Risks are assessed regularly and are reflected in written information that staff use to guide the way they work each day. As a consequence, staff are able to adapt and change the way they work quickly to ensure risks are managed effectively. The home is excellent at tailoring the service to ensure it carefully meets individual needs.

Young people are fully consulted about their day-to-day arrangements and the running of the home. The Registered Manager and staff have excellent systems in place to ensure young people can communicate their views and opinions about the care and support they receive. The Registered Manager meets with young people frequently to listen to what they have to say. The home is organised in a way that responds to young people positively and they receive regular feedback about their views and suggestions. Young people know how to complain if they are unhappy about something. They are listened to and complaints are resolved quickly and to young people's satisfaction.

The home's staff have access to an excellent range of information which enables them to learn about young people's needs. This includes comprehensively written plans that are updated on a regular basis. Staff complete daily and weekly records

which are then used to produce review reports to reflect the progress and developments of each young person. Young people are fully supported and encouraged to be involved in their review meetings to ensure their views are heard.

Key workers spend lots of time with individual young people to help them with matters that are important and key to their own safety and emotional well-being. The team advocate strongly on behalf young people to ensure they have access to the same opportunities that other young people have, for instance, access to the right schools and vocational training courses.

Young people are provided with living accommodation that is spacious, comfortable, clean and tidy. Good domestic routines are in place, which young people are involved in. Staff ensure that there are good routines in place that enable young people to access local shops and services to reduce the impact of the home being in a rural location.

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

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

Overall, young people are safe and feel safe in the home because the Registered Manager and staff team have a clear focus on potential and actual risks facing each individual. Staff are able to adjust and adapt their practices to ensure risks are managed and young people's welfare promoted. Staff know what to do if they are concerned about a young person. This is because they are trained in child protection procedures and have access to safeguarding policies that detail their role and responsibilities. One of these policies is currently being updated which relates to young people who go missing from care. The policy does not yet reflect the local police protocol for these circumstances but the Registered Manager knows to follow this guidance when young people are missing from care.

Staff know what to do if a young person is away from the home without permission and they use individual risk assessments to inform their practice and reporting procedures. Some young people who have had significant histories of being missing from care are at less risk now because staff have been successful at helping them change their behaviours. Where young people continue to go missing and are vulnerable to exploitation, the Registered Manager and staff team work with placing social workers and other agencies to plan and coordinate safeguarding responses. The Registered Manager attends multi-agency 'at risk' meetings to ensure information is shared with other professionals. During any missing from care episodes, the home's staff create a chronology of actions so they can review their responses and identify any further actions that may assist with the safe return of a young person.

The home has effective systems in place to monitor and maintain good standards of health and safety. This includes ensuring equipment and utilities are checked and serviced regularly, that fire prevention systems are in good working order and the home's environment is free from unnecessary hazards or risks. Young people live in a

home where their health and safety is fully protected.

Young people are encouraged to behave well and say staff are fair when it comes to helping them with their behaviour. They understand how to gain rewards and privileges, which are realistic and achievable. Staff provide practical support to young people who need help with aspects of their behaviour. Young people and staff live and work in a home where bullying behaviour is not tolerated. The Registered Manager provides clear guidance to staff that helps promote consistent boundaries and this approach is further supported by detailed behaviour management plans. Where young people's behaviour has challenged acceptable boundaries, the home's records reflect a proportionate response. This includes the use of physical restraint but this does not happen often and its use is very short in duration.

Young people's protection is further supported by safe recruitment, selection and vetting practices for all new staff. The service has a clearly defined system in place that ensures all necessary checks have been completed and are acceptable prior to any staff member starting work in the home.

## **Leadership and management**

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

Young people benefit from living in a home that is effectively managed. The staff team are organised and supported in a way that ensures the needs of young people are comprehensively met. Staff are very committed to the care of young people and the work of the home and these circumstances are as a result of strong and clear leadership from the Registered Manager. The service has well-established systems in place to monitor the operation of the home. These systems include regular visits from representatives of the organisation through to the Registered Manager's own monitoring activities. Information is clearly available to inform the service about how well young people's needs are being met.

The Registered Manager has a development plan in place and some of the actions have already been achieved. For instance, the staff team have strengthened their approach to providing key worker sessions for young people. Far more time and effort is now being placed on delivering specific sessions that match individual needs and circumstances. Young people are benefiting from a more targeted approach that is relevant to their current or changing needs.

The service provided by the home is accurately described in the Statement of Purpose and young people's guides. Young people are well informed about what to expect from the staff team and what is expected from them. The guides provide a good description of the home's commitment to promoting young people's rights.

Young people benefit from living in a home where the Registered Manager and staff team are committed to shaping the service that consistently meets individual need. The quality and detail of each young person's plan of care supports this commitment. Staff are led by a conscientious Registered Manager who promotes young people's

diverse needs as being important. As a consequence of this, staff have an excellent knowledge and awareness of how to work with each young person.

The number of staff on duty is always enough to meet the needs young people which supports their welfare, protection and daily plans. There is an induction, training and support programme that provides staff with the skills and knowledge to comprehensively help young people through their placement. The staff team are either qualified to a level 3 qualification or are working towards this. Managers evaluate performance through a system of supervision and appraisal so staff know how well they are working with young people.

Young people's case files are kept securely and contain an appropriate range of information about their history and progress. The Registered Manager has well-established systems in place to ensure that relevant agencies are notified about any significant events that occur in the home. These systems are part of the wider administration of the home and are very well organised.

## 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* (March 2011) and the evaluation schedule for children's homes.