

## Inspection report for Children's Home

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| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC066917     |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 08/12/2010   |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Chris Scully |
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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 outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

### 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 service is a children's home that offers a long term therapeutic placement for up to two young people aged between 10 years and 17 years on admission, who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. The premises are located on the outskirts of a large town and consist of a detached farm house, domestic in appearance and within walking distance of some local amenities. The home has two vehicles for transporting the young people to other areas, so that they can access a range of recreation and leisure facilities and other amenities. Staffing levels can be adjusted to match the individual needs of the young people. Night time supervision is determined by levels of need and risk.

This service has its own school, which the young people can access as part of their educational programme. Older students are provided with individual programmes that may include part education and part work experience. The young people are able to engage in therapy that is provided by the responsible individual who has postgraduate qualifications in cognitive behaviour therapy.

There were two young people living at the home at the time of this visit.

### **Summary**

The overall quality rating is good.

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

At this unannounced full inspection, all the key standards were inspected. The main focus of the inspection was to identify how well the home meets the needs of young people living there.

Overall, this is a good service with outstanding outcomes for enjoying and achieving. Young people live in a safe and very supportive environment, which helps them to feel secure. Young people spoke about the support they receive from staff and their experience of living here. The young people's comments are reflected in the main body of the report. Relationships between staff and children are positive. Young people's education is actively encouraged resulting in them making good progress and developing a range of skills to support independent living.

Young people receive good quality care. All of their needs are carefully planned for by motivated and caring staff. Staff encourage young people to participate in decision making processes which affect them, such as reviews. The home performs well in all of the outcome areas including meeting the demands of equality and diversity.

Staff have a wide range of experience and skills to support the individual needs of

young people. Monitoring systems work appropriately, identifying what works well and areas for improvement. However, there are some shortfalls within the recording of medication; staff supervision, the allocation of pocket monies, outstanding repairs and the record of restraints.

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

Not applicable as no actions or recommendations were raised at the last inspection.

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

The provision is good.

Staff have a very good understanding of the individual dietary needs of young people and provide them with healthy nutritious meals. They actively encourage young people to eat healthily and to explore new foods. This is further supported by the introduction of culture days during which young people try different meals from around the world. Regular opportunities to eat in restaurants and food outlets enable young people to explore the social aspects of sharing a meal. Young people confirm they have a say in the menus and are encouraged to shop for ingredients. Hence, young people develop future life skills, such as budgeting and food preparation while maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Young people comment that they enjoy preparing meals and baking with staff.

The good health of children is effectively promoted because staff have an excellent understanding of their individual and specific health needs. For example, staff seek support from other agencies, such as the children and adolescent mental health service to ensure young people receive effective help and guidance. All young people are registered with the appropriate health care professionals. Staff closely monitor young people's health and make sure they get the appropriate care, advice and support when they are feeling poorly. Young people state staff take care of them when they are ill making sure they have plenty of fluids and take their medication.

The systems for administering and recording of medication are not sufficiently robust. Records do not make it clear as to the actual dosage of medication administered to the young person. For example, staff are using code letters to say how much medication has been given within records, which are not agreed by the organisation. The use of a medication continuation sheets is not effective as they do not always identify the type of medication and dosage to be given. This is not good practice as it does not provide an accurate record of administered medication. Young people have individual medication cabinets, which effectively minimise any potential risk of mixing the medication with another young persons. However, medication monitoring systems are not robust as two tablets were missing from the young person's medical cabinet and could not be accounted for.

Staff encourage young people to take an interest in looking after their health and lead healthy lifestyles. As a result young people take part in variety of activities, such as attending local gyms, kayaking, rambling and rock climbing. Staff effectively

promote healthy lifestyles by providing very good advice, support and information on a wide range of health and social issues. This includes personal hygiene, smoking cessation and sexual health which means young people are able to consider the potential impact these activities have upon their health. Young people's health care plans are regularly revived, which ensures they remain current and the ever changing needs of the young person are effectively met.

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

The provision is good.

Young people's privacy is actively promoted. They have single bedrooms and their privacy and dignity are respected when washing. The accommodation provides plenty of space where young people can relax easily and spend time alone when they wish. Staff respect young people's privacy, which is consistent with good parenting and the need to protect young people. Confidential information is held securely in the office.

Young people know how to make a complaint. Their concerns are listened to, taken seriously and always addressed by staff. Staff are open to responding to young people's concerns and young people receive a full response to their complaint within the prescribed timescales. Young people state that they feel safe in the home and know who they can talk to if they were worried about anything.

The home gives protecting young people from harm a high priority. Staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, resulting in their ability to promote and safeguard young people's welfare. This is enhanced by the clear procedures and guidance for responding to concerns about young people's safety. Staff receive suitable safeguarding and child protection training.

Good advice is provided to young people on how to keep themselves safe. Young people comment that staff keep them safe. For example, when crossing roads and when in the community, as staff sensitively highlight potential dangers and ways to avoid these. Bullying is not an issue for young people. Staff are aware of the potential for bullying and provide a high level of supervision and encourage young people to deal with any difficulties constructively.

Young people going missing from care is not an issue at the moment. Discussions with young people regarding the potential dangers of missing from care mean they are able to make safe, informed choices. Young people are effectively supervised, which means staff are fully aware of their whereabouts. Detailed individual risk assessments and plans for what staff should do if young people go missing are in place. The plans clearly set out what action is taken including: staff trying to contact young people by telephone, going out to look for them, collecting them when they are found and who should be notified.

Comprehensive individualised behaviour management plans and risk assessments actively encourage acceptable behaviour and ensure challenging behaviour is

effectively addressed. Young people know what standards of behaviour are expected and comment that the house rules are fair. Records of physical interventions are in place, but do not always record the duration of the restraint. Also on one occasion three restraints were recorded together. This is not appropriate as it is unclear as to the duration of each restraint and the time that it took place as the entry covers a period of two hours. The use of positive consequences has a very positive impact upon young people. For example, rewarding a young person for their swift action in calling the emergency services to come to the aid of a member of staff significantly enhanced their self-esteem. This demonstrates the positive relationship young people have with staff and their increasing confidence and maturity in dealing with difficult situations.

Staff see young people in a very positive light and are committed to helping them when they are anxious or upset. They are knowledgeable and understanding about young people's individual behaviours which mean they are able to offer effective guidance and support. Young people say that staff are good at helping them and they feel safe.

Health and safety matters are managed well. Individual and general risk assessments enable staff to put into place comprehensive plans to lessen or eliminate risk. All risk assessments are reviewed regularly to ensure the information is up to date and reflects the ever changing needs of young people. Fire, electrical and gas equipment are checked regularly and young people take part in fire drills so that they know what to do in an emergency. Maintenance programmes are in place for the home to ensure it remains in good repair. However, there are outstanding issues with regards to mould and damp patches in the bathroom and some areas of damp on the landing.

The recruitment and selection of people working at the home is very thorough to make sure young people are protected. All staff working at the home have an appropriate Criminal Records Bureau check. All visitors to the home are suitably vetted and supervised to ensure young people's safety.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Young people feel very well supported and confirm that 'things are going well'. Staff view young people as individuals and ensure they receive excellent help and guidance when they need it. Young people's needs are explicitly identified in comprehensive placement plans, which are effectively put into practice. The home meets a wide range of young people's potential needs, including healthy lifestyles, culture, sexuality, gender and personal care. In addition, the home has well-established and effective links with a variety of helping services, advocacy services and therapists. This ensures young people have full access to the right support to meet their specific needs, including those relating to equality and diversity.

Young people's education and achievement is encouraged and supported. They are

doing well at school, talking confidently about forthcoming exams and looking forward to college. Young people are confident to express the type of courses they would like to attend at college. For example, retail and working with animals. Young people have realistic expectations about securing their first choice of course and have back-up plans in place. Young people comment upon the good support they get from staff, the therapists and school which enables them to make progress. Excellent links between the home, school and therapists means young people receive effective, consistent support and guidance. As a result young people are able to achieve their individual goals. For example, building their confidence, self-esteem and independence. Their placement plans provide extensive details about their learning needs and how these are supported. The home's daily routines effectively support young people's daily attendance at school.

Staff provide practical and emotional support when young people experience difficulties going to school. This support always reflects young people's individual needs and the issues they face. The home has good links with young people's schools, and work very well with teachers to support their education and deal with any problems that may arise. Staff actively encourage young people to enjoy their spare time and to take part in leisure activities at home and within the community. Young people enjoy an extensive range of activities and are able to follow their particular interests, such as cycling, kayaking, going to the sports centre and shopping. As a result young people are able to build confidence in their own abilities and take pride in their achievements.

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

The provision is good.

Planning the care received for each young person living in the home is effective. This is because each individual has a placement plan that identifies the purpose of the placement and how the care plan will be progressed. Case files confirm young people's progress is reviewed within the statutory time periods. Weekly in-house meetings mean all three staff groups are very well informed about the young person's progress and ongoing needs. This provides excellent opportunities to identify how a young person's current needs are to be met. Monthly key worker reports provide chronological reports for the home and placing authority, resulting in them being fully informed of a young person's placement.

Young people are appropriately supported to maintain contact with their family and friends, for example, using telephone or email. Contact visits are effectively managed to ensure young people's safety is ensured, for example, two members of staff accompanying the young person. As a result young people are in regular contact with their family.

Effective systems for the planning of placements exist between the home and the local authority. Time is taken to gather the necessary information to ensure the home is able to meet each individual's needs and it is the most appropriate placement for them. This results in a smooth introduction to the home, which is



carefully and sensitively monitored. For example, moving a young person into the home with their key worker ensured constancy and stability for them. As a result they are happy, settled and state they have the 'best key worker ever.' Also the home is good at helping young people move on. Pathway plans are in place, which enable young people to make comment upon where they want to live and the skills they need to achieve for independent living.

Young people's views are actively sought by staff in relation to all aspects of the home. They are involved in decisions about what food they eat and what they do in their spare time. The manager and staff actively seek young people's views about how well they feel they are looked after. Young people have regular access to advocates to enable them to express their views effectively. Young people enjoy positive relationships with staff based on honesty and respect. They are very helpful and enjoy spending time with young people, exchanging banter with the young people. They have clear professional and personal boundaries with young people consistent with good child care.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

Staff actively encourage young people to develop skills they need for adult life, suitable to their age and understanding. Young people routinely learn skills through taking part in the running of the home and carrying out tasks, such as food preparation, cooking, shopping and tidying their bedrooms. Young people are encouraged to develop money managing skills, which enable them to budget their money later in life. However, it is not appropriate for young people to pay for the home's cars to be washed. This has a negative impacted upon young people's choice on how to spend their pocket money. This issue was discussed with the Registered Manager, who has stated that the money will be reimbursed to the young people. Therapeutic input helps prepare young people emotionally for moving on. This results in young people having every opportunity to develop a wide range of life skills to support them in the future.

Young people are encouraged to express their individuality when purchasing clothes and other personal items. Their clothes are of a good standard and meet the young people's needs in relation to their age, gender and culture. Young people live in a comfortable and homely environment that meets their needs. Young people like the accommodation and have personalised the home to reflect their interests and individual tastes. For example, covering their bedroom walls with posters of favourite actors, films and pop stars.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Young people benefit from a well organised and managed home, which has a positive impact upon the outcomes for young people and their families. The home

has effective guidance and procedures for staff and established systems to monitor the operation of the home and improve the quality of care. There is an up-to-date Statement of Purpose that describes what can be expected in terms of facilities. Young people receive a service guide that provides a clear outlines the services and support available to them as well as daily routines. This is initially shared with young people at the point of admission to the home. As a result young people are aware of the care and support they receive.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Young people's individual needs are fully assessed as staff work hard to enable young people to achieve their full potential, having regard for their diverse needs wishes and circumstances. For example, considering their choice of courses in further education and how this can be achieved. Clear explanations are provided by staff as to why some of their wishes cannot be addressed at this time, such as returning home. This enables young people to develop realistic expectations.

Team meetings take place regularly every month. This allows the whole staff team to discuss and review individual young people needs and other issues. For example, the running of the home, staff development, training, and exploring ways to improve upon the service provided. However, staff are not receiving a minimum of one and a half hours formal one-to-one supervision each month. New staff are not receiving supervision fortnightly during the first six months of their employment. This does not comply with the standards to monitor their performance, accountability and identify their individual development needs.

Young people receive good levels of supervision and support because staff have a wide range of skills, expertise and experiences. The vast majority of the staff have achieved a recognised child care qualification or are working towards gaining one. Staff have very good access to suitable training. The training programme comprehensively covers the needs of young people and provides staff with the skills and knowledge to effectively do their jobs. As a result young people feel safe and happy in the home.

The home has good systems in place to review the quality of care. Areas for improvement are identified and action taken to ensure the home meets the needs of the young people and promotes their welfare. Young people are encouraged to read their records and make comment upon these. Young people's files and other records are maintained. An independent person visits the home every month to complete checks on the care of young people and reports of these visits are made to the manager and Ofsted.

## **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/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider(s) must comply with the given timescales.

| Std. | Action                                                                                                                                                                                  | Due date   |
|------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 12   | ensure there are suitable arrangements for the recording, handling, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of any medicines received into the children's home. (Regulation 21.1) | 23/12/2010 |

## Recommendations

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

- ensure the record of restraint clearly identifies the duration of the restraint and each restraint is individually recorded (NMS 22.9)
- ensure the interior of the home is in a good state of repair with particular regard to the mould and damp patches in the bathroom and hallway (NMS 24.3)
- ensure young people are encouraged to manage their own finances and are given as much choice as possible in making decisions about spending their pocket money (NMS 11.8)
- ensure all staff working in the home receive at least one and a half hours one-to-one supervision from a senior member of staff each month. New staff receive one-to-one supervision at least fortnightly during the first 6 months of their employment. (NMS 28.2)