

## Inspection report for children's home

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| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC061678        |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 17/11/2011      |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Chris Scully    |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | Full            |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>       | Children's home |

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| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 22/02/2011 |
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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

The home provides care for three young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. It is owned and managed by a limited company.

### Overall effectiveness

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

Young people feel safe and are protected from significant harm. Young people are extremely positive about the quality of care and the support they receive from staff. This is echoed by social worker's who comment upon the positive, trusting relationships young people have with staff. This is enabling them to make good progress in all aspects of their lives. Staff are highly committed to helping young people make positive lifestyle choices and make a successful transition into adulthood.

Care planning is extremely good. All aspects of care planning and practice are highly personalised and tailored to comprehensively meet the individual needs of each young person. This is supported by staffs innate understanding of each young person's diverse needs. Staff work in a coordinated way with young people, their family, schools and placing authorities. This ensures young people continue to receive the right help, guidance and support they need on a daily basis. Young people are doing well with regards to their education and are considering future learning and employment opportunities.

The management of the home is effective. Staff and the Registered Manager are committed to providing good quality care to young people. Records and documentation are generally well maintained though there are some minor issues with regards to; the Statement of Purpose, the young people's guide, medication, health care plans and room searches. However, immediate action has been taken to address these issues.

Young people's views are central to the running of the home. They are fully included in the decisions affecting their lives and actively influence the running of the home. Young people feel empowered as they are able to put forward their views and wishes, such as overnight stays and the creation of a vegetable plot. Social worker's comment upon the positive impact this has had upon young people's lives and how staff are helping them to move forward.

### 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   |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 4<br>(2001) | ensure the Statement of Purpose consists of a statement as to the matters listed in Schedule 1 and the young person's guide contains the address and telephone number for Ofsted.<br>(Regulation 4 (1)(3)(c)) | 08/12/2011 |

## Recommendations

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

- ensure young people's health is promoted in accordance with their placement plan, in particular that health care plans clearly identify their current medical needs (NMS 6.5)
- ensure information about the child is recorded clearly and in a way that will be helpful to them in the future, in particular the records of room searches and medication brought into the home (NMS 22.5)
- ensure all areas of the home are well maintained and decorated, in particular the toilet on the ground floor and the mould removed in the shower cubicle. (NMS 10.3)

## Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people are making good progress in developing emotional resilience and are growing in confidence and maturity. Social worker's say that they are really pleased with the progress young people have made since residing at the home. Young people are developing an understanding of their past experiences and are beginning to talk to staff about these. This is enabling them to identify how this has impacted upon them as a person. Consequently, young people are beginning to understand and accept things that they are not able to change and understand why some people may perceive them in a specific way. Young people have confidence in their own abilities and talents, for example, they delight in taking part at a drama club and in stage productions.

Young people are developing an understanding of healthy lifestyles. They enjoy a generally healthy and nutritious diet. Some take pleasure in the opportunities to cook with staff and plan their weekly meals. Young people say that staff encourage them

to eat healthily but they do not like it. They prefer pizzas and snacks, although they do acknowledge they are drinking less carbonated drinks and more water. They feel this is a positive change as they are actively involved in sports and understand the need to keep hydrated. Young people's personal care is good. They take responsibility for their own needs and enjoy physical activities, such as bicycle riding.

Young people are able to make informed choices about their health, such as smoking. This is because they have access to excellent guidance from staff and clear information on the dangers of smoking, using recreational drugs and other health care issues. Young people are beginning to engage with other agencies to help them to further improve upon their health. Young people are aware of the health services and other help available in the community to support them. Young people are very pleased to be designing their vegetable plot and are enthused with the idea of growing their own vegetables. They talk animatedly about how they can collect apples and bake apple pies to share with staff and their neighbours.

Young people are making good progress with regards to their education with some making excellent progress in relation to their starting points. Young people talk positively about their various educational establishments and feel that they are doing well. They have clear career paths in mind and are conscious of the action they need to take to achieve these goals. Young people's attendance at school is very good. Young people are rightly proud of their academic achievements, such as completing some of their GCSE exams a year early.

Young people have strong family links and benefit from appropriate contact with their families and those people who are important to them. This effectively enables them to sustain positive relationships with these people. Staff work really hard to ensure that contact arrangements are organised so as to ensure the safety and well-being of the young people. Staff are aware that on occasion these visits can be stressful and make sure young people are suitably and sensitively supported.

Young people are being well-prepared to become more independent and make a successful transition into adult life dependant on their age and level of understanding. Young people are encouraged to become involved in the running of the house, taking part in shopping, planning meals and managing money. They are developing an awareness of the needs of others as they help to care for pets belonging to staff and taking their needs into consideration when planning holidays. They understand the need to budget for larger items such as computer games or special events.

## Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy extremely positive relationships with staff, which are built upon trust, honesty and respect. Consequently, young people are thriving in a stable, nurturing and supportive environment. Social worker's say that the positive relationships young people have with staff has helped them to turn their lives

around. Young people feel safe here and have a strong sense of belonging. Young people say that they have very positive relationships with staff, especially their key workers who make sure they are kept well informed. Young people say, 'my key worker encouraged me to attend my reviews and they were right because it's about me and I get to have a say in what I want.' Social workers acknowledge this is a huge achievement for the young person, as they are now effectively engaging in the review process. They say, 'with the continual support and encouragement of staff, the young person is making steps in the right direction.'

Young people comment upon the high levels of consultation between themselves and staff. Young people are very pleased about their recent holiday and are already consulting with staff on where they would like to go next year. Young people are very aware that their requests may not always be possible, for example going on holiday to Florida. However, they accept the explanations by staff as they are realistic and enable young people to consider the costs involved. Other young people are really pleased that their requests for overnight stays with family over the Christmas period have been agreed. Young people feel empowered and say that staff enabled them to put forward their case to social workers in a constructive way.

Young people are aware of how to make a complaint. They are exceptionally well supported by staff when raising concerns. Young people say that they also have access to outside agencies such as the children's rights office for additional support.

Staff plan young people's care and accommodation exceptionally well. Staff have an excellent understanding of the diverse needs of each young person and plan extremely well to meet these needs in practice. Young people's placement plans provide a comprehensive picture of their personal needs and the support each young person needs. Care planning and the day to day practice of staff effectively identifies young people as individuals with various needs, backgrounds, interests and views. As a result young people receive a service, which is effectively tailored to their personal needs, cultural background and personal identity. Placements are regularly reviewed to ensure they reflect any changes in their personal circumstances. Staff work extremely well with young people, their families and placing authorities to monitor and evaluate their progress.

Young people live in a healthy environment which actively promotes their physical health and emotional well-being. Young people are fully supported to develop healthier lifestyles. Young people are registered with the appropriate health care professionals and have a good understanding of where to seek additional support or advice. Staff are aware of young people's specific health needs and ensure these are met on a daily basis. Young people are encouraged where appropriate to self-administer their own medication dependant upon their age, development, and level of understanding. Health care plans are in place and usually include all relevant information about the young people. On one occasion this information was not as detailed in relation to the triggers for a condition. Staff are skilled in enhancing young people's self-esteem when dealing with sensitive issues regarding their personal care needs. For example, instigating code words for young people to ask for additional support, thus reducing their potential embarrassment.

Staff have high aspirations for young people's educational achievements and future employment opportunities. They have created a stimulating environment that effectively develops young people's confidence in their abilities and skills. Young people talk enthusiastically about the support provided by staff which enables them to engage with their interests such as drama. This is a very important aspect of the young people's lives and is extremely well supported by staff who ensure they arrive on time for rehearsals. Young people laugh as they explain how they went with staff to see the opening night of a film still dressed as their character from the play. Young people feel empowered as staff respect them as individuals and are fully supportive of their interests.

Young people are extremely pleased that staff are looking for training courses which will help them to achieve future goals, such as entering the fire service. As a result young people are positive about their future as they have clear aspirations for themselves. Some young people say, 'I love school' and talk enthusiastically about the support provided by staff to enable them to get into the college of their choice. Young people are engaged in a wide range of self-chosen enjoyable activities such as chill zones, bicycling and visiting museums.

Young people live in a very comfortable and homely family house in a residential neighbourhood. The house is decorated and furnished to a good standard. Young people are fully involved in how the house is decorated and are very pleased that they are able to personalise their own rooms. The home is well maintained although there is mould in the young person's shower cubicle and there is some damage in the toilet on the ground floor.

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

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

Young people are protected as staff have a secure understanding of the home's safeguarding procedures. Staff are clear on the action to take should they have any concerns regarding a young person's safety or well-being. Staff are extremely aware of each young person's vulnerabilities and risks when away from the home and plan effectively to ensure young people remain safe. Young people say that they feel safe here and would talk to staff if they were worried or upset as they know staff will know what to do.

The incidents of young people going missing from the home have significantly decreased. Young people no longer feel the need to be missing since living at the home. Social worker's comment that this is a big achievement for the young person and has effectively removed a number of the safeguarding issues for them. Clear procedures are in place should this occur which means staff are able to quickly locate a young person and ensure they return home safely and quickly.

Young people have clear and consistent boundaries and know what is expected of them and what is unacceptable. Young people are generally polite and courteous to

one another, staff and visitors. The reward system is working well and young people's rewards far out way the number of sanctions imposed. Young people were very pleased with their new trainers for achieving a number of positive examination results a year early. Young people are aware that physical interventions may be used as a last resort. However, staff are skilled in de-escalation techniques, which means they have not had to physically restrain a young person.

Staff carry out regular health and safety checks of the premises and this includes certifications for gas, electrical and fire safety checks. Staff ensure all visitors to the home are fully aware of the fire evacuation procedure and where to evacuate to in an emergency. Young people are protected by a comprehensive range of health and safety procedures and risk assessments.

The recruitment and selection of people working at the home is thorough to ensure young people are protected. The manager ensures staff have the skills and competencies to meet the needs of each young person. Visitors to the home are vetted and are appropriately supervised during their visit.

## **Leadership and management**

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

Young people live in a home that is effectively managed in their best interests. The Statement of Purpose and young person's guide are shared with young people, their families and placing authorities. These are generally well written and provide a clear picture of the home's aims and objectives. However, there are some omissions, such as the qualifications of the Registered Manager and staff in the Statement of Purpose and the address and telephone number of Ofsted in the young person's guide.

The Registered Manager and staff demonstrate a strong commitment to delivering exceptional childcare tailored to the young people's individual needs. The effectiveness of this approach is evident in the good outcomes young people are making with regards to their education, life opportunities and developing emotional maturity and responsibility.

The Registered Manager has a clear and realistic understanding of the strengths of the setting and the areas for further development. The home demonstrates a capacity for sustained improvement based upon its performance over the last year and the development of positive outcomes for young people. Recently revised records and documentation have improved the recording systems and the outcomes for young people. For example, the monthly reviews of care plans means staff are extremely aware of each young person's needs and are able to effectively revise their plans to ensure it continually meets their specific needs. The Registered Manager and the staff commitment to ongoing improvement is evident from the swift action to rectify the shortfalls identified at this inspection.

Young people are cared for by a competent and highly committed staff team. Staff have a wide range of skills and experiences which effectively meet the needs of the

young people living at the home. Staff say the training opportunities have significantly improved since the last inspection and they now have approximately two training sessions per month. They feel the increased opportunities for training have enabled them to reflect upon their own practice and improve upon the outcomes for young people. Staff say they feel valued and are very enthusiastic about their roles and the part they play in supporting young people.

Staff are complimentary about the manger and other team members. They say they work well as a team and 'are more like a family'. They have good support from the manager, who is always available to talk to. Regular opportunities to meet as a team mean they are able to consider young people's progress and modify any plans to ensure they remain current.

Monitoring of the home is good and generally identifies any areas for future improvement. Although, some minor omissions within some records have not been identified such as the recording of room searches and an item of medication brought into the home. All other records are well maintained and provide a clear insight into the lives of the young people while residing at the home. Appropriate systems are in place for notifying Ofsted and placing authorities of any significant events. This ensures transparency and promotes the welfare of young people.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.