

## Inspection report for children's home

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| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC063219        |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 12/08/2011      |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Sharon Lewis    |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | Full            |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>       | Children's home |

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| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 24/02/2011 |
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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 is registered to provide residential care and support for up to five young people, aged between 11 and 17 years, with emotional or behavioural difficulties. The home is owned and operated by a private organisation and was registered in 2005.

### Overall effectiveness

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

Young people benefit from an effective, caring staff team who are dedicated to their roles. The camaraderie between the young people and constructive relationships with staff contribute to the warm, homely environment. Staff provide nurturing support which enables young people to make good progress in relation to their starting points. There is a strong understanding of individual needs and how to engage with young people in a meaningful way. Staff provide a positive link between young people and their parents, which helps them rebuild their relationships.

The experienced, well-qualified staff team demonstrates a passionate commitment to their respective posts. Staff have a competent understanding of safe working practices and the new regulatory framework.

Management understand the home's strengths and areas requiring further development. The main shortfall is the refurbishment of the property. A further shortfall is the failure to notify Ofsted of all serious incidents when the police are called to the home. To further improve practice, recommendations are made regarding the purchasing of games consoles to replace those stolen, and record keeping, as young people's files do not contain evidence of all the work staff undertake, particularly in relation to accessing community resources.

### 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   |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 31<br>(2001) | ensure the premises are of good structural repair, reasonably decorated and maintained ( Regulation 31 (2) (d) & (e)) | 01/12/2011 |
| 31<br>(2001) | ensure the home is suitably furnished, especially in relation to the lounge sofa and carpet ( Regulation 31 (3))      | 01/12/2011 |

|              |                                                                                                                                                                |            |
|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 30<br>(2001) | ensure Ofsted are informed of the listed events in Schedule 5, particularly in relation to serious incidents necessitating calling the police. (Regulation 30) | 01/09/2011 |
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## Recommendations

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

- consider purchasing the games consoles requested by young people (NMS 7.5)
- ensure staff record all research done to meet young people's identified goals. (NMS 22.1)

## Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people receive a wide range of assistance to develop practical and social skills necessary for adult life. Young people understand the importance of healthy lifestyles. In their workshops they learn about healthy eating, food hygiene, first aid, and alcohol and drug misuse. Through group living young people are learning to think about others. Examples of this include baking cakes, cooking for the other young people, and making cups of tea for staff. Independent living skills are part of their daily routine. Young people take responsibility for keeping their room tidy and undertaking their laundry. They are also able to practise their semi-independence through the allocation of an individual grocery shopping budget. Workshops help them prepare for adult life; topics include life-goal setting, communication, interview skills, curriculum vitae writing, politics, dilemmas and banking.

The nurturing environment enables young people to develop a positive self-view and emotional resilience. Young people have the opportunity to learn about pertinent issues, such as healthy positive relationships. Young people are all making significant progress compared to their starting point. Staff act as role models and assist young people with developing a strong identity. Young people are able to approach staff and feel comfortable discussing sensitive issues relating to their culture, race, gender and sexuality. Young people are growing in maturity and are learning to become self-motivators.

Young people are able to practice their faith and participate in cultural customs. They are able to attend church or other places of worship. They also learn the practical aspects of religions, an example being a recent group discussion regarding Ramadan. Young people receive an ongoing appreciation of differences through participating in an equality and diversity workshop. They have their uniqueness celebrated through various events. This includes birthday and leaving parties, meals out and gifts.

Young people regularly access their local community and also enjoy trips to the surrounding areas. They enjoy going swimming and eating out. The summer programme includes going to the seaside, having a barbecue and engaging in a wide range of fun activities, including laser quest and adventurous zip-wire outdoor pursuits. Young people also receive encouragement to pursue their interests and further develop their talents, for example art, fishing and athletics.

Educational achievement within the home is good, taking into account both young people's attainment and progress from when they first came to the home. Young people are graduating from their courses and receiving certificates from their pupil referral units. Young people are undertaking apprenticeships, training courses, enrolled and attending school, or looking for employment. Young people use their initiative to visit the careers service. They are also able to extend their learning as they have a computer and regular workshops on a broad range of topics.

### **Quality of care**

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

The home succeeds in providing long-term care within a warm, family-style atmosphere. Young people affectionately refer to and treat each other as their 'brother' and 'sister'. They enjoy spending time with each other, both inside and outside of the home. Staff relate well with young people, working in a positive, constructive, professional manner. This provides a foundation for mutually respectful relationships. The open-door management culture enables young people to easily approach staff. Staff also advocate on young people's behalf to ensure social workers are appropriately meeting their duty of care.

Care planning has an aim and details young people's needs. Plans focus on outcomes and have a clear action plan. Effective key working relationships help young people with their goals. Young people are making progress in all areas of their lives. Plans address equality and diversity appropriately, responding to the individuality of each young person. Young people's files detail their race, religion, culture, health and emotional needs. Key work meetings appropriately address areas identified in the respective young person's care plan. The only shortfall relates to staff not documenting all the work they undertake with young people. This is particularly in relation to their investigation of community resources.

Staff empower young people through a range of consultation measures. Young people contribute through daily discussion, key work and group house meetings, for example, by making suggestions for menus and activities. These meetings also provide an avenue for staff to listen to young people's concerns. In response, staff are able to explain why they make certain decisions. Staff pride themselves on being a positive link between young people and their families. They keep families informed on a regular basis and also provide a listening ear for relatives. This supportive way of working helps young people to rebuild relationships with their families. It also assists young people to come to terms with understanding their respective backgrounds.

Young people receive sound health support. Medication arrangements protect young people. The staff team includes a nurse who takes overall responsibility for medical arrangements. Staff securely store medication and accurately maintain administration records. Staff liaise with professionals to ensure young people receive the necessary medical and emotional support. They discourage young people from pursuing unhealthy life choices, for example, smoking. Staff encourage young people to eat a healthy international diet. Fresh fruit is readily available and menus are generally balanced. Young people enjoy daily food treats and regularly eat out. Staff buy culturally reflective food products, which young people appreciate. An example of this is cornmeal porridge, which is popular in the Caribbean community.

The home is suitably located and blends into the residential area. Young people have their own single bedrooms which they are able to personalise to reflect their individuality and interests. Young people are able to relax in the lounge or dining room. Both rooms have televisions. The lounge has a range of home entertainment equipment which includes a DVD player and a satellite box. The home did have a selection of games consoles; these, however, were stolen. Young people are requesting that these games consoles are replaced as they 'get bored' and enjoyed this indoor activity. Young people are also able to spend time outside in the paved garden. The home has a small fitted kitchen where young people are able to prepare meals and bake. Young people do not have their own payphone as the phone booth is not in use. Young people do not identify this as a problem, however, as they are able to make private calls in the staff office.

The building is fairly old, which has an impact on the internal maintenance. Young people explicitly express their disappointment at the general décor of the home, feeling the home is 'falling apart'. The building is in a poor state of decoration. Highlighted issues include cracks in the walls and the skirting board. The main lounge has a sofa in disrepair and a carpet with cigarette burns. The management are aware of these issues and have an adequate plan to address all areas of concern. The refurbishment of the home is ongoing. This includes redecorating throughout and the purchase of a new sofa and a lounge carpet.

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

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

Young people benefit from effective arrangements to safeguard and promote their welfare. The home's workshop programme educates young people in health and safety matters, 'stranger danger', cyber and mobile phone bullying. Young people report that they feel safe and there are no issues with bullying. There have been no complaints since the last inspection. Young people routinely voice any concerns immediately with staff.

Care plans identify risk factors for individual young people. When young people are absent without authority staff know who they are with. Young people are always with their friends or family members. Staff are able to keep in contact by telephone,

to ensure they are safe. Staff are currently liaising with the local police and children's services in regards to establishing a new missing persons protocol. Staff receive ongoing training in safeguarding and child protection. They were aware of the procedures and knew they could contact external organisations to relate any concerns.

Health and safety are high on the agenda within the home to promote a safe environment for young people to live in. The building is secure and close circuit television monitors the entrance areas. Certificates verify the safety of the environment. Young people understand the importance of fire safety and participate in fire drills. The organisation endeavours to ensure unsuitable people do not work with young people by using a thorough staff recruitment procedure. Staff are not employed until all checks have been received.

Young people receive assistance to behave in an appropriate manner. Staff promote positive behaviour mainly through praise and discussion. Staff work hard with young people to enable them to reflect and learn the consequences of their actions. The home has a points-based reward system, where young people can earn additional monies. There are plans to review this system to ensure it works in the best interests of young people. There has been one restraint since the last inspection, which was appropriately managed, and sanctions are minimal. To ensure disciplinary measures are consistently applied, new sanction guidance has been produced. Young people were able to contribute their views regarding the types of sanctions staff should issue.

## **Leadership and management**

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

The home has an up-to-date Statement of Purpose which is available for young people's relatives and involved professionals, so they know what services the home provides. Young people benefit from their own guide which summarises what they can expect from the home. The home has received a compliment from a parent of a young person who has left and is now living independently in the community. In appreciation for all their hard work, staff were given a card, gifts and the manager and key worker were taken out for a meal.

Young people receive support from an enthusiastic, competent, culturally diverse, staff team. The well-qualified staff team includes people with decades of social care experience, qualified social workers, nurses and youth workers. Staff share their hobbies, interests and personal heritage with young people. This includes fishing and hairdressing. Information summaries regarding staff members' countries of origin are on display in the lounge. This assists with raising young people's knowledge regarding a wide range of cultures.

The staff team has a strong rapport and works effectively to meet young people's needs. Staff demonstrate a committed, empathetic nature to their work. Staff view young people positively and are able to identify their respective strengths. This



attitude assists with raising young people's self-esteem. Staff are prepared effectively for their role through the structured induction and ongoing training. They receive ongoing support through regular supervision, and the performance appraisal system addresses their personal development. Team meetings provide an opportunity to focus on the needs of young people.

Staff securely store young people's files. These files are outcome focused and provide a clear record of young people's lives. Monthly reports highlight young people's progress.

The home has complied with the majority of actions and recommendations from the last inspection. The environmental risk assessment addresses pertinent issues. There are appropriate domestic arrangements for sanitary waste. The petty cash box is now stored in a more secure lockable cabinet. Fire drill records are more robust and the phone booth is no longer required. Due to wear and tear on the property and equipment, the refurbishment of the home is ongoing, together with the replacing of crockery and cutlery.

Management understand the strengths and areas requiring further work. The development plan focuses on promoting positive outcomes for young people. There is a good awareness of the regulatory changes. Records, policies and procedures are currently being adapted to reflect the new legislation and inspection framework. Monthly regulatory visit reports contribute to an efficient quality assurance system. The only issue was in relation to two incidents of a theft and criminal damage to the property where Ofsted were not informed. Although this action did not have an impact on young people, regulations stipulate Ofsted should be notified of such serious incidents involving the police.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.