

Inspection report for children's home

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| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC037762       |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 11 August 2010 |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Liz Driver     |
| <b>Type of Inspection</b>      | Key            |

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|--------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 10 March 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 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 registered children's home for up to seven young people between the ages of 12 and 17 years. The home is owned by a local city council. It is a purpose built, two-storey building that opened in August 2001. The accommodation is spacious, well-maintained and provides appropriate accommodation for the young people living there. The home is located in its own grounds with parking at the front and an enclosed garden at the back. The home is in a busy residential area and there is easy access by public transport to the city.

### **Summary**

This was an unannounced key inspection. It was brought forward in response to a regulation 33 report that identified some concerns around bullying, behaviour management and admission processes. All concerns have been addressed at this inspection.

On the day of inspection five of the seven young people accommodated were out on a day trip and the two young people at the setting were not willing to be involved in the inspection process. One young person did briefly talk with the inspector.

The home provides good care to young people who require emergency and short to medium term placements, however the use of the emergency bed needs to be correctly reflected in the homes Statement of Purpose. Young people have their needs assessed by a competent and confident staff group who have the skills to build good relationships with challenging young people. The lack of pathway plans and information on admission has caused some difficulties for staff being able to plan for responses to challenging behaviours and for young people leaving care. Staff training is good with some staff supervisions having slipped recently due to staff sickness

Young people are helped to keep themselves safe and to understand the risks involved in some of their chosen behaviour. Good systems ensure their physical and emotional health needs are met. Consents for medical treatment are in place, however not for the administration of non prescribed medicines. There are good systems for ensuring the safety of the young people and staff in the home. There remains one outstanding recommendation from the last fire service inspection; repair of an emergency light.

The accommodation is, in general, well maintained but subject to damage from young people at times. The home provides areas for privacy as well as communal living.

There is close monitoring of the home by the regulation 33 visitor and the registered manager.

Overall the setting provides a good standard of care with some aspects being satisfactory.

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 setting was asked to ensure that all fire call points are tested at suitable intervals. Records show that this has been addressed. The setting was also asked to

ensure the physical intervention log had individually numbered pages. This has also been addressed.

## **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Young people are encouraged to have a healthy and balanced diet where their individual food preferences are taken into account. There is choice at all meals and menus show that there is a varied diet with plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables. Young people are able to get involved in shopping and cooking, although current young people do not wish to. The home has a designated cook who works Monday to Friday and provides homely cooking for the young people to enjoy. The home's current food budget is satisfactory.

On admission all young people are subject to a comprehensive health assessment undertaken by the local authority's looked after children's nurse. Written consent for medical treatment is obtained from all appropriate parties. From the information obtained, a health plan is developed to address any areas of identified need. Staff within the home ensure that young people have access to the necessary services and will arrange appointments and provide transport as required. Staff monitor the health and well-being of each young person on an on-going basis. Young people receive information from staff on a range of health related topics including, smoking, substance misuse, personal relationships and sexual health. Current young people do not require assistance with personal care apart from some encouragement relating to personal hygiene.

The medication administration arrangements in the home are, in general, good. The medication is kept in an appropriately locked cupboard and the records of administration of medication are accurate and up to date. Staff have received training in medication administration and are aware of the health needs of each young person. A comprehensive risk assessment is carried out prior to any young person being granted permission to self-medicate. Current consents obtained do not cover the administration of appropriate non prescribed medication although they do cover emergency treatment. A recent regulation 33 report found medication left out in the office, and visible to young people. The manager stated this was a one off incident. All medicines were safely and securely locked away during this inspection.

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

The provision is good.

Staff respect young people's privacy and seek permission by knocking before entering their rooms. There is a policy for room searches and all young people are made aware of it on admission. Room searches are only undertaken if it is felt a young person is putting themselves at risk. Records show very low numbers of room searches to have taken place. Shared facilities such as toilets and bathrooms all have appropriate locks. Staff discuss confidential information with young people in private and information relating to each young person is stored in an appropriately locked facility. Young people have access to a phone.

The home has a robust complaints procedure that staff and young people are very well informed of. Staff ensure young people are aware of their rights and encourage them to take up formal complaints where they remain unhappy with the action taken. Most concerns are resolved by the Registered Manager before they become complaints. The staff are careful to write accurate records of any incidents or sanctions given and give young people the opportunity to comment on what is written. This helps young people feel they are listened to and their concerns taken

seriously. Current young people challenge staff on an ongoing basis and are confident in voicing their views and opinions. There have been no external complaints since the last inspection.

The home operates with an experienced staff team who are aware of the need to provide a safe and caring environment for the young people. The local procedures for safeguarding children are thorough and training is provided to all staff. There are a number of policies directly related to child protection and the reporting of any issues relating to abuse. Young people at the home sometimes choose to put themselves at risk by their behaviour. The staff do all they can to discourage this and ensure the young person is aware of the dangers. Good communication with the local police helps protect young people from some of the risks they take.

The home operates a policy of zero tolerance toward bullying and all young people are made aware of it on admission. There is a good anti-bullying policy and risk assessments highlight any known problems. Staff actively discourage bullying and remove rewards from young people who are seen to behave in a bullying manner. All reports of bullying are taken seriously and investigated by staff. Young people involved in bullying are supported in resolving their difficulties. Key-worker sessions and individual counselling are used to try and minimise this behaviour. The last regulation 33 report commented on young people singling out other young people who are subject to bullying. This has been addressed by the manager who has increased staffing levels with staff working hard to resolve it.

The home has a policy and procedure for reporting young people who are absent without authority. There is an expectation that all young people will inform staff where they are going. Return times are negotiated with staff before they leave. Staff determine return times with reference to risk assessments. If a young person encounters any difficulties in making the agreed time, they are expected to contact the home. Young people are made aware that failure to return or contact the home could be putting themselves at risk and result in them being reported missing. All incidents of young people absconding are recorded and the action taken on their return noted.

It is made clear to young people what is expected of them in relation to behaviour. The home has an established system for the recording and reporting of accidents and incidents. All serious incidents are reported internally within the department and externally to appropriate authorities such as Ofsted. While staff receive physical intervention training to help manage incidents of challenging behaviour, interventions are rarely used. If an incident of physical intervention occurs staff are expected to record the time, place, method of restraint and context in which it took place. The home uses a rewards system where points are given for a range of behaviours, including settling well at night, going to school and not getting involved in other young people's disruptive behaviour. The rewards can be exchanged for extra pocket money or treats. Young people's views about the sanctions given are included in the records. These are monitored by the manager and challenged if felt to be inappropriate.

There are good systems to ensure the safety of young people in the home. These include regular testing of fire alarms and equipment, fire drills, checking visitor's identity and surveillance of the grounds. Maintenance is good with all repairs being dealt with in acceptable time scale. There remains one outstanding recommendation made at the last fire and rescue service inspection carried out in November 2009; repair of an emergency light.

The council has a recruitment process managed centrally. The recruitment procedures ensure correct checks are made prior to any staff member starting work with young people. The personnel records, held at the central office, will be inspected following this inspection. Any issues resulting from this visit will be addressed directly with the council.

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

The provision is good.

Young people's individual needs are assessed and care plans show how these needs will be met. Each care plan identifies the work needed with the young people and who will undertake the work. The home provides short term care and therefore cares for a continually changing group of young people. Staff are good at building relationships with young people and quickly identify individual goals and aspirations. Each young person is allocated both a key and co-worker. Key-workers and co-workers meet at least twice monthly with the young people with whom they are assigned to discuss all aspects of their lives within the home. Key-workers maintain contact with the young people's social workers and if appropriate, family members.

Education is promoted by the home and staff make every effort to ensure that young people access appropriate education and training. Staff do all they can to ensure the young people attend by providing transport, the correct clothing and rewarding attendance. Some young people do not see education as a priority and have little interest in educational achievement.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

The home provides one of the main placement options for young people in the city who need to be cared for in an emergency. Sometimes staff have to care for young people without the benefit of a full assessment or placement plan. The lack of information has had an impact on the young people and staff who cannot prepare for and ensure appropriate responses to young people. In the absence of appropriate information, staff are skilled at gathering available information quickly and at assessing the immediate needs of the young person. Where the placement has been planned there is good assessment material available. The manager has the opportunity to consider how the placement will affect the other young people in the home.

Staff attend the looked after children reviews and have frequent discussions with the young people's social workers. All reviews are well documented and detail the progress made by the young people.

Young people are encouraged to maintain constructive contact with their families, friends and other people who play a significant role in their lives. There is clear guidance for staff on the type and frequency each of the young people can have with their parents, relatives and friends. Young people can maintain contact via visits and the phone. Any restrictions regarding contact are made clear.

Young people are welcomed to the home sensitively, although in many cases there is not enough notice to arrange a planned introduction. The home's Statement of Purpose identifies one emergency bed that is to be used for three days. Since the last inspection and currently, this has been exceeded. Welcome packs are provided that give the young people a good picture of how the home runs and includes useful advice and contact numbers. The young people have their own rooms and are encouraged to personalise them with their own possessions. When

young people leave the home it is well planned and staff are able to offer ongoing support if identified.

## **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people moving into independence are generally involved in a pathway plan. They usually have access to a period of training to manage alone before moving out. Not all current young people over the age of 16 have a formal leaving care plan/ pathway plan in place. The home aims to provide young people with experiences that will prepare them for adulthood such as using public transport and managing their money. The current group of young people choose to have little involvement in shopping and cooking, but staff confirm that previous residents have done so effectively.

The home is a modern purpose built property situated on a quiet site. It has parking to the front and a well kept enclosed garden to the rear. Its location, design and size are in keeping with its purpose and function. The home has ground floor facilities to accommodate one young person with mobility difficulties. The building is in constant use and as a consequence is subject to a lot of wear and tear. Staff continually strive to ensure that maintenance issues are addressed promptly and that the fabric and décor of the building is maintained at a good standard. Communal areas are bright, appropriately furnished and welcoming. The home was observed to be clean and tidy and is subject to regular health and safety risk assessments.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The home is very young person orientated and is good at assessing and meeting individual needs. Staff are very keen to promote individuality and will support young people to follow their own goals. The staff are careful to ensure they challenge any discriminatory behaviour and encourage young people to appreciate each other's differences. The home celebrates a range of special occasions and dates including those of other cultures. The staff say they have learnt a lot from caring for unaccompanied asylum seeking children in the past.

The home has a Statement of Purpose that reflects its aims, objectives and target population, apart from the use of the emergency bed, as commented on under Economic Wellbeing in this report. A young persons' guide has also been developed, in an appropriate format that provides an overview of life within the home.

The staff have many years combined service of caring for young people in residential care. They are reflective in their practice and are encouraged to challenge each other. Roles and responsibilities are well known and the shifts are organised effectively. The Registered Manager is experienced and generally additional to the staff on duty. There are adequate staff to meet the needs of the young people in placement and the manager is responsive to the changing needs of the group. Recently staffing has been increased in response to some bullying issues. The council provides a good range of training opportunities to its staff and ensures the basic necessary training, such as child protection, is refreshed regularly. Staff are supported to develop their knowledge and skills on a continual basis and can request specialist training if it is work related. Recently some staff supervisions have slipped due to staff sickness. The gender balance

amongst staff is good and there is careful consideration of the best way of using individual strengths to promote the best care to young people.

The council has a well developed monitoring process, including unannounced regulation 33 visits. The reports provided are thorough and pick up any issues of concern. This unannounced inspection was brought forward in response to concerns raised in the last regulation 33 report received. The current reports do not refer to Ofsted but a previously named regulatory body.

Young people's needs, development and progress are recorded to reflect their individuality. Individual files and records are well maintained, up to date and workable. The files are thorough and easy to read and provide a good picture of each young person and their needs.

## 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       |
|----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| 2        | ensure, before providing accommodation for a child, a written placement plan is prepared in consultation with the child's placing authority (Regulation 12)                                                                | 31 August 2010 |
| 26       | make provision for evacuation in the event of fire; by ensuring the one outstanding recommendation made at the last fire and rescue service inspection is actioned. This relates to the emergency lighting (Regulation 32) | 31 August 2010 |
| 1        | ensure the Statement of Purpose consists of matters listed in schedule 1; specifically in relation to the correct use of an emergency bed. (Regulation 4 (1) schedule 1 (9))                                               | 31 August 2010 |

### Recommendations

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

- obtain and retain on file prior written permission from a person with parental responsibility for each child, for the administration of first aid and appropriate non prescribed medication (NMS 13.4)
- ensure staff receive at least one and a half hours one-to-one supervision from a senior member of staff each month (NMS 28.2)
- ensure young people have formal leaving care plans/ pathway plans in place in accordance with times scales stated in the homes policy (NMS 6)
- ensure regulation 33 reports identify Ofsted as the correct regulatory body. (NMS 32)