

## Inspection report for children's home

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| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC066565        |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 21/09/2011      |
| <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> | 21/02/2011 |
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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 privately owned children's home is registered to provide care, accommodation and education for up to 26 boys and girls from eight years up to 17 years old. The home offers a specialised service to children and young people with autism.

### Overall effectiveness

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

Good personalised care is provided to young people, which takes into account their individual needs. Young people are making positive progress in their lives, which is supported by well-planned care. Strong and positive relationships exist between the young people and the staff. This assists young people in building trust and in turn is enabling them to work well with staff. Young people are safe and they benefit greatly from the effective safety measures and practices staff implement to keep them safe.

Not all parts of the home used by children are clean, of sound construction and kept in good structural repair internally. Some flats are decorated and furnished to a good standard, others are satisfactory. Aspects of some of the environment have deteriorated and some fixtures, fitting and furnishings are worn and broken.

Staff use and implement placement plans and other supporting records to assist in providing care to young people. However, these are not always effectively organised. This means that the new staff are not able to efficiently retrieve information to provide individual care to each young person. These records do not clearly show when the goals set for young people have been met and thus identify the progress young people have made

Although there are some opportunities for young people to give their views on the care they receive, this is not extensive enough to give young people a voice and enable them to express their views on all aspects of their life and care.

Mandatory training is provided to the staff. However, not all staff have attained the level 3 Children and Young People's Workforce Diploma qualification and they have not completed all specialist training in areas relating to caring for young people with learning disabilities.

### 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 that all parts of the children's home used by children are clean, of sound construction and kept in good structural repair internally and externally. (Regulation 31 (2)(d)(e)) | 28/11/2011 |

## Recommendations

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

- build on and seeking further the views, wishes and feelings of young people to influence the day to day running of the home and on the care they receive (NMS 1.1 and 25.2)
- ensure that young people know how their concerns will be dealt with and acted upon; in particular that the complaints procedure is in a format which will facilitate their understanding (NMS 1.1)
- ensure the home provides a comfortable and homely environment that is well maintained and decorated (NMS 10.2)
- ensure all staff attain level 3 Children and Young People's Workforce Diploma qualification (NMS 18)
- build on the existing training programme to equip staff with the skills required to meet the needs of the young people and purpose of the setting; in particular, conditions relating to young people with learning disabilities (NMS 18.1)
- ensure the home's development plan identifies and incorporates all planned changes in the operation or resources of the service (NMS 15.2 )
- ensure the young person's placement plan is monitored by a designated person to ensure all the requirements of the plan are implemented in line with their day-to-day care; in particular their progress in clearly established ( NMS 25.2)
- ensure that there is a clear written policy that clarifies the purpose, format and content of information to be kept on a young persons file. There is a system in place to monitor the quality and adequacy of record keeping and take action when required; in particular making sure that information is easily retrievable. (NMS 22.1)

## Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people enjoy good health. The staff ensure young people's health needs are

efficiently and effectively identified and services are provided to meet them. The young people's health is closely monitored and record keeping is accurate. Young people are encouraged and supported to attend routine appointments with dentists, doctors and opticians, both within school and the community. Physical exercise is well promoted. Young people regularly enjoy taking part in activities such as using trampoline, swimming, walking and the outdoor play facilities at the home.

Young people's preferences are incorporated in the menus provided by the home. A balanced diet is promoted and the staff encourage young people to eat healthy foods and snacks. Matters arising from diversity are well managed and particular dietary requirements are met. Young people enjoy using the on-site bistro several times a week, which gives them the social experience of using a restaurant and making choices. A number of young people are actively involved in shopping and cooking basic meals, with staff support.

All young people benefit from attending school on a full-time basis, which assists in them making good progress in their education. Contact between the home and school is regular. This enables the staff to support young people successfully with educational targets where appropriate. Therefore, there is good integration between education and the home environment to ensure good holistic planning to meet young people's needs to develop skills for life.

Young people fully benefit from the security, stability and sense of consistency that regular family contact brings to maintain long-term relationships. Family members confirm that the staff encourage and help them to keep in touch with their children, which is so important to them. A young person said: 'I phone home twice a week', and other young people have weekly visits and some overnight stays to see their family.

Young people are supported to develop life skills, such as personal care, helping to tidy their bedrooms, shopping, cooking and using community facilities. This builds on their confidence and self-esteem. A young person said: 'I enjoy cooking and cooked a Sunday roast dinner this week with staff help.' A parent said: 'Our child is so much more independent since coming to live at the home. The staff have made this possible and this has improved their daily life.' This helps young people to be prepared for adulthood.

## **Quality of care**

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

Young people unreservedly benefit from staff who are committed, child centred and caring; they pursue opportunities for young people to assist them in reaching their potential. Staff have built trust and strong relationships with the young people through their consistent care practices. Staff communicate with young people verbally, with the use of communication aids and visual daily routine planners. Young people use the varying forms of communication aids which best support their diverse needs. These assist and allow young people to make decisions and choices about

their daily routines and activities, facilitating young people building on their confidence and self-esteem.

Young people have their views sought and acted upon. Staff facilitate this by involving young people to make decisions about their lives. Examples of how young people's choices are implemented include activities, personalising bedrooms, menu planning and trips. However, young people's views and wishes are not significantly sought to influence the running of the home and all aspects of their care.

Staff are aware of their advocacy role to support young people to make a complaint when required. Young people are clearly supported by staff if they wish to make complaints. However, their right to complain is not fully promoted because there is not a suitable format explaining the complaints procedure for young people with varying learning disabilities.

Satisfactory written placement plans with other supporting records outline how each young person's needs will be met. There is a wealth of information to support and inform staff on how to care for young people. For example, individual daily routine plans include each young person's preferences for personal care. Parents are consulted and can attend their child's review. However, young people do not take an active role in their own reviews. Following reviews, placement plans are promptly updated to support young people's continued progress. However, the records do not always demonstrate all the progress made by the individual young person in achieving aims and goals. Staff and parents are, however, fully aware of each young person's progress, such as taking charge of aspects of their own personal care, daily living and social skills.

Young people receive medication safely and as prescribed by their doctor to support their health and welfare. This is achieved through staff being trained to safely administration and record the medication given.

Young people are supported to pursue their particular interests and leisure activities. They are encouraged to socialise, which enables them to build self-esteem and confidence. Young people choose the weekly activities they want to do and experience a range of activities, building on interests and social skills. Examples of this include eating out, swimming, trips out, cinema, interactive electronic gaming, swimming, trampoline sessions, going for walks and attending church.

The young people benefit from a wide range of leisure and education facilities on site. These include home cinema, bistro, gym, hydrotherapy pool and sensory room. Young people say that they enjoy using the many leisure facilities. These build on their life experiences, interests and confidence.

Young people's experience of the home's environment varies, depending on the flat in which they live. Some are decorated and furnished to a good standard, others are satisfactory. Aspects of some of the environment have deteriorated and some fixtures, fitting and furnishings are worn and broken. Offensive odours are evident in one flat. This is not providing a pleasant living environment throughout the home.

## Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are safe and parents confirm this. Young people benefit from specific detailed risk assessment and plans. Staff are fully aware of the individual risks of young people to ensure young people are kept safe. This enables young people to enjoy daily life, when out in the community and in the home, while still being safe.

Young people's welfare is promoted by the staff following clear safeguarding procedures and practices. For example, all staff receive mandatory training on the signs and symptoms of abuse and on procedures to alert appropriate persons to any concerns and report them. High staffing levels and support for young people assist in preventing any bullying or related behaviour.

Young people receive substantial support from the staff to promote positive behaviour. The staff approach is to de-escalate any challenging behaviour and they recognise any triggers for young people. This is reducing and minimising negative behaviour. Each young person has a behaviour support plan, specific to them, to allow the staff to work consistently with them. Parents say their children's behaviour has improved within social settings and they are more able to control their anxieties. This has been achieved with the support of staff and the implementation of positive behaviour strategies.

Young people live in an environment that is safe. Young people's health and safety and the safety of the building are very well managed, with regular reviews and oversight by the management team. Young people are safeguarded because fire safety is well maintained and the home carries out regular fire evacuation drills and health and safety risk assessments.

Young people are protected through sound recruitment procedures and monitoring of visitors to the home. This prevents unsuitable people having access young people.

## Leadership and management

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

An experienced manager supports staff to provide a stable and safe environment with good care outcomes for young people. A Statement of Purpose outlines the aims and objectives of the home. Parents and young people receive information in the form of a welcome pack. This clearly informs them about the home and the care that is to be provided, prior to or on arrival to young people.

Outcomes for young people have improved because all previous actions and the majority of the recommendations are met. However, not all care staff have completed a National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People, or its equivalent.



Young people receive consistent and good care from the staff team who are well trained. High staffing levels assist in supporting young people's care successfully. Although the staff receive some specialist training, such as autism, not all the conditions relating to learning disability areas are covered in the training programme. Additional training in specialist areas will equip staff further and ensure they fully understand all young people's needs.

Young people's inclusion in the local community is actively promoted. Young people visit and use local amenities on a regular basis. This has fostered positive community relationships, ensuring young people are included, enhancing their self-confidence and self-esteem.

Staff are very well supported to enable them to provide high quality care to young people. Management support is described as 'good' and 'open and approachable' by a staff team who clearly value the contributions of the recently appointed management team. There are regular opportunities for staff to discuss their roles and practices. Suitable arrangements for professional supervision have been identified by the management team as a priority. This is now being provided to ensure support and guidance are available to all staff to fulfil their roles and provide good quality care to the young people. This ensures the staff are properly supported and managed.

There is good and robust management of the home that identifies weaknesses, strengths and finds solutions to improve the service to children. These include changes to the staffing structures and communication systems. There are good systems in place to monitor, report and evaluate the administration systems of the home. Where weakness are identified they are being acted upon. The monthly monitoring undertaken by the Regulation 33 visitor covers the required areas set out in the regulation. Although the service has a development plan, not all areas identified for improvement have been incorporated into it.

Young people's case files are stored safely. However, young people's information is not easily retrievable or arranged in a manner that makes it effectively useable by staff or accessible to young people. This does not support good cross-referencing of all documentation; neither does it enable the management team and staff to evaluate and monitor young people's progress and development efficiently.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.