

## Inspection report for children's home

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| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC042147                   |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 04/10/2011                 |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Paul Taylor / Janet Hunnam |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | Full                       |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>       | Children's home            |

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| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 17/03/2011 |
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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 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.

### The inspection judgements and what they mean

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

**Good:** a service that exceeds minimum requirements

**Satisfactory:** a service that only meets minimum requirements

**Inadequate:** a service that does not meet minimum requirements

## Service information

### Brief description of the service

The home is run by a private organisation. It is registered to accommodate up to six young people of either gender who have emotional and behavioural difficulties and who are unable, for the moment, to live in a family setting. The home aims to support young people return to family, move to foster carers or to move on to independent accommodation.

### Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be **good**.

This is an effective service that positively impacts on the young people's lives. The young people receive good quality care and effective support from a stable and experienced care team. Young people make progress in all areas of their life and social skills, which increases their confidence, self-esteem and self-control.

Young people are kept safe and feel safe as a result of both the trust they have in the staff and the confidence that they have to express any feeling of dissatisfaction. Robust formal systems of safeguarding underpin day-to-day safe care practices.

The staff work very hard to assist young people in attending education and offer opportunities for them to take part in enriching and stimulating activities and past times.

While the manager provides very good support to the staff team, some records are not consistently monitored and the electronic recording system is not totally reliable. Regular formal supervision is not routinely embedded in practice and some new members of staff do not receive a formal induction process. The manager is aware of the shortfalls in the home but has yet to write an action plan to address these.

These shortfalls have not on this occasion compromised the good quality of care provided to the young people, but they undermine the efficient monitoring and oversight of the home.

### Areas for improvementStatutory 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 |
|------|-------------|----------|
|------|-------------|----------|

|               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |            |
|---------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 4<br>(2001)   | ensure that the Statement of Purpose includes all the matters as listed in Schedule 1 (Regulation 4)                                                                                                                                                     | 30/11/2011 |
| 17B<br>(2001) | ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of discipline in the home, a written record is made in a volume kept for this purpose which shall include all the matters required (Regulation 17 B (3) ( a - i ) )                                | 28/10/2011 |
| 33<br>(2001)  | ensure that the person carrying out the visit under Regulation 33 shall interview, with their consent and in private, such children accommodated there in order to form an opinion of the standard of care provided in the home (Regulation 33 (4) (a) ) | 28/10/2011 |
| 34<br>(2001)  | ensure that the registered person shall establish and maintain a system for monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 and improving the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 34 (a) and (b) )                                            | 28/10/2011 |

## Recommendations

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

- ensure new staff undertake the Children's Workforce Development Council's induction standards within seven working days of starting their employment and being completed within six months (NMS 18.3)
- ensure that staff have access to support and advice, and are provided with regular supervision by appropriately qualified and experienced staff (NMS 19.4)
- ensure there is a system in place to monitor the quality and adequacy of record keeping and take action when needed (NMS 22.1)
- ensure that a record is kept which includes details of the action taken, and the outcome of any action or investigation, following a notifiable event. ( NMS 24.2 )

## Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make good progress in the home. They gain confidence to express their views and learn interpersonal skills to help them develop relationships. Supportive relationships based on respect enable young people to develop their self-esteem and confidence.

Young people benefit from very well planned health care. They receive specialist services, which include access to psychological and psychiatric assistance, if they need it. They are offered routine medical appointments to opticians, dentists and doctors. Any specific needs are identified in their health plans and the system to

administer medication ensures that the young people receive medication when they need it. Healthy living is encouraged by offering a balanced and healthy diet and by encouraging exercise. The approach operated by the home ensures that young people have good access to advice and medical intervention if they need it.

Young people receive good support which enables them, for the most part, to attend their educational settings. They benefit from living in a home where the value of education is promoted. Progress has been good especially when taking into consideration their starting points. Young people have, as a result, been able to take and pass examinations appropriate to their abilities.

Young people are encouraged and enabled to take part in activities in the community, such as badminton, army cadets and swimming. This enables them to experience enriching activities which also give them a chance to be a positive part of their community.

Young people are enabled to maintain contacts with their families and friends. The approach means that they can continue to maintain meaningful relationships with those that are important to them. Members of staff will also escort young people during contact visits if it is felt that they need this support.

Young people receive well thought out support to develop their independent living skills. Individual programmes are put in place which encourage the young people to develop their living and independence skills at a pace they can handle and at a level commensurate with their understanding. This enables young people to be well prepared to live independently if that is the plan for them.

## **Quality of care**

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

Young people enjoy positive and constructive relationships with staff. 'My key worker is the best' was a comment made by one young person. Staff form and maintain trusting relationships with young people that are resilient and enduring. 'I could never trust anyone before, but now I can' was another comment from a young person.

Young people express their views and wishes openly in day-to-day contact as well as more formally in house meetings and key work sessions. This approach ensures that young people are able to influence decisions relating to their daily lives, such as menus and activity planning. Young people are enabled to understand why they sometimes cannot do certain things, such as prohibited contacts with some individuals or activities which may be too expensive or risky. This ensures that they feel listened to and that their views are taken seriously.

Young people are aware of how to make a complaint to the home. They are also aware that there are external agencies and organisations they can approach if they do not want to complain to anyone in the home. There have been no formal

complaints made by young people since the last inspection.

Young people benefit from comprehensive care planning. Placement plans demonstrate that each young person's individual needs are assessed and addressed. Plans are regularly discussed with the young person in order that they may make comments or their express views. The process enables young people to feel that they are taking an active part in decisions affecting their lives and are working to known goals.

Young people are supported by good healthcare planning and are registered promptly with core health services which include the general practitioner, dentist and optician. Young people benefit from regular treatments as well as more specialised interventions, such as counselling, psychologists or drug awareness, if these are needed. Good records are maintained of health appointments and treatments. These ensure that the young people receive treatment and medication they need and have access to their health histories as their lives develop.

All young people in the home are receiving good support to attend school or college, although progress is varied in some cases. In the majority of cases, outcomes for young people have been very good with attendance exceeding previous achievements. Staff work very hard and liaise closely with educational settings. They provide support to the young people in their placement if necessary and this approach enables them to achieve progress which some of them have never experienced before.

Young people are given the opportunity to engage in activities and hobbies and to join community based clubs, such as army cadets. This provides young people, not only with the opportunity to engage in enriching pastimes, but also supports their integration in to the wider community.

Young people benefit from living in a comfortable environment which is maintained to a good standard. Young people are encouraged to personalise their rooms so that they feel they have ownership and an investment in where they live.

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

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

Young people report that they feel safe and protected in the home. They report that they are confident to express any concerns to the staff.

If young people become absent or missing from the home, staff take prompt actions to address this. Formal protocols are followed for searching, reporting and collecting the young person if needed. These procedures are effective in safeguarding and protecting the young people. The strategies used to manage any issues related to young people going missing have been very effective for some of the young people, with periods of being missing or absent without permission significantly reduced.

Staff actively encourage and promote positive behaviour. Young people are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and how to develop strategies to deal with challenging situations. Restraint is rarely used. Records relating to restraint are clear and young people are able to voice their opinions about the incident after the event.

Sanctions are imposed if behaviour is negative. Records of sanctions are not always thorough and on occasion a sanction has been imposed but not recorded in the sanctions log. The effectiveness of sanctions has not been measured or assessed consistently or effectively. However, young people report that they are fairly treated and that sanctions are also fair.

All members of staff are subject to a rigorous recruitment process which ensures that all necessary checks have been carried out before they work in the home. This ensures that only adults who have been assessed as being appropriate to work with young people are employed.

The environment in the home is physically safe and appropriately secure for the young people who live there. Health and safety and fire safety are robustly maintained and regular review and assessment of the safety of the environment takes place.

Risk assessments of the premises, activities and behaviours of the young people address how to ensure that young people are kept as safe as possible.

## **Leadership and management**

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

The home is managed to a satisfactory standard. The manager works hard to ensure that members of staff are supported well so that they can provide good care to the young people.

The home has a Statement of Purpose which describes what it intends to achieve. This is managed in practice, the home providing a good standard of care to the young people and meeting the aims it sets out in the Statement of Purpose. Details of members of staff and the registered manager in the document, are however, not up to date. Young people have a hand book which accurately describes what life is like in the home, the rules and routines and agencies to whom they can approach for support, advice or to help with complaints.

Young people are clear as to what they hope to achieve by living in the home and how they feel they can benefit from being there. Placing social workers are very positive about the service the home provides, the good level of communication achieved and the positive outcomes for the young people.

While recommendations and requirements from previous inspections are addressed, there are lapses in monitoring of some key records, such as sanctions and incident

reports. The manager monitors most of the key records, such as complaints and restraints, but does not do this consistently. This has resulted in some shortfalls not being identified, such as missing records of sanctions. Additionally the home has been using an electronic recording system, and some of the records have gone missing from the system. For example, while there was written evidence that two incidents had occurred in the home, the reports could not be found on the computer system. The manager was aware of the incidents and so the young people's safety was not compromised. This does not reflect well on the security and accuracy of records kept.

Regular visits take place by an external manager and reports are written to assess the level of care being provided. However, the reports do not include comments made by young people or record if they have been given an opportunity to meet the monitoring visitor. This means that young people's opinions are not included in the reports.

The manager is very aware of the weaknesses and gaps in the service and has clear ideas on how to address these. However, there is no written development plan in place to evidence how the shortfalls will be rectified.

The home has a stable and committed staff team who have the experience and training to provide good levels of care and support to the young people. Members of staff have their performance appraised on an annual basis to ensure that their practice is up to date and to ascertain what their training needs are. However, a recent appointment to the staff team, although experienced in working with young people, has not received a formal structured induction. Due to his previous recent knowledge and experience, this had not compromised his effectiveness, especially with regards to maintaining young people's safety. However, he had not been offered the opportunity for a clear and structured induction into the organisation's policies and procedures.

Members of staff are unanimous in their praise of the support given to them by their manager. She shows a high level of commitment in ensuring that the staff are guided and enabled to provide a good standard of care. Formal structured supervision, however, is not provided on a consistent level. This compromises records of how any specific issues have been addressed on a formal basis.

The home has a very good and efficient system of informing relevant agencies of any specific events as required by legislation. However, the record of how the event was subsequently addressed and resolved is not always clearly evidenced.

The majority of records are clear and securely stored, although problems with the electronic monitoring system have undermined this process on occasions. The manager and responsible individual have acknowledged this problem and are exploring ways of addressing it.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.

