

Inspection report for children's home

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| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC066010     |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 11 June 2009 |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Robert Curr  |
| <b>Type of Inspection</b>      | Key          |

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|--------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 19 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 children's home provides up to four long-term placements for young people aged from 12 years old up to 17 years old. The accommodation consists of four single bedrooms and spacious communal areas for eating, studying and relaxing.

The home is approximately three miles from the town centre and it is close to public transport. One of the main aims of the setting is to equip young people with the skills to make responsible choices and to cope well as citizens.

### Summary

This was an unannounced inspection. All of the key standards were checked and improvements made since the last inspection were noted.

This is a good service. Young people's education is encouraged and promoted. Leisure needs are met and a multi-disciplinary approach ensures young people's views are taken into account when planning their future.

Training on equality and diversity is available and the staff demonstrate an appreciation that individual young people may have a range of possible needs arising from diversity.

Young people's welfare is enhanced by the positive relationships fostered by the staff team. The service is closely monitored, thus enabling the registered provider to oversee the operation of the home.

There are sufficient experienced and competent staff who are very well supported. However, the overall qualification recommendation is not met.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

### Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the registered person was asked to take action in relation to staff achieving a qualification at National Vocational Qualification level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People.

Although progress has been made in relation to staff training generally, National Vocational Qualification ratios do not meet current standards.

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Staff encourage young people to live healthy lives and to stop engaging in activities that may be harmful to their health. Although young people preparing for independence can decide what they want to eat, staff support them to focus on healthy eating. Opportunities for young people to prepare meals enhance the social and emotional aspects of communal eating. All staff are trained in food hygiene, which is good practice.

Staff encourage young people to attend routine medical appointments at suitable intervals. Young people are registered with local health services and have written healthcare plans to monitor their health and physical development. Where necessary, young people are referred to specialist health services.

There is a locked cabinet for any medication which needs to be stored in the home and there are suitable procedures in place for the disposal of medicines. A first aid box is at hand and staff are trained in first aid. This maintains the health of young people.

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

The provision is good.

The safety and welfare of young people is well promoted by a range of practices developed by the organisation. The manager could not produce the current local safeguarding procedures for staff to follow in the event of any allegation or suspicion of abuse, although staff demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the safeguarding procedures to promote and protect the young people.

When behaviour does become unacceptable, staff are quick to respond and are good at helping to resolve any difficulties. Records indicate that there have been sanctions put in place.

There are effective arrangements in place to deal with absconding and complaints. Young people receive information which tells them what to do if they have a complaint about the care they receive in the home. However, the complaints procedures refer to previous regulators and do not have the contact details for Ofsted. Bullying is not an issue at the home, as there is a zero-tolerance approach to any form of bullying.

Procedures and practices at the home ensure that young people's right to privacy and confidentiality is upheld. For example, all confidential information is stored appropriately and securely, and the home is large enough to provide young people with quiet space should they so wish it. There is a CCTV system in operation. The use of this system is not highlighted in the statement of purpose to ensure that its use is appropriate at all times.

The identity of visitors is checked and the visitors' book is used well.

The management of health and safety processes is good, which helps to protect young people from the risk of harm or injury. A range of risk assessments is undertaken on young people's known and likely behaviours. Equipment and installations are serviced as required. Regular fire safety tests are carried out including regular full evacuations of the home.

Young people are protected by the recruitment and selection process. The manager ensures all staff undergo appropriate checks before starting work at the home. This includes an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check for every staff member.

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

The provision is good.

Placements are medium to long term and very stable, which indicates that the needs of young people are effectively met and that they are appropriately placed.

Young people receive good levels of individual support. This is achieved by long-term commitment and continuity of staff, improved staffing levels and the application of a range of interventions to raise young people's confidence, self-esteem and social skills. Key working notes show that staff praise young people for 'sharing their feelings'. Key working sessions help young people gain an understanding of their own history and develop a greater sense of identity.

Staff emotionally reinforce young people when they make a positive effort and do well, and celebrate their achievements. This helps them to develop a sense of positive self-esteem and belief in themselves. The staff team value education and educational outcomes are good for young people. One young person stated, 'the staff are right behind me when it comes to my work experience'. Staff are good at supporting young people in their learning in it's widest sense, and those young people who are preparing to leave school are helped by staff to seek and prepare for further education.

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

The provision is good.

Young people benefit from being looked after by staff who are competent in identifying and meeting their individual needs, and in compiling detailed placement plans which demonstrate how these needs will be met. Staff are successful at engaging with young people and are focused on achieving the stated aims and objectives of individual plans. These cover all the usual physical, emotional and behavioural dimensions, any cultural and religious needs, as well as focusing on strengths and resilience and practical arrangements, such as maintaining contact with friends and family. This ensures that staff have the essential information required to meet the young people's needs.

In line with good parenting, the development of young people is regularly monitored by observation, interactions with staff and ongoing review of placement, risk and behaviour plans. Throughout these processes staff are good at consulting the young people and involving them in making appropriate decisions about their daily lives and long-term decisions about their future.

Young people's views are made known through formal statutory review proceedings. An effective complaints procedure and contact with a range of external professionals and independent visitors enable young people to shape decision-making as well as providing additional safeguarding measures.

Systems are in place for introductions and visits to the home and information is provided to anyone considering using the service. Any discharges take place in a planned way.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

Young people receive care which helps to prepare them for adulthood. Care planning mechanisms ensure that young people receive good advice and support with financial issues, as well as with basic practical skills such as shopping for and cooking meals.

Young people live in a comfortable home which is domestic in size, welcoming and provides a homely atmosphere. It is furnished to a good standard and provides ample space for the young

people living there to have privacy should they require it. The bedroom door lock mechanisms are inappropriate. Young people must be able to lock their door and staff must be able to open the doors from the outside in case of emergency.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The home fulfils its statement of purpose in providing young people with the care and support they need. The statement has not been reviewed, although it sets out the services it offers and how the home operates.

Young people are cared for by staff who are competent in discharging their duties. Staff training and development is well established and there are ample opportunities for staff to enhance their knowledge and skills. Although further staff have achieved a qualification at National Vocational Qualification level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People, the overall qualification recommendation is not met. Staff are also supported through regular and effective supervision and team meetings.

Staffing arrangements are organised and adapted to meet the individual needs of young people and to ensure the smooth running of the home. Staff have sufficient time to complete the necessary paperwork and young people's records and other documents are kept in well-organised files with effective cross-referencing. Young people's files are kept in a manner compliant with the regulations.

Staff handovers are routinely held to exchange information about progress, care needs and other issues of concern to young people.

Staffing levels are in line with the statement of purpose and are sufficient and flexible enough to meet the changing needs of young people, taking current risk assessments into account. Young people enjoy a continuity of care by people who are known and familiar to them.

The manager ensures that the interests, safety and well-being of young people are central to operations. Monitoring is undertaken by the manager to assess the performance of the home in meeting young people's needs and identifying areas for improvement, with evidence of consultation with young people as part of this process.

There is a regular senior management presence within the home, including time spent directly with young people. There is a clear system in place for someone to deputise in the absence of the manager. This procedure upholds the effective organisation of the home and helps to deliver the best possible care.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Young people receive a service designed to meet their diverse needs. This is evidenced by the detailed level of care planning and the response to changing individual need. Young people are looked after by a team that has a good balance of age and gender, and staff have access to equality and diversity training.

## 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     |
|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| 17       | ensure that the staff have access to and read the up to date local safeguarding procedures (Regulation 16)      | 30 June 2009 |
| 16       | include details of how children and families can contact Ofsted within all appropriate documents (Regulation 4) | 30 June 2009 |
| 9        | include the use of CCTV within the statement of purpose having regard to children's privacy (Regulation 22).    | 30 June 2009 |

### Recommendations

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

- ensure bedroom locks can only be opened by staff in an emergency (NMS 24)
- ensure the statement of purpose is up to date (NMS 1)
- ensure that 80% of the staff team achieve the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People or an equivalent (NMS 29).