

## Inspection report for children's home

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| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC061439        |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 16/06/2011      |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Leonard Hird    |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | Full            |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>       | Children's home |

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| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 01/12/2010 |
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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 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 company and provides care and accommodation for up to five young people aged from 12 to 17 years. It is located in the suburbs of a large town and comprises three floors, an enclosed rear garden and a double garage. The ground floor comprises a kitchen, dining room, lounge, another room used for doing school work and a toilet. On the first floor, there are four bedrooms and a family sized bathroom. On the second floor, there are a further two bedrooms and a shower room. Each young person has their own single bedroom.

The home is close to local shops and bus routes are nearby if young people wish to visit the town centre with its larger shops, cinema and leisure facilities.

### Overall effectiveness

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

The levels of support, guidance and care provided to young people is good. All of the care staff team regularly undertake the appropriate levels of training in different aspects of looking after young people and are well supported and supervised by the management team. However, members of the teaching staff are not receiving the appropriate levels of supervision in relation to their professional requirements and it is essential that this be offered. Members of staff work in partnership with placing authorities, parents and carers to ensure they are actively involved in supporting the young people while living at the home. Young people benefit from this strong commitment by staff and are enabled to make successful progress in their lives. Positive comments were received from young people about their lives at the home about how staff worked on their behalf to ensure they are well cared for.

### 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   |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 27<br>(2001) | ensure that staff have access to support and advice, and are provided with the regular supervision by appropriately qualified and experienced staff. (Regulation 27 (4) (a)) | 30/09/2011 |



## Outcomes for children and young people

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

All of the young people are engaged in educational studies either at the home's educational facility or regularly attending local schools or colleges. Each young person has their own detailed education plan and this is subject to regular review by the home and educational services. A social worker commented that, 'on arrival at the home the young person they represent, had a poor interest in education, and since their time at the home they are now showing a positive interest in learning and developing their knowledge and skills'. An Independent Reviewing Officer confirms that the home ensures there are extra levels of positive support from staff when changes occur in the day-to-day life of the young person when attending school. In preparation for independent living the home encourages young people to learn about domestic budgeting, cooking and developing some of the other life skills they may require in later life. Young people spoke positively about the levels of support and guidance they receive from members of staff in preparing them for independent living.

Young people have their own detailed health plan and are supported by their key workers and other members of staff in managing their health needs. Parental medical consent forms are maintained on each young person's file to ensure that emergency medical treatment and medication can be given. The safe storage, administration, recording and disposal of medication helps keep young people safe. Members of staff can access training from specialists in health-related matters such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder or the safe handling and administration of medication.

Members of staff are first aid trained and if young people are unwell they attend either the local health centre or make an appointment with their doctor. The home's doctor confirms that, 'the young people at the home have access to the full range of health services'. Young people said that when they are unwell the home takes care of them.

All of the young people have a named key worker appointed to ensure there are good levels of support and guidance available for them. Key workers work very closely with parents, carers and placing authorities to ensure the needs of the young people are well managed in line with the agreed care plan. The care plan and its different components are subject to regular review by both the home and placing authorities. Detailed records of these review meetings and the actions and outcomes decided at them are maintained on the individual young person's file.

Positive encouragement is given to young people to keep in contact with friends and family by the home and where this is not possible the home ensures young people have access to an independent visitor for the purpose of regular contact visits. The home provides good levels of support by transporting young people to different places within the locality as well as by providing rail tickets for them to visit relatives living outside of the area.

## Quality of care

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

Young people have their own placement plan detailing how the home will meet their needs. All of the staff, but most especially, the young person's named key worker play an important part in supporting them to take an active role in the development of their care plan. Young people's progress is monitored through the regular recorded statutory educational and social care review process. The home's own monitoring system plays an integral part in providing information for this process by ensuring the life of the young person at the home is well documented and monitored on a day-to-day basis. Positive encouragement is given to young people to take a full part in these reviews and young people are well supported at these meetings by their key worker. Parents and carers are kept up-to-date of the progress a young person is making and opportunities are made available for them where appropriate to meet with members of staff. A schools liaison officer commented, 'I have the utmost respect for all the staff I have had to deal with from the home. They are caring and efficient and in all my meetings with them have always considered, and listened to, the concerns of the young person in their care'.

The home operates an open door policy for young people to speak to any member of staff at any time no matter what the issue is. Young people confirm they are encouraged to raise issues of concern with the staff, the registered manager or outside agencies, such as, the local authorities complaints officer. Prior to members of staff being employed they meet with the young people and both parties thought that this was a really worthwhile exercise.

The home is a large detached building set in its own small grounds and is generally well maintained, furnished and decorated. There are good levels of separate bathing and toileting facilities in the home for use by young people and staff. Each young person has their own lockable room and these are furnished, decorated and personalised by the individual concerned. The home's communal rooms and small garden are well used by the young people. Young people spoke positively of both the communal living areas and their room. During the inspection, young people and staff were observed working well together in a friendly but professional manner.

The home provides a good and healthy diet which helps in the promotion of their health and physical well-being. Specialist dietary needs and different cultural requirements can be catered for. Members of staff who help in the preparation of food have a qualification in food hygiene and ensure that the appropriate records are kept. Menus are planned weekly by staff with the assistance of the young people but can be easily changed. Young people spoke positively about the choice and quality of the food at the home and confirm that the home celebrates special events in their lives.

## Safeguarding children and young people

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

All members of staff receive regular, appropriate and recorded training in child protection and behavioural management. The welfare of young people is enhanced by the home's clear policies, procedures and guidance in safeguarding and risk assessment. Members of staff are very clear as to their roles and responsibilities in reporting and recording of any child protection matter. The home's experienced designated person for child protection matters is the registered manager who has developed close working relationships with the Local Safeguarding Children Board and other partner agencies. Young people living at the home confirm they feel safe and a young person indicated that this was the safest placement they had lived in. A social worker commented that young person they were working with had told them they felt safe and cared for by the staff team.

The home has a zero tolerance policy towards any form of bullying including cyber or text bullying. There are robust policies, rigorous procedures and guidance in place for members of staff to follow when addressing any bullying behaviour. Young people and staff are very clear that bullying is not acceptable but if an incident does occur then they know how to address it. Young people can easily access a number of different independent youth support agencies such as ChildLine for support if required.

The home's policy and procedure on behaviour and discipline is clear in content and is followed in practice by the staff team. Regular and recorded training in behaviour management including the use of physical intervention is undertaken by all of the care staff team. Young people are aware of the home's rules and indicate they are fair. There is a sanction and reward scheme in place but only a few sanctions have been recorded since the last inspection as the home tries to promote positive behaviour by its reward scheme. The home has a detailed policy, procedure and protocol on the actions to be taken when young people are absent without authority and this is followed by staff. The positive and excellent working relationships that have been developed between young people and staff ensure that young people are living in a safe and caring environment.

Young people's welfare is protected by the home's corporate recruitment process. The home follows a clear policy on recruitment in line with the Department for Education guidance. A comprehensive record of the recruitment and employment process showing Criminal Records Bureau checks, references, verbal reference checks and the formal interview process is maintained on staff's personnel files.

Young people are safeguarded by comprehensive health and safety policies, risk assessments and well trained staff. The home and the young people are protected by effective and regular monitoring of all electrical and gas appliances as well as the safe storage of substances hazardous to health. Maintenance issues are identified and dealt with by staff and external contractors to ensure young people are protected from potential hazards. Young people's welfare is further promoted by the use of comprehensive risk assessments in their day-to-day life and planned activities.



## Leadership and management

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

The home provides a well detailed Statement of Purpose for use by placing authorities, parents and carers. Young people are supplied with a very informative young person's guide about life at the home. These documents contain information for young people, parents and carers on how to contact different organisations and services such as ChildLine, the Children's Rights Officer, Ofsted and the local authority's complaints officer. The corporate body and the home review this documentation on a regular basis to ensure that it is factually correct and up-to-date in content.

Members of the care staff team receive good levels of support, training and recorded supervision to maintain their professional development. There is a need, however, for the educational staff working at the home to receive similar levels of professional educational supervision, guidance and support. The management team is well qualified and is providing positive and effective leadership for the hard working and experienced staff team. Staffing levels are meeting the current needs and numbers of young people living at the home but if necessary can easily be increased by the registered manager. The experienced and well-qualified staff team are committed to providing good levels of support to the young people to ensure their often complex needs are met.

Monthly unannounced monitoring visits are occurring and are undertaken by the company's appointed representative who is a residential manager from another one of the company's homes. A written record of the visit and the outcomes of it are provided to the registered manager, company and Ofsted. The registered manager assisted by senior members of staff undertake weekly and monthly quality assurance checks to ensure the home is delivering a good quality of care for the young people and where issues are identified from these they are addressed. The company and the home's management team responded quickly to address all of the requirements and recommendations made by Ofsted at the last inspection.

Young people's care records are well managed, documented and reflect the ethos of the home. Quality assurance systems within the home underpin this by making sure that records are robustly monitored and reviewed regularly. The home's records are stored securely but for those paper records requiring long-term archiving the home has entered into a contract with a specialist storage company that offers long-term confidential and secure archiving facilities within the locality.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.