

## Inspection report for children's home

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| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC066912        |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 02/10/2012      |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Amanda Ellis    |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | Full            |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>       | Children's home |

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| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 19/01/2012 |
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## Service information

### Brief description of the service

This privately owned home provides accommodation for up to two young people. The home caters for young people who may display emotional or 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 **outstanding**.

Young people living at this home experience an outstanding level of quality of care. Effective management and staff teams ensure high standards maintained and young people's needs fully met.

Safeguarding practices are sound and young people learn how to keep themselves safe. Young people are safe and say they feel safe.

Young people are encouraged to be involved in planning and reviewing their care. They actively participate in the running of the home.

Young people are encouraged to aspire and achieve. For example, young people now have exceptional school attendance and engage in vocational training. Young people make excellent progress, including taking examinations a year earlier than their peers.

Young people benefit from participating in a wide range of activities. Young people have their health promoted and are taught how to keep themselves healthy. They receive support from a committed, knowledgeable and experienced staff team. Relationships between young people and staff are excellent and young people are positive about the home, staff, manager and quality of care.

The management of the home is excellent. The staff team are well trained, well supported and are confident and capable in their duties. A young person commented that 'This is my home, I am proud of it and love living here.'

Shortfalls identified at this inspection are in relation to encouraging young people to review and add comments to their files and seeking the views of young people and taking these in to account in the development plan.

## Areas for improvement

### Recommendations

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

- ensure children are actively encouraged to read their files, and to correct errors and add personal statements (NMS 22.5)
- ensure the wishes, feelings and views of children and those significant to them are taken into account in monitoring the staff and developing the home, specifically in including within the development plan. (NMS 1.7)

### Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people thrive because of a service provision which values the diverse individual needs of young people. Significantly improved emotional resilience and the development of a positive self-view are positive outcomes which young people experience. Young people learn to develop positive attachments and relationships with carers. Consequently, positive behaviours are developed and negative behaviours reduced. This results in positive transitions for young people to future and permanent placements.

A significant strength of the home is enabling young people to pursue positive pursuits in place of risk taking behaviours or offending. The accomplishments which young people achieve raise self-esteem and further provide confidence to develop new skills and abilities. Positive behaviours greatly enhance outcomes for young people.

Young people receive health care appropriate to their individual needs to ensure they achieve good health outcomes. Their physical, psychological and emotional needs are met because the home provides an environment with integrated social, education and therapeutic professionals. Young people benefit from a healthy lifestyle promoted by a skilled and knowledgeable staff team.

Young people make exceptional progress in education in relation to their starting points. They have extremely good school attendance and make significant progress in their academic achievements. Staff support young people with their studies both within and outside of school. Effective daily communication between home and education staff ensures young people enjoy cohesive care.

Young people benefit from appropriate contact with their families, friends and other people who are important to them. The multi-disciplinary staff team work alongside the young people and their families. The team engage with the young people and their families to sensitively promote positive contact in line with arrangements agreed in individual care plans.

Independent living skills form part of the daily routine of the home. Young people receive support, guidance and encouragement to develop independence skills to prepare them for adult life. They undertake a range of activities, according to their age and ability, to prepare them for independent living. The acquisition of such life skills provides young people with improved outcomes to live independently.

### **Quality of care**

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

Young people receive an outstanding quality of care at the home. Staff demonstrate dedication and commitment to their work. Young people thrive with the quality of the care they receive. They develop positive and constructive relationships with the staff team and with each other. Young people say that one of the best things about the home is the staff. Young people flourish because of effective relationships with staff.

Young people's care package is inclusive of the involvement of the provider's education, care and therapeutic staff. Exceptionally effective partnerships with external agencies and social work services are also evident. One social worker commented 'The home works very much in partnership; they collaborate for the benefit of the young people. They have the interests of the young people at heart.'

Young people make a positive contribution to the home through daily and weekly meetings and contributing to decisions about their care. Management ensure the views of young people reflect in the running of the home. Consequently young people's views can influence the quality of their care.

Staff are exceptionally skilled at enabling young people to understand why it may not be possible to act upon their wishes and to set clear boundaries. Young people's behaviours improve and they learn socially acceptable behaviours, consistent rules and clear about expectations are reinforced by the staff team.

Young people receive a young person's guide which contains information on their care, advocacy, contacts and the details for Ofsted. Young people know how to make a complaint to staff and outside agencies. The complaints procedure is on the notice board in an appropriate format; the weekly young people's meetings ensure that complaints are included. Young people have access to their own telephone to make private calls with relevant details for children's rights organisations. Young people say that they feel listened to and that their views taken into consideration.

Care planning, risk assessments and behaviour management plans are

comprehensive, detailed and up to date. Regular and consistent reviews of plans, alongside rigorous auditing ensure clarity for staff to provide effective support to children.

The home provides a healthy environment which enables young people to access a range of services. Routine liaison with relevant health care professional provides optimum levels of care for young people. The home has its own therapeutic service which provides therapeutic support to each young person; training and consultation to the staff team and liaison with the wider mental health service. Broader health care is provided in ensuring young people learn about healthy lifestyles, participate in physical activities and receive a highly nutritious diet with freshly cooked meals throughout the day. This means young people benefit from comprehensive health care which promotes good health.

The providers have their own school registered with the Department for Education. The home has a strong ethos about all young people attending and achieving in school. Young people express that they are extremely positive about attending school and proud of their significant achievements and improvements in behaviour. Young people develop skills, confidence and knowledge through participation in education. This provides a strong foundation for transitions to further education and vocational training.

Young people actively engage in a range of stimulating activities. Staff routinely participate with young people in a broad variety of leisure pursuits. Outdoor activities include climbing, golfing, mountain biking, fishing and kayaking. In addition, there are opportunities for more relaxing indoor and social pursuits. These opportunities provide young people with a range of ways to explore their talents and skills and thereby build confidence and self-esteem.

The home's environment is undergoing significant improvement. Despite the significant renovations, the home remains warm, comfortable and homely. Young people have chosen the décor of their bedrooms and the lounge area. The furniture is of a good standard.

## **Safeguarding children and young people**

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

Young people are safe and state that they feel safe. Robust working practices, comprehensive safeguarding policies, procedures and comprehensive risk assessments ensure young people's safety is prioritised. Staff demonstrate a thorough understanding of safeguarding issues and routinely review safe working practices to ensure they meet individual young people's needs. The calibre and training of staff demonstrate that the safety and welfare of the young people are paramount. Occasionally, other staff are used to provide additional cover. These staff members are well-known to the young people and are employees of the care company.

There have been no reported incidents of young people going missing from the home since the last inspection. The home has clear procedures in place to notify the relevant bodies in the event of a child going missing. Staff are clear about how to respond to a young person missing from the home, by following the local police and multi-agency procedures.

There has been a low incidence of the use of physical intervention in the home since the last inspection. Staff use physical interventions as a last resort when a young person is placing themselves or others at risk. All staff that utilise any restraint have appropriate up-to-date training. Young people learn to improve in their interaction with staff and each other because of effective behaviour management practices.

Staff employed to work in the home experience a rigorous selection process prior to taking up their positions. There have been changes within the home, with several staff members moving from another of the provider's homes. There has been no negative impact on the young people from these changes. The new staff are well known to the young people and the previous staff remain in contact.

There has been one allegation within the home since the last inspection. This was investigated in a timely and transparent manner. The manager's response was robust and all agencies notified and updated as required.

The home is physically safe for the young people. Health and safety is of paramount importance with rigorous maintenance procedures in place. Robust monitoring of visitors to the home further ensure the protection of young people from potential harm.

## **Leadership and management**

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

The home has a highly experienced and knowledgeable manager in place who recently moved to the home and has applied to be the Registered Manager.

Young people benefit from a home that has maintained exceptional standards since the last inspection. The home demonstrates capacity for continuing improvement, based on its track record and performance since the last inspection. There were no requirements and one recommendation made at the last inspection. This recommendation related to the home implementing a written policy that clarifies the purpose, format and content of information kept on the registered person's files and information to on the child's files. The effective implementation of this system has resulted in clarity in accessing documents.

There is a clear, well written Statement of Purpose, which accurately reflects the aims, ethos and facilities offered to children. The children's guide is informative and is available in two formats one written by the young people and one with more detailed text. It contains all the information specified in the national minimum

standards to give young people all the relevant information they might need.

The key strengths of the home are the expertise, knowledge and dedication which the staff team make to the delivery of the service. The staff team are dedicated and have solid experience. This means that young people receive sound and safe care.

Young people benefit from effective management and monitoring of the home. The manager undertakes rigorous routine monitoring activities, in addition to the independent monitoring visits by an independent person. These systems ensure that young people receive a consistently high quality of care.

The manager is able to demonstrate how the quality of care provided to young people has improved their life chances. The strengths and weaknesses of the home are recognised by the Registered Manager and are used to inform future practice. A development plan is in place for this home; while pragmatic in planning for improvements, it is lacking sufficient detail as to how the service seeks the views of young people and those significant in developing the home.

Staff benefit from excellent training. They engage in a range of professional training which underpins their practice. All staff are suitably qualified and receive regular, good quality supervision. They say that they are able to seek advice and support when necessary. The manager confirms that she is very well supported and that the management team meet regularly. The home is financially well-resourced and is working effectively within the allocated budgets.

All records are very good, records are clear, up to date and stored securely, therefore ensuring that records contribute to an understanding of their lives. Although, young people are not routinely encouraged to read their files or add personal statements. Young people are being encouraged to participate in recording their time at the home.

The manager has systems in place to notify relevant agencies, including Ofsted, of significant events to ensure the protection of young people by multi-agency decision making.

## 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.