

## Inspection report for children's home

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| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC066469        |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 07/11/2013      |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Debbie Foster   |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | Full            |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>       | Children's home |

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| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 12/11/2012 |
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## Service information

### Brief description of the service

This service is a young people's home run by a company. It provides three medium to long-term placements for young people who have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

### The inspection judgements and what they mean

**Outstanding:** a service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

**Good:** a service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements

**Adequate:** a service that only meets minimum requirements

**Inadequate:** a service that does not meet minimum requirements

## Overall effectiveness

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

Young people living in this home benefit immensely from being looked after by a staff team who nurture, are persevering and show determination to address welfare, education and safety issues. Staff are committed to caring and supporting young people to move forward in their lives. Young people spoke positively about the staff that care for them.

Young people are provided with a positive environment where staff recognise the importance of building strong relationships with them. This assists young people to build trust and confidence to enable them to move forward in their lives. The progress young people are making is dependent on the length of time they have lived at the home and the life journey they have previously experienced. The practices staff implement help to protect young people from harm.

Professionals made very positive comments, including: 'Staff work very well with other supporting professionals to achieve the best for young people.'

There is a strong and experienced manager who supports a stable and experienced staff team. They are focused on supporting young people to move forward in their lives. Staff receive good training and supervision to ensure they are well equipped to care and meet the needs of young people. The home demonstrates a strong commitment to reviewing the care provided to improve outcomes for young people.

Areas for development include; reviewing the Statement of Purpose relating to the

home's admission criteria to the home. This will assist in making sure the needs of young people can be met along with the needs of the group. Improving the standard of the home's environment to ensure young people enjoy and thrive and the home is maintained to a high standard throughout. Promoting and building further young people's independence skills to ensure they are well prepared for leaving care and looking after themselves. To provide additional specialist training to staff to equip them with the knowledge and skills to support particular needs of young people. Building further on the monitoring of the service to demonstrate and evaluate how the whole service will continue to improve the quality of care.

## 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   |
|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 31<br>(2001) | ensure that all parts of the children's home used by children are kept of sound construction, in good structural repair externally and internally; is kept reasonably decorated and maintained and achieved the aims and objectives set out in the statement of purpose. In particular the kitchen, floor coverings and decoration in several rooms ( Regulation 31(2) (d), (e) and (4) (b)) | 30/01/2014 |
| 5<br>(2001)  | keep under review and, where appropriate, revise the statement of purpose. In particular the admissions criteria, setting out how the needs of each child with be met along with that of the group already living in the home. (Regulation 5 (a))                                                                                                                                            | 30/01/2014 |

### Recommendations

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

- ensure children are supported to routinely develop practical skills, including shopping, buying, cooking and keeping food, washing clothes, personal self-care, understanding and taking responsibility for personal healthcare; develop financial capability, knowledge and skills (NMS 12.1)
- ensure staff receive guidance to provide appropriate care if looking after children with complex health needs. In particular autism, self-harm, substance misuse, and mental health needs ( NMS 6.8)
- ensure there are effective procedures for monitoring and controlling the activities of the home. In particular, all deficiencies identified are acted upon in a timely

fashion. Ensure monitoring systems evaluate the service provided, to further improve the quality of care delivered. (NMS 21.1)

## Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **adequate**.

Young people who have lived at the home for some time have built strong and sustained relationships with staff. Other young people who have recently moved into the home are beginning to form positive relationships. Some young people have learned how to express their emotions positively; others are still to benefit from this. As a result, some young people gain good knowledge and understanding of their own backgrounds. All are developing a more positive view of themselves building on their self-confidence and self-esteem.

Young people are supported well overall to develop healthy lifestyles and this includes young people attending routine health appointments. Young people are supported to eat balanced diets to maintain healthy outcomes. A young person said 'We give our suggestions each week for the menu,' and another said 'I've been to the doctors and dentist since coming to live here.' Young people have access to emotional and mental health services. Staff have an understanding of most of young people's specific health needs. However, some more specialist training has not been accessed to ensure all young people's needs are met. This relates to autism, self-harm, substance misuse and mental health needs. This could impact negatively on health outcomes for some young people now and in the long term.

Education is given high importance in the home. Staff members are very encouraging and they enable attendance and participation, through practical support and the use of rewards. Progress in education for those with a history of non-attendance is adequate; with some young people making advances to improve their attendance overtime; with others making small steps forward with regards to their school attendance from the starting point of their placements. Young people are being supported to get to school on time by staff and support in school when required. An educational professional said 'The staff support and communication is excellent; they come in to support the young person in school, attend in prompt meetings,' and 'They are an stable and experienced staff team with very positive relationships with the young person and us, this helps a lot.' However, for the majority of young people, their attendance level in education is not sustained at a good level. This is affecting their ability to achieve. Therefore, this has a negative effect for young people, reducing their future educational course options, employment opportunities and life chances.

Young people benefit from positive contact with family and significant others. This promotes their identity needs and sense of belonging. A young person said 'I do see my nan and I can phone her any time.' Staff understand the benefits of contact and build positive relationships with parents and significant others. This has enhanced relationships further and built support networks for young people. As a result this has improved communication and understanding between all parties, which is in young

people's best interests.

Young people are supported by staff to practise some independence skills. However, domestic tasks, cooking and some house chores, are minimally undertaken, not always being promoted in relation to young people's their age and understanding. This does not fully broaden their life skills to prepare young people for adulthood adequately.

## Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy positive relationships with staff, which are built upon honesty and respect. A young person said 'I do get on with most staff and I would go and talk to X, Y and Z about anything, as I get on best with them.' Consequently young people who have established relationships with staff are starting to thrive in a stable, nurturing and supportive environment. A young person new to living at the home is on a journey to build trusting relationships with staff. Young people are enabled to develop the skills to move forward in their lives and become more confident. Staff always see young people in a positive light and want them to make good progress.

Staff provide care in a way that promotes young people's welfare regardless of the challenges they present. Diverse needs such as vulnerability, personal safety and lifestyle choices are all effectively addressed. Young people are involved in a number of ways in the running of the home. For example, they contribute to their placement plans, weekly activity plans, menus, appointments and their activities; with help from staff. This contributes to keeping young people at the heart of what goes on in the home.

Staff plan young people's care well. They have a good understanding of the diverse needs of the young people and plan well to meet these needs in practice. Care planning is child-focussed and individually designed to the young person's needs, interest, background and views. Placement plans are regularly reviewed and adapted to meet young people's changing needs to safeguard and help them to develop the skills they will need for adolescence and in later in life. Direct work for the specific identified areas for each young person is regularly undertaken and recorded. This clearly evidences the work that has taken place with the individual young person and assists to demonstrate some of the progress made.

Young people enjoy spending their time with friends, family and undertaking some activities. Staff continue to try and engage young people in other activities to extend their life experiences within age appropriate activities.

Young people live in a detached house in a residential neighbourhood, with good and easy access to local shops and the town centre. The home is furnished in the main to an adequate and safe standard. Young people liked their bedrooms and have personalised them. However, the kitchen units and floor covering are very worn and work surfaces are damaged in places. This has been the case for some time.

Decoration in a number of other areas in the home, are marked and look tired; a number of carpets are worn and stained in places. This gave an unkempt appearance and an impression of a lack of care. This is not acceptable and does not provide young people with a high quality and comfortable environment in which to live. It does not promote the positive ethos that is evident in the care provided to young people overall. A young person said 'I'd like to have a say in how the home is decorated.'

## **Safeguarding children and young people**

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

Young people live in a home where safeguarding is a given high importance. Young people say that staff teach them about risks and how to keep themselves safe. Detailed risk assessments are available for each young person. These assessments link into the behaviour and placement plans, enabling it to be clearly cross-referenced to each area of work being undertaken. Risk assessments are updated regularly alongside any change required to behaviour and care plans where identified. These assessments help staff know what is required to keep young people safe. Staff demonstrate a very good knowledge of the welfare and safety risks to each young person. They are able to describe the work they are undertaking with each young person to reduce or eliminate the identified risks.

Young people's behaviour is improving in relation to their starting points. Some young people have presented high-risk behaviour which is now significantly reducing. For those young people who have lived in the home for some time, continuous steady progress has been made. Where young people have recently moved into the home, there is evidence that some progress is being made in relation to their behaviour. When young people do go missing from home, staff always take action to minimise the risks and secure young people's safe return. For example, staff will routinely check out young people's whereabouts and check on known addresses. They undertake direct work with young people to address this risk taking behaviour. Staff work effectively with the police and other agencies to ensure a proportionate response is taken, based on the individual concerns and the level of risk. It is recognised that there has been some success in reducing risk taking behaviour relating to missing from home incidents. A professional said that 'Staff are very proactive in calling missing from home meetings to make sure all agencies are working together to reduce and stop further incidents.' Although this is still to be sustained over a longer period of time to ensure all young people keep themselves safe indefinitely.

Behaviour management strategies are implemented and regularly reviewed to support and assist young people in developing positive behaviour. Sanctions are appropriately used, proportionate to age and understanding. Staff are trained in physical intervention and understand the need to encourage improved behaviour rather than attempt to force an issue. The use of physical intervention is very rare. Staff use negotiation and diffusion with young people, only considering restraint as a last resort.

The provider has strong safeguarding systems and procedures which staff follow in the event of any allegation or suspicion of abuse. The manager and staff have received child protection training. This is further supplemented by refresher training. Written guidance and procedures detailing the course of action to follow in the event of an allegation or if they have any concerns are readily available for all staff to access. Staff demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of the safeguarding procedures and because of this are able to promote and protect young people's safety.

Young people say there is no bullying at the home. Staff have spoken to all young people at the residents' meeting and individually explained that bullying will not be tolerated. This ensures young people are clear on what bullying is and that it is not acceptable.

Young people are protected from any hazards by a wide range of health and safety procedures, risk assessments and checks. Regular fire safety checks and maintenance arrangements contribute to a safe environment. Routine evacuation procedures and practices ensure that young people have awareness of what to do in the event of an emergency and staff know how to protect them. As a result, this ensures young people live in a physically safe and secure home.

All staff employed in the home are subject to appropriate vetting to ensure they are suitable to work with young people.

## **Leadership and management**

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

A very experienced manager supports the rest of the staff team who are committed and who themselves have substantial experience in working with young people in care. This helps to provide a stable home environment where good care outcomes for young people are achieved over time.

The Statement of Purpose outlines the aims and objectives of the home. However, the admissions criteria of the home is wide reaching and this has some impact on the compatibility of admissions to the home. As a result, on occasions this has hindered and delayed the progress of some young people.

Young people confirm they receive a children's guide, ensuring they are well informed about the home and the care provided. They said that staff explain the house rules to them. This helps young people to settle, be clear on expectations and gives them some information about how they will be cared for.

Young people live in a home that provides good quality care. The stable, experienced and skilled staff group are committed to achieving good outcomes for young people over time. The majority staff team are qualified with National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in caring for children and young people, or above. Staff that have



completed their probationary period have commenced the new level 3 children and young people's workforce diploma. In addition mandatory training undertaken by staff includes such areas as, first aid, safeguarding, behaviour management and sexual awareness. However, where young people have particular individual needs or have been recently diagnosed conditions, more specialist training is required. This relates to autism, mental health, self-harm and substance misuse. This will assist the staff further to care and support young people with a sound knowledge and understanding of their individual needs.

Staff say 'We are well supported,' and 'The manager is very approachable.' Regular informal and formal supervision takes place. This ensures that staff have access to continuing advice and guidance in relation to their care of young people.

The monitoring systems in place overall are to a good standard and report on the administration systems of the home. There is an up-to-date development plan, setting out planned areas to improve the operation of the service. The monthly monitoring undertaken by the Regulation 33 visitor covers the required areas set out in the regulation. In the main where weaknesses are identified, they are acted upon. All matters relating to safety have been addressed. However, on occasions shortfalls identified have not been acted upon in a timely manner, this relates specifically to replacing the kitchen fixtures and some areas requiring decorating within the home. The manager's regulation 34 monitoring does not always evaluate the service provided to assist in bringing about continued improvement in the quality of care provided at the home.

Young people's case files are stored confidentially and are arranged in a manner that makes them useable by staff and yet accessible to young people. The young people know they can have access to their records. These records and other written documentation are well organised and of a good standard. This facilitates positive communication with other professionals and ensures that young people have a permanent record of their history.

## 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* and the evaluation schedule for the inspection of children's homes.