

Inspection report for children's home

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| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC065189        |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 3 November 2009 |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Mark Kersh      |
| <b>Type of Inspection</b>      | Key             |

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| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 24 March 2009 |
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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.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

## The inspection judgements and what they mean

|               |                                                               |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Outstanding:  | this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality |
| Good:         | this aspect of the provision is strong                        |
| Satisfactory: | this aspect of the provision is sound                         |
| Inadequate:   | this aspect of the provision is not good enough               |

## **Service information**

### **Brief description of the service**

This home provides care, education and accommodation for up to two young people of either sex, aged 10 to 17 years. The home is run and managed by a private organisation who operate a number of other children's homes. The home is easily accessible by car or public transport and benefits from good access to local amenities. The home is situated within a residential area and comprises of four single bedrooms, two of which provide young people with their own separate bedrooms. The other bedrooms are used by staff, as sleeping quarters and one bedroom is also used as an office. The home has an education room, games room, lounge, dining area, kitchen, washing facilities, en-suite facilities and utility room.

Two young people currently live in this home and were present during this visit. One young person did not participate in the inspection.

### **Summary**

At this unannounced full inspection, all key standards were inspected. This is a good service and young people's welfare is enhanced by the good relationships that exist between staff and young people and between young people and their peers. Young people are encouraged to eat healthily and take regular exercise. They are able to prepare at their own pace for independent living. The care planning documentation is personalised and detailed in content. The home works closely with a wide range of outside agencies in order to meet and safeguard the full range of young people's needs. Staff receive good support from the manager who has a strong commitment and focus on improvement.

Although some minor shortfalls in administration systems were identified during this visit, there is evidence that these do not have an immediate impact on the care of young people. Shortfalls in some fire procedures may have an impact on the safety of young people.

The overall quality rating is good.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

Following the previous inspection the registered manager was asked to ensure young people and staff have the opportunity to eat together. At that time this was in relation to a young person on independent training. Following the previous inspection the independent plan was amended to give a young person appropriate time to sit and enjoy meals with staff. As a result all staff and young people sit and eat together.

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Young people contribute to weekly menus and can make drinks and snacks, which promotes their daily living skills. The home promotes healthy eating, and regular exercise as part of a healthy lifestyle and menus show that young people are given a choice and are provided with a varied and nutritious diet. Staff record what young people actually eat, so they can monitor their diet. Mealtimes are pleasant and social occasions with young people and staff eating their meals together. Meals are provided which take into account young people's diverse and specific

dietary needs. Young people participate in selected themed nights, they dine out in restaurants, and explore their own and other people's culture.

Young people's physical and emotional health needs are identified and effectively met. They are registered with local health services and staff support them when attending their appointments. Individual health plans are detailed and monitored regularly to ensure the information is accurate and up-to-date. Young people have access to good information and staff give them advice in relation to health and exercise. Young people in the home have their specific needs met through appropriate appointments with professionals, for example appointments with a clinical psychologist. Young people respond positively to the therapeutic support provided to them.

There are effective arrangements for the secure storage and administration of medication, which protect young people. Staff have a clear understanding of medication procedures, and routinely check records and stock balances. This ensures all medication kept in the home is accounted for daily. All staff have completed first aid training and they demonstrate their competence in the safe administration of medication. These practices safeguard young people and protect their welfare.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Young people's privacy is respected. Each young person has their own bedroom and key and can store their personal belongings securely. Young people can make and receive telephone calls in private. All written information in relation to young people and staff is stored securely for confidentiality reasons. Staff demonstrate well their understanding and responsibility to maintain confidentiality. They are professional when sharing information and records with other agencies and parents.

Young people receive information about what they should do if they have a concern or a complaint about the care they receive in the home. There is information displayed should young people wish to contact independent services, to raise a concern or complaint. Detailed records are kept of complaints and show outcomes to investigations. Young people say staff listen to them and take their views seriously, and they confirm they know what to do if they have a complaint about the home.

Young people are safeguarded from abuse as the home has clear policies and procedures in place and staff are aware of their responsibilities. All staff are trained to recognise, respond, and report any allegation or suspicion of abuse, to authorities charged with safeguarding young people. There are currently no safeguarding issues. Good leadership and monitoring from the management team consistently promotes an environment where safeguarding young people is paramount. There have been no issues in relation to bullying and information within the home is made and displayed by young people, this educates them of the impact bullying can have on themselves and others.

There are good systems in place for staff to notify appropriate authorities of any significant event. Records show there has been one significant event following the previous inspection and that the provider acted appropriately and there were no safeguarding concerns. When young people go missing staff know what to do and follow agreed procedures. Young people

rarely absence themselves without authority and there are no issues or concerns in relation to this.

Young people's individual risk assessments and behaviour management plans are detailed and identify strategies for staff to deploy to minimise inappropriate behaviour. Young people and staff say relationships between each other are good. This assists young people to feel valued and promotes positive outcomes for them. There is an incentive scheme which young people understand, that encourages and rewards positive behaviour. All staff are trained in behaviour management methods and safe restraint procedures. Sanctions imposed for inappropriate behaviour are fair and agreed by young people, with their views recorded and name signed within the records kept by the home. Restraint is only used as a last resort and rarely happens.

Health and safety matters are mostly managed well. There are appropriate systems in place to keep young people, staff and visitors safe from risk from fire. Staff routinely check equipment and the fire detection system, for faults, and records of these checks are maintained. Gas and electrical installations are serviced annually and the home environment is risk assessed, to minimise potential health and safety hazards. Fire evacuation tests are carried out regularly, however, at times young people are not present during these exercises, and evacuations are not routinely carried out at night.

All staff have been appropriately recruited and undergone suitable Criminal Records Bureau and reference checks to ensure they are suitable to work with young people. The home operates a signing in and out book, visitors do not have unsupervised access to young people.

## **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Young people receive a good level of support that meets their individual diverse needs. Staff demonstrate they are fully aware of the needs of the young people and their routines. Young people are not allocated a keyworker as all staff work directly in a group and as individuals with young people. Direct work sessions with young people take place regularly and identify specific needs and areas of interest. For example, young people are referred for additional services and external support, and plans are agreed to research young people's heritage and contribute to life story work. Records are maintained of all direct work sessions and these mostly include discussions and learning outcomes with actions agreed. However, some records show discussions only and this prevents the manager from monitoring effectively the actions agreed by staff and young people.

Young people's education is fully supported and there is good communication with tutors and colleges. The home provides education on site, for young people without an education placement. There is a clear understanding in the home that daily attendance in lessons and prompt arrival at college is an expectation. There are incentives for achieving this, which encourages young people to attend. There are suitable facilities and resources in the home, such as, an education room and a games room, which has art and craft materials, computer and educational books, to support young people's learning and help them to achieve. Staff emotionally reinforce young people when they make a positive effort and do well, and celebrate their achievements.

Young people are regularly involved in discussions with staff and each other in relation to activities, outings and holidays. Such discussions take into account young people's cultural and

religious needs and their past and present hobbies and interests. Leisure interest are explored for individual young people's talents, for example, performing arts, with a trip planned to a West End show, and football, with visits to stadiums and watching games. Young people enjoy holidays with staff and contribute their preferences of where they would like to go. There is sufficient funds to cater for leisure activities and holidays.

## **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Young people have their needs assessed, planned for and reviewed by staff. Care plans are developed in consultation with young people, through direct work sessions. However, fire safety requirements within a care plan have not been fully implemented. Written plans address any issues or support needed arising from disability, ethnicity, race, gender or belief and demonstrate that young people receive appropriate external support. Young people contribute to a detailed report prepared by staff for statutory reviews and they confirm their attendance at review meetings.

Staff are good at consulting with young people and involving them in making decisions about their daily lives and the operation of the home. Monthly reports are sent to placing social workers and parents to keep them updated on young people's experience and progress in the home. Feedback sheets are attached to monthly reports and every effort is made for these to be returned, so as suggestions can be considered and standards in the home improved further.

Young people know their arrangements for maintaining contact with family and friends. Staff work closely with their parents and placing social workers to promote and support positive contact. Where young people have no contact with siblings as a result of adoption, staff makes sure that social networks are developed and young people can send and receive correspondence to each other.

There are good arrangements for young people moving into the home and when they leave the home. These ensure young people can have a look around and meet staff. They are given information about the services the home provides. Admissions to this home are usually planned. Staff work well with young people and placing social workers to identify suitable placements for when young people are preparing for adulthood and independent living.

## **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

Young people receive care and support from staff that enables them to prepare to live independently or to move to a placement with less staffing in preparation for adulthood. Prior to the commencement of statutory leaving care plans, the home implements its own effective independent daily living scheme. This assists young people to gradually take responsibility for aspects of their own care and to prepare them for the future. Plans are put in place, for young people, with goals to achieve in skills, such as budgeting, preparing menus, shopping and cooking their own meals. These are carefully monitored, by staff, to ensure young people are not overwhelmed by their new responsibility. Where young people are overwhelmed, plans are changed or temporarily stopped to suit young people's individual pace and level of understanding.

This home is not physically distinguishable as a children's home, so young people do not feel disadvantaged or stigmatised by their physical surroundings. The location of the home ensures that young people have good access to public transportation and local amenities. The home is maintained to a good standard of decorative repair. The home comprises of four single bedrooms, two of which provide young people with their own on suite separate bedrooms. The other bedrooms are used by staff, as sleeping quarters and one bedroom is also used as an office. The home has an education room, games room, lounge, dinning area, kitchen, washing facilities, and a utility room. There are sufficient toilets and washing facilities to meet the needs of young people and staff.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The home's statement of purpose provides detailed information to parents and placing authorities about the services the home provides, and is available on request. This document makes clear the home's commitment to equality and diversity. There is good information for young people about the services they can expect to receive in the home. There is a wide range of printed material available for young people and staff which covers equality and diversity. The home celebrates birthdays, name days, cultural and religious festivals. Staff receive equality and diversity training. Young people's case files and care planning documentation reflect individual needs and differences.

Young people benefit from the effective leadership provided by the management team who are committed to promoting good parenting strategies. The management team are suitably qualified and experienced, including supervisory experience and are able to cover the Registered Manager's absence. All staff receive regular supervision, which allows them to identify areas of professional development, self evaluation and to discuss young people's needs. Team meetings are held regularly and sufficient time is allocated for staff handovers.

All staff have attended mandatory training but not all are currently trained to National Vocational Qualification standards. Those staff who are not qualified, are progressing to achieve their qualification. Training opportunities for all staff are good. This means that young people are looked after by staff who are trained and competent and who understand their diverse needs. Some training certificates gained by staff are not evident within the home.

Good arrangements are made for reviewing the quality of care. The manager routinely audits the home's administrative systems to make sure that what staff do, they do well. The views of young people and staff are taken into account and reported on during independent monitoring visits, carried out by the provider. There are no identified issues or actions as a result of reviewing the quality of care in this home.

Young people's case files and other documentation is detailed. This facilitates good communication with other professionals. Young people have a good record of their history and how they are cared for according to their individual and ever changing needs.

## What must be done to secure future improvement?

### Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, The Childrens Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

| Standard | Action | Due date |
|----------|--------|----------|
|----------|--------|----------|

### Recommendations

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

- ensure all young people take part in regular fire evacuation tests for the home, including those for use at night, in case of fire (NMS 26.7)
- ensure direct work sheets show learning outcomes and action agreed following individual sessions with young people (NMS 7.10)
- ensure all certificates of training completed by staff are kept in the home. (NMS 31.4)