

## Inspection report for children's home

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| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC039897        |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 06/11/2012      |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Pete Hylton     |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | Full            |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>       | Children's home |

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| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 17/01/2012 |
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## Service information

### Brief description of the service

This local authority owned children's home can accommodate up to four young people.

### 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**.

Highly personalised care supports young people in making excellent progress in all areas of their lives. All young people are regularly attending school and other appropriate educational opportunities. From their starting points, young people make significant improvements to their academic, social and emotional progress. This is underpinned by a highly stable, caring and nurturing staff team. Relationships between staff and young people are built on a culture of mutual respect and young people enjoy living in an exceptionally well-presented home.

Young people have exceptionally positive views about the home and the staff who care for them. Complaints from young people are rare and where they do occur, are quickly resolved. Effective consultation ensures that young people are enabled to share their views, wishes and concerns. A young person commented, 'staff treat us like adults, they treat us with respect and listen to us. They are really caring and make changes for us if we want them.'

Young people are safe and feel safe. A new model of behaviour support has resulted in fewer sanctions being given. The frequency of young people going missing has reduced. The safety of young people is further enhanced by a safe environment that protects them from harm. However, the use of electronic monitoring devices is not governed by a specific policy in the home. This does not negatively affect the outcomes for young people.

The leadership and management of the home is excellent. The home continues to make improvements and the Registered Manager leads a highly motivated staff

team. Highly effective monitoring systems ensure that the quality of care is of a high standard and these systems also drive improved outcomes for young people.

## Areas for improvement

### Recommendations

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

- ensure that where electronic monitoring devices are used to monitor children, there is a written policy that sets out how they should be used, how they promote the welfare of children, how children will be informed of their use, how legitimate privacy of children will be protected and how children will be protected from potential abuse of such measures. (NMS 10.5)

### Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make excellent progress at the home. All young people are engaged in appropriate educational activities and make excellent progress in relation to their starting points. For example, where young people have previously been without a school place or are not regularly attending education, they are now doing so and with high levels of success and attainment. This can be attributed to young people being encouraged and feeling able, to reach their full potential.

Staff regularly seek the views of young people. This ensures that they are able to openly discuss their concerns, anxieties and worries. Young people feel a strong sense of security and place great trust in the staff team. As a result, young people develop a positive self view and emotional resilience. A young person commented, 'staff help me with my feelings, we talk about issues that bother me, things that I am worried about.'

A structured independence program enables young people to monitor their own progress and recognise their achievements. This ensures that young people are able to develop their independence skills, with staff support where necessary, and are prepared for adulthood and independence. Young people are encouraged to take responsibility, in line with their abilities, for their own lives. For example, young people plan and prepare meals, maintain their own finances and complete their own laundry tasks. As a result, young people have developed key skills in managing their behaviour, forming appropriate social attachments and developing their knowledge of safe lifestyles. Young people enjoy regular meetings with visiting health professionals at the home. These meetings further enhance their knowledge and understanding about substance misuse, risks of smoking, contraception and sexual health, among other health issues.

Young people enjoy plentiful, varied and purposeful activities in the home and the

wider community. They make excellent progress in developing their social skills and enjoy spending quality time with staff, their peers and the wider community. An open and highly inclusive atmosphere means that young people feel able to invite their friends to the home. As a result, young people develop and sustain attachments with their peers and build strong social networks.

## Quality of care

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

A highly skilled, knowledgeable and committed staff team provide exceptional care to young people. The individual and collective needs of young people are central to how the home operates. An open, warm and nurturing culture supports young people in making considerable progress across all areas of their lives.

Excellent relationships between the home, parents, carers and external agencies mean that progress and concerns are shared and acted upon where necessary. Where young people face difficulties, for example in educational settings, the staff team ensure that they are proactive in establishing support and resolving any barriers to progress. Avoidable delays in setting up meetings are resolved by a diligent staff team who effectively challenge partner agencies. This ensures that the home promotes the needs of young people at all times and these needs are at the centre of staff practice

Complaints from young people are rare and where they do occur, are sensitively managed and thoroughly investigated. The organisation has a dedicated complaints officer who meets with young people, where necessary, and resolves any concerns. The Registered Manager ensures that the staff team model an open and inclusive atmosphere in the home. This enables young people to feel that their views and concerns will be listened to, respected and acted upon. Effective staff support is enhanced by the provision of contact details for variety of age appropriate support services. Young people are able to make contact with these services, using a freely available telephone, if they so wish.

Regular house meetings seek the views of young people and provide an open forum to discuss all aspects of life in the home. These meetings enable young people to state their views and preferences and changes are made as a result. For example, young people have chosen the new garden furniture and ornaments and new items for their bedrooms. As a result, young people feel listened to and that their opinions are valued. This is further underpinned by highly effective key working sessions that address individual issues with young people and seek to further explore the opinions and views of young people. A young person's relative commented, 'I'm 100% happy with the home and I cannot praise them enough.'

The views and wishes of young people are embedded into highly individualised care plans. Young people are cared for in line with their preferences and cultural needs. A sensitive and knowledgeable staff team are highly effective in supporting young people with their personal care needs. For example, where young people request

specialist hair and beauty treatments, these are sourced and provided. Young people feel that the staff team treat them both as individuals and as young adults. A young person commented, 'staff treat us with respect.'

The health needs of young people are actively promoted. The home has excellent links with local health and advisory services and professionals regularly visit the home. This results in young people forming positive relationships with support services and enables them to seek professional support for their needs.

Food provided for young people is varied, healthy and nutritious. The menu planning respects young people's cultural and dietary needs. Young people enjoy living in a home that is exceptionally well presented, clean and comfortable. Photographs of young people are on display around the home and this further enhances the warm, homely feel. The garden has been improved through the purchase of colourful decorations and new seating enables young people to relax and spend time outside. A young person commented, 'It is like a normal, everyday home'. Bedrooms are personalised to the tastes of young people and this further enables them to express and maintain their individuality.

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

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

Young people are safe and feel safe at the home. A conscientious staff team are highly vigilant to the needs of young people and promote a safe environment at all times. Young people are fully enabled to discuss their behaviour and excellent relationships with staff underpin a culture of openness, honesty and respect. The Registered Manager commented, 'we enable the young people to develop skills to keep themselves safe.'

The Registered Manager ensures that the home is up to date with all required checks and any defects are swiftly reported and appropriately resolved. The risk of fire is well managed and regular evacuation practices, including evening time drills, ensure that all young people and staff are practiced in leaving the building safely and quickly. Young people have a strong sense of safety and security at the home and this is further enhanced through the use of electronic measures. Monitoring alarms alert staff to young people leaving their rooms at night. Although all young people, parents, carers and social workers are aware of the use of these measures, there is no policy governing their use. A recommendation has therefore been made. However, the outcomes for young people are not adversely affected by this shortfall.

There have been no occasions of restraint since the last inspection and this can be attributed to highly effective behaviour support. The staff team, including all ancillary staff, have been trained in a model of working that is aligned to the theory of social learning. This has empowered all staff with an effective set of skills and techniques in managing young people's behaviour. Sanctions given to young people have dramatically reduced. The use of positive recognition and a bespoke rewards system, designed by the young people, ensures that behaviour in the home is positive. This

results in a safe environment where young people behave in a socially acceptable manner.

Highly detailed care planning and risk assessment ensures that the vulnerabilities of young people are carefully recorded and monitored. Young people with offending history prior to living at the home no longer engage in dangerous or risk taking behaviours. The frequency of young people going missing from the home has reduced. A young person commented, 'I don't run off now' and a social worker commented, 'Since being at the home, there has been no episodes of missing and this is a massive improvement.' Young people are supported in developing and maintaining safe behaviours and consequentially, are safe at the home. As a result of living at the home, young people are safer and develop and maintain safe behaviours.

Serious incidents are appropriately notified to the relevant professionals and well managed by the staff. The home works closely with the local safeguarding team, police and other agencies to ensure that concerns about young people's welfare are identified, assessed and well managed. The Registered Manager ensures that young people who are at risk of harm are supported and that their safety and well-being is promoted at all times. Young people are able to build appropriate and trusting attachments with a highly stable staff team. The quality of the staff team is effectively underpinned by rigorous safe recruitment practices. All staff are subjected to appropriate checks and vetting prior to employment. This ensures that young people are protected from contact with adults who may pose a risk to them.

## **Leadership and management**

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

No requirements or recommendations were made at the last inspection in January 2012. However, an experienced, highly effective and ambitious Registered Manager is committed to further improving the service given to young people. The developmental needs of staff are very regularly reviewed and met through the provision of high quality and effective training. The staff team are up-to-date, confident, capable and highly skilled in their work. As a result, the staff team are fully able to meet the needs of young people in the home.

Consultation with the organisation's training officers has identified further staff training and development areas. This has enriched the quality of care for young people. For example, senior staff have completed additional training in managing the performance of team members and now feel empowered to support staff in improving their practice. Furthermore, communication methods used in the home have improved as a result of an analysis of the existing systems. A revised system for staff changeover discussions ensures that young people benefit from consistent care and boundaries at all times. This, in turn, ensures that young people know what is expected of them and further aids their social and emotional development.

Effective relationships with safeguarding agencies ensure that issues and concerns

are well communicated and resolved. This ensures that young people are safe at all times and their safety is at the forefront of staff practice. Young people's progress is accurately recorded and the staff team ensure that information is appropriately shared with parents, carers and social workers. All records are up to date and securely stored. A social worker commented, 'All records are up to date, completed on time and tell me what is happening.' An education provider commented in relation to the staff, 'They are very open, willing to discuss issues or concerns.'

The Registered Manager empowers the staff team to make decisions and take action to address any shortfalls. Regular and extremely high quality supervision ensures that staff discuss their practice, ideas for improvement and feel highly motivated in their work. A well-trained and highly capable staff team are focused on young people. Staff share the Registered Manager's vision and passion for further improving the home.

The home's development plan clearly lists the areas for improving the home and comprehensively evaluates the strengths and weaknesses. Highly effective quality assurance systems are used in the home. All records are regularly checked and audited by the senior team and where shortfalls are identified, they are swiftly and robustly resolved. Young people benefit from a home that models a culture of continuous improvement and strives to provide exceptional care to young people at all times. The Registered Manager's own quality checking is effectively underpinned by similarly effective monitoring from the organisation. Regular visits to the home evaluate the quality of care, the views and experiences of young people and identify areas for further improvement. This enables the home to monitor its activities and make improvements where necessary.

## 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.