

## Inspection report for children's home

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| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC053145        |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 13/09/2011      |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Graham Robinson |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | Full            |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>       | Children's home |

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| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 15/03/2011 |
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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 registered to accommodate three children or young people of either gender. Lengths of stay vary.

### **Overall effectiveness**

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

Young people are making good progress in relation to their starting points both socially and educationally. They benefit from a nurturing, supportive environment that is underpinned with clear and consistent boundaries. Individual needs are identified with plans and strategies put into place to address them.

Young people are cared for by a staff team, who work positively and energetically to meet their needs in a non-punitive way. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of safe working practices, linked to young people's individual needs. As a result these working practices ensure young people's welfare is promoted.

The management and organisation of the home is good. This and the effective levels of communication between staff promote consistency of working practices. The strengths and weaknesses of the home are assessed and there are suitable plans for continued development.

Staff and young people enjoy good relationships with each other and this enhances the progress being made by young people. Although comprehensive and child focused, the young person's guide does not contain all the necessary information following the introduction of the revised children's homes standards.

### **Areas for improvement**

#### **Recommendations**

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

- update and revise the young person's guide to include the contact details for the Children's Rights Director and a young person's independent reviewing officer as well as updating the contact details for Ofsted. (NMS 13.5)

### **Outcomes for children and young people**

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

Young people are achieving positive outcomes in all respects. They receive good levels of support that allows them to settle into the home following admission and go on to prosper socially and educationally. The ethos and practices of the home are supportive and encourages young people towards setting and achieving personal goals. Young people's individual needs are identified and these are reflected in the plans and strategies in place for them.

Young people benefit from contact with family, friends and other appropriate adults. Young people feel well supported by staff who facilitate contact with distance not viewed as a barrier. As a result, young people's needs are well met.

Currently, young people are beyond school leaving age, but are assisted and encouraged to engage in further education. The strong links developed by the home with local colleges means young people can gain access to relevant courses. For example, one young person has just started a plumbing course. These links coupled with an expectation from staff that young people will engage positively in their education, gives young people the opportunity to achieve good educational outcomes.

Young people enjoy good health and their health needs are positively promoted. Good health plans ensure individual needs are assessed and met. All young people are registered with community-based health services to access day-to-day health support. Specialist interventions are arranged when required. Young people are given opportunities to improve their lifestyles through diet and exercise. They are provided with information and given every encouragement and practical support to modify certain aspects of their lifestyle, such as tobacco, drugs and alcohol. As a result, most young people enjoy improvements in their general health.

The home is well established within the community and actively encourages young people to take full advantage of the resources available. For example, young people regularly bring friends back to the home. Individual activities as well as those shared with staff and other young people form part of the evening and weekend routines. Photographs displayed around the home give an insight into the range of activities taking place.

### **Quality of care**

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

Staff are skilled and work hard to form positive relationships with young people, which encourages them to settle and develop trust. The strong relationships formed between staff and young people are used positively, which reduces the number of serious behaviour management events that need to be managed. Staff use a range of planned strategies to support young people rather than use sanctions. This results in minimising the number of stressful experiences for young people.

Young people confirm that their views, wishes and feelings are actively sought by staff. Young people can influence certain aspects of the home's operation, for example, through weekly young people's meetings and regular individual sessions with key workers. Young people and staff are relaxed in each others company, which leads to good levels of communication taking place on a daily basis. This encourages and supports young people towards making appropriate and more informed decisions about themselves and their future.

Young people know how to make a complaint and are confident to do so. The young person's guide is informative. However, the details for the Children's Rights Director and independent reviewing officers are not included in the guide. In addition the details for Ofsted have not been reviewed.

Young people benefit and thrive in a supportive and nurturing environment. Their individual needs are clearly identified in care plans and individual risk assessments. This includes identity, religious and cultural needs. Regular reviewing of the plans and strategies in place ensure young people's needs are current and well met. Young people demonstrate good insight into how they are cared for and are familiar with the plans in place for them. They benefit from having excellent relationships with staff, who work openly, transparently and communicate positively with them. As a result young people enjoy a relaxing environment and receive care in a trusting atmosphere which allows them to develop greater confidence in themselves and others.

This home is modern, welcoming and homely. A calm, relaxed atmosphere in a bright, modern building gives a good impression of the home and the people living in it. The levels of equipment, fixtures, furnishings and décor are of a high standard. Each young person has their own bedroom, with two having en-suite facilities. Young people decorate and personalise their rooms to reflect the taste and interest of the occupant. The home is accessible for people with a physical disability and has areas where young people can be either active or relaxed. Internet access is available for both recreational and educational use. Young people take pride in the quality of their environment and facilities. Photographs and mementoes on display reflect young people's positive experiences.

Staff promote healthy lifestyles in a variety of ways. Young people actively engage in a wide range of group activities, individual interests and leisure pursuits. For example, individuals have opportunities to follow their own interests and leisure pursuits, which are usually community-based. Young people benefit from healthy meals and take an active role in shopping and planning menus. They are encouraged to try unfamiliar foods, appreciate different cultures and try international cuisine. Festivals and religious events are celebrated.

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

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

Young people are well cared for and feel safe living at the home. There have been

no safeguarding issues affecting the home since the previous inspection. Staff understand their responsibilities and what they should do if a safeguarding situation arises. This will result in a prompt referral to external agencies which ensures young people are appropriately protected. Strong links are in place with external agencies who report good levels of communication between themselves and the home. All staff have undertaken initial safeguarding training, with regular refresher courses completed by longer serving staff. Overall safeguarding awareness and practice keeps young people safe.

Young people say that bullying is not an issue of concern and confirm staff will quickly intervene should an incident occur. Staff are alert to young people's specific needs and monitor bullying closely to minimise opportunities for incidents to occur. This gives young people a feeling of security and general safety.

Staff know how to respond should any young person go missing and are aware of local protocols and practices in place to protect young people.

Young people are supported to work positively through difficulties and they recognise sanctions as being fair. Reward systems for good behaviour are in place and young people say that rewards outweigh the number of sanctions imposed. Staff are skilled at diffusing difficult situations, with the result that the number of physical interventions are minimal and only take place as a last resort. Good monitoring of incidents ensures young people's individual strategies are kept under review and adapted. As a result, the number of serious behaviour management incidents are declining.

Young people benefit from a permanent and relatively experienced staff team. Appropriate recruitment policies, procedures and practice ensure all new staff are suitably cleared prior to taking up their posts. This ensures only suitably checked people have contact with young people.

Young people are protected with a range of risk assessments which are regularly updated and revised. Young people participate in regular fire drills and can safely exit the home if needed. Safety checks to maintain a safe environment are regularly undertaken. Individual risk assessments, coupled with coping strategies, promote a safe environment for all young people. Individual strategies are updated in light of reviews of young people's risks and progress. Young people confirm that the home is a safe place to live.

## **Leadership and management**

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

The home is well organised and managed. The manager has good communication skills, is child focused and has a clear vision on how the home should develop and progress. The staff team work well together, are enthusiastic and supportive of the ethos, aims and working practices developed by the home. They understand their role and responsibilities and work with the support of manager to address young

people's needs.

The staff team receive regular supervision and appraisal to improve their knowledge and working practices. Most staff either have, or are about to commence training for appropriate professional qualifications. Staff regularly participate in core training events to update their knowledge and skills. This ensures they possess the competences and skills to effectively meet young people's diverse needs.

Both the internal and external monitoring of the home are taking place regularly, with reports from monitoring visits in place. Reports appropriately review performance and identify areas for improvements. Young people contribute to monitoring and can discuss their views.

The manager is well supported and demonstrates an understanding of the strengths of the home and areas in need of improvement. The home has a good record of compliance and has successfully addressed the actions and recommendations following the previous inspection. As a result significant improvements are noted in young people having access to the medical services they require, appropriate documentation being kept detailing young people's further education arrangements and improvement in the recording of room searches.

Young people benefit from living in a home that is stable, well managed and organised. This gives them a sense of security, with many describing this provision as their home rather than just another children's home.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.