

## Inspection report for children's home

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| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC044224        |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 06/12/2011      |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Stella Lovie    |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | Full            |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>       | Children's home |

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| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 04/02/2011 |
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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

This home offers care and accommodation for young people who have severe learning disabilities. The home is registered to care for young people of both genders, however, at the time of this inspection males occupied all four places. The premises are suitably adapted to support their needs.

The private organisation responsible also operates an independent 52 week school. It is co-educational and caters for pupils and students from the age of seven to 19-years-old.

### Overall effectiveness

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

The home provides a good level of care that significantly improves the quality of life for the young people and their families. Staff work effectively to promote personal growth and development of each young person. This is achieved through highly supportive relationships between staff and young people. It is further assisted by personalised and carefully reviewed care planning.

The home cares for highly vulnerable young people with severe learning disabilities and autism who have extremely limited means of communication. Young people have access to a wide range of augmented communication that helps them to express their wishes and feelings. Staff sensitively attribute meaning to behaviours that the young people exhibit in order to ascertain their views. Additionally, some of the young people have significant contact with family who are able to advocate on their behalf. However, not all the young people have that family support and are limited in their ability to have their voices heard independently. This means that some of the young people may not be able to make a complaint easily if they wished to do so.

The high staffing ratios and dedicated teams facilitate a safe environment for these young people. Young people are enabled to enjoy safely a wide range of activities in the community. This access to new experiences helps the young people to mature and develop greater confidence.

Given the very high levels of restraint, staff need to keep more accurate and clear records of all physical interventions. The home's guidance and Statement of Purpose on the criteria for undertaking a physical intervention is not congruent with The Children's Homes Regulations 2001. This could mean that some young people have been restrained for reasons of compliance with consequent adverse effects on trust and promotion of positive behaviour. However, no such incidences are evident in the home's records.

The staff are skilled and committed to providing a high quality of care. However, not all staff have reached, or are in the process of reaching, the minimum required level of qualification. Also staff are not fully trained in some of the sensory therapies that they undertake in the home. Additionally, while bullying is not a current issue in this home, young people's safety and well-being would be improved if staff were fully trained in the proactive recognition of, and intervention in, bullying.

However, the shortfalls above are balanced by the fact that the young people are making considerable personal achievements within their capabilities because of the very personalised and creative care practice. The whole staff team ensure that the young people are at the centre of all they do. There is consistently effective communication between parents and staff, and between the home and the school. This promotes consistency of care and helps the young people feel secure. There are robust safe recruitment processes and good staff support which safeguards the welfare of the young people. There are effective quality assurance processes which mean that the young people's care is monitored rigorously, and adaptations to plans are made as needed.

## 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   |
|---------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 5<br>(2001)   | shall keep under review and, where appropriate, revise the Statement of Purpose, notify the HMCI of any such revision within 28 days; and if the children's guide is revised, supply a copy to each child accommodated in the home (Regulation 5 (a) (b) (c))                                                                          | 03/01/2012 |
| 17A<br>(2001) | ensure that a measure of restraint may only be used on a child accommodated in a children's home for the purpose of preventing injury to any person (including the child who is being restrained); preventing serious damage to the property of any person (including the child who is being restrained). (Regulation 17A (1) (a) (b)) | 06/03/2012 |

### Recommendations

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

- ensure that children have access to independent advice and support from adults which is appropriate to their age and understanding (NMS 1.5)

- ensure that staff in the home are trained to recognise and deal with any indications or incidents of bullying (NMS 3.12)
- ensure that staff involved in delivering therapeutic interventions have appropriate training and expertise (NMS 6.10)
- ensure that all existing care staff have attained a minimum level 3 qualification. All new staff engaged from the commencement of the national minimum standards (in April 2011) are to hold the level 3 Children and Young People's Workforce Diploma which must include mandatory social care units; or be working towards the Diploma within six months of confirmation of employment. (NMS 18.5)

## Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make good progress in terms of their emotional resilience and self management of challenging behaviours. The home provides a fulfilling experience that significantly improves the quality of life both for the young people and their families. One parent commented that 'whatever is needed, they tend to provide'.

Young people are encouraged to eat a healthy diet and to take responsibility for aspects of their personal care. For example, some of the young people have been supported to attend the local barbers for haircuts. This helps significantly with self-esteem and socialisation. The young people's overall health needs are successfully managed within a comprehensive network of health professionals. This ensures that the young people are enabled to live in a healthy environment that provides them with all the necessary services to respond to their needs.

All of the young people have achieved good engagement with their education which has helped to promote their personal growth and development. Their individual education achievements are displayed and celebrated by the home and this helps the young people feel valued and respected.

Young people are supported to enjoy a wide range of activities in the community which helps them to develop as individuals and promotes their well-being.

## Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy warm and caring relationships with staff. The staff group are entirely committed to their well-being. As one member of staff said, 'it's always about the boys, about their individual needs'. This helps the young people develop trust and reduces challenging behaviour.

Young people are supported to learn socially acceptable behaviour. This is based on

individual management strategies that include de-escalation, re-direction and the use of visual prompts to help young people to self manage their behaviour. Most of the young people have made significant progress in this area. One of the health professionals commented that 'behaviours are being expertly managed by the home'. The Registered Manager has held training events about positive behaviour management for relatives. These have been well attended and have helped ensure continuity of care for young people, and support for families.

Young people have good detailed care plans that are very person-centred. This ensures promotion of all aspects of their individual identities. The plans are clearly presented with symbols and pictures which aid young people to participate in their care planning. The quality of the care planning is very professional. It is clear to see that staff monitor trends and patterns of behaviour in order to develop new ideas for positive engagement with individual young people. The formal reports prepared by the home for the statutory reviews are of a high standard. They help the young people, their families and the professionals reflect on progress made, and on areas of future need.

There is good communication between the home and the school. This helps ensure consistency of care and promotes the successful involvement of the young people with their education.

Young people are able to exercise choice in the food that they eat and are able to prepare their own food and snacks in accordance with their abilities. This helps develop self-esteem and confidence. Young people have a wide range of communication aids to help them express their wishes and feelings. Staff also rely on their interpretation of individual behaviour to ascertain what the young people want and how they are feeling. However, there is limited independent support for the young people to make a complaint. This is particularly an issue for those vulnerable young people with little or no family contact. This means that there is limited opportunity for those young people to communicate their views on all aspects of their care and support.

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

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

Feedback from parents and professionals confirms that the young people are safe in this home: 'my son is happy in this home. The high staff ratio helps to keep him safe'. Young people enjoy positive and purposeful relationships with the staff. This helps young people to practise skills to build and maintain constructive relationships, and resolve conflicts positively. Staff are skilful and effective in providing the right balance of supervision, privacy and child protection. Young people are further safeguarded by thorough and individualised risk assessments. Young people are thus enabled to have opportunities to develop skills needed to mature into confident adults. There have been no incidents of young people going missing from this home.

While the home has a comprehensive positive handling strategy, some young people are subjected to a high level of physical restraint used to manage extremely challenging behaviour. These incidents are mostly carefully recorded, and include analysis of trends and patterns. This helps staff consider alternative methods of intervention with a view to reducing the number of restraints. It is evident that this has been successful for most of the young people. These methods are shared between the home and the school and this helps ensure consistency of care. However, the home's recording documentation and policies about the criteria for physical intervention are not entirely compliant with The Children's Homes Regulations 2001. This poses a potential adverse effect on young people's trust and positive management of conflict.

There are robust safe recruitment processes for new staff which helps to prevent unsuitable people from having access to the young people. This is further assisted by thorough induction and probationary activities that help ensure that staff are able to practise safe care. However, not all the staff have received training in how to counter bullying. This could mean that the staff response to any incidence of bullying is not as robust and proactive as it should be. Staff are also not trained in some of the sensory therapies that they undertake with the young people. As a consequence, some of those interventions may not be as positive as they could be.

## **Leadership and management**

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

The aims of this home are clearly stated for both parents and young people, and are mostly effectively translated into practice. There are some inaccuracies in the Statement of Purpose though in relation to the justifications for physical interventions, complaints and staff training. This is particularly significant given the high level of restraints used in this home. Not all staff have attained the minimum level of qualification or are working towards it and this may impact on their ability consistently to deliver a high quality of care to the young people. However, most of the staff are sufficiently well trained to ensure a good level of care.

There are effective quality assurance processes that ensure that managers and staff reflect upon areas for development. For example, staff reflection on incident debriefing forms has led to more constructive engagement with some young people's challenging behaviour. The Registered Manager has an annual written development plan with realistic aims and objectives to drive forward improvements in the home. As a consequence, young people have benefited from enhanced maintenance of their home environment. This helps promote young people's well-being. However, the recommendation from the previous inspection about improving staff awareness and skills to counter bullying has only been partially completed. While bullying is not a current issue in the home, young people's safety would be enhanced by staff being trained proactively to recognise and deal with any incidents of bullying.

The young people benefit from high levels of staff on duty at all times. This enables safe individual care of each young person both within the home and on visits out into

the community. Staff are well supported with regular supervision which helps them meet the needs of the young people.

Records are clearly expressed and individualised. They give a balanced picture of the young people's lives in a way that is helpful if the young people want to access them now or in the future.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.