

Inspection report for children's home

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| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC359846         |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 1 September 2010 |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Jacqui Gosling   |
| <b>Type of Inspection</b>      | Key              |

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|--------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 23 March 2010 |
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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 home provides care and accommodation for up to five young people of either gender aged between 13 to 17 years on admission, who exhibit challenging behaviour. Placements are on a medium- to long-term basis. Emergency admissions are considered if sufficient places are available and appropriate assessments of risk can be undertaken. The home provides accommodation up to the age of 18 depending upon the needs of each young person and the requirements of the placing authority. The property is detached and has private gardens to the front and rear. There are five single bedrooms for young people. Currently, four young people are living here. Five young people completed Ofsted's pre-inspection survey and one young person spoke positively about living at the home during the inspection.

### **Summary**

This was an unannounced full inspection, which looked at key standards and all outcome areas. The purpose of the visit was to assess the quality of care being provided to young people who live at the home.

The home provides outstanding levels of care and supervision to the young people placed here. Young people's physical and emotional health needs are proactively addressed, with detailed information being collated in respect of young people's health needs.

The home supervises and supports at an appropriate level, which is based on the risks and needs of the young people who are accommodated. Three shortfalls were identified, some young people are not always signing their financial records, aspects of the written record of the protocol that is in place when staff are lone working are not sufficiently robust and placing authorities have not provided the required looked after children's paperwork for some of the young people.

Young people live in a home which offers homely accommodation and it is decorated, furnished and maintained to a good standard. They make good relationships with staff, who also work effectively with other agencies. The commitment of all staff to meeting the needs of young people is evident.

There are robust management systems in place to ensure that staff are well supported and trained to provide a outstanding level of care to the young people resident in the home.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

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

No actions or recommendations were made at the last inspection that took place in March 2010.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Young people's health and well-being are effectively promoted by the staff within the home. The organisation has developed clear guidance regarding promoting and safeguarding young people's health; these are known and followed by staff working in the home.

Staff provide healthy, nutritious meals that meet young people's dietary needs; fruit is available for the young people to help themselves to. Staff are knowledgeable regarding young people's likes and dislikes and endeavour to develop menus around this, while encouraging young people to try different foods. Young people have opportunities to contribute to the planning and preparation of meals within the home with the assistance of staff especially as part of developing their skills for later life.

Staff take a proactive approach to meeting young people's physical and emotional health needs. The health and care needs of young people are identified and updated regularly. The home seeks all available information regarding young people's health needs at the time of placement and registers young people with appropriate health professionals at the earliest opportunity. Staff ensure that young people receive prompt medical attention when this is required.

Staff promote healthy lifestyles by encouraging healthy activities and diet. Staff encourage young people to be actively involved in their health promotion. For example, talking to young people about the risks of smoking, alcohol and illegal substances. Referrals to external specialist agencies are made when further support is needed for the young people.

The well-being of young people is promoted by staff completing first aid training. All medication is stored appropriately within a locked cabinet. The files for the young people contain signed medical consent forms and the required permission to allow staff to provide first aid and 'homely' medicines. This enables young people's health needs to be quickly met.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Young people continue to receive excellent care and support that promotes and safeguards their welfare. Staff are confident and able to understand their role and level of responsibility in terms of child protection and safeguarding practice. Operational policies, procedures and staff guidance are used effectively to promote young people's safety and welfare.

Staff are aware of their responsibilities to promote privacy and confidentiality, whilst ensuring young people's safety. Staff do not enter young people's rooms without permission, except when young people are considered at risk. The organisation has developed a clear policy in relation to when a young person's belongings need to be searched and a record is made of the search within the young person's file and in a central log. Young people have use of a telephone for their private conversations.

The young people are well informed about how they can make a complaint or raise a concern about their care and say they are confident that staff listen to them and take appropriate action when necessary. The young people are also able to access an independent advocate to support them in making a complaint. They have not made any complaints since the last inspection. All staff undertake training in managing complaints. This ensures that the home takes young people's concerns seriously.

Safeguarding is the paramount priority within the home; it influences everything that is undertaken within the home. Young people are provided with appropriate levels of staffing. A key success of the home is the way in which staff are able to engage with young people about matters that are significant to their safety and protection. Important areas are covered that are part of the home's approach to managing risks and raising young people's awareness. For example, individual and group sessions are regularly delivered covering a wide range of subject areas like personal safety, behaviour, relationships and bullying.

The home has clear procedures for responding to child protection concerns and the manager and staff have clear guidance for liaising with the local safeguarding children's team and the local police. Staff receive robust training and the local authority works in partnership with the home to enhance and develop their knowledge and awareness regarding safeguarding matters. Young say, 'they feel safe living here.'

Staff work actively in the home to ensure that bullying does not happen. Young people are well educated about the detrimental effects bullying behaviours have. They are clear about the home's policy on bullying as this is discussed when they first come to live at the home, during key worker sessions and their house meetings. Young people are supervised and interactions are monitored, to ensure that all young people are safe at all times and any incidents of bullying are quickly identified and dealt with.

Staff are aware of triggers, which may result in a young person absenting themselves from the home. Staff respond appropriately to instances of young people going absent without authority and work closely with other agencies to minimise any risk. Records of unauthorised absences are kept and monitored by the manager.

Relationships between staff and young people are positive. Young people say, 'if they are worried they would speak to members of staff' and 'that rules are fair because they apply to all.' Young people are assisted to develop socially acceptable behaviour through discussions with staff on an individual basis and during house meetings. This takes place in a safe and supportive environment. Staff are able to set and maintain safe and acceptable boundaries in relation to acceptable behaviours. For example, young people are treated as individuals and are offered plenty of praise and encouragement. All staff are appropriately trained in managing challenging behaviour, with physical interventions only being used as a last resort to keep young people safe. Appropriate records are maintained in respect of restraints and any consequences used within the home.

Staff are proactive in taking steps to ensure that young people, staff and visitors are safe from fire and other hazards in the home. Frequent checks are carried out on fire equipment and emergency lighting with fire drills regularly undertaken in excess of the requirements. The required certificates of insurance are displayed as required. All visitors to the home are shown the fire exits to ensure their safety. The home undertakes comprehensive risk assessments in relation to all aspects of the safety of the premises and grounds, including a fire risk assessment. Risk assessments are also undertaken regarding the potential behaviour of young people and their activities. However, the written record of lone working when taking young people on holiday is not sufficiently robust.

Staff recruitment procedures are robust covering all the requirements of the relevant national minimum standards. The organisation is proactive in ensuring they only employ people who are safe to work with the young people.

The identity of all visitors to the home is checked before they are allowed to enter the home. These robust systems protect young people, as they ensure that unauthorised individuals are not able to gain access to the home.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Young people benefit from receiving individualised support, that is based on a continuous in-house assessment of their needs and from a staff team that are focused on assisting them to achieve.

Young people's needs are fully assessed at the time of admission and an in-house placement plan is developed to ensure that they receive a high level of individual support in line with this assessment. To support young people when English is not their first language, staff ensure they have full access to an interpreter.

Young people's well-being is promoted as they are allocated a key worker who is responsible for the coordination and monitoring of the young person's programme of care and support. Additionally, young people are engaged in a range of activities that encourage them to manage their behaviour in a way that reduces risks to themselves and others.

The home is supported by specialist services when necessary. For example, a representative of the children and adolescent mental health service is currently visiting the home on a fortnightly basis to assist the staff team in developing an insight into the reasons behind young people's health concerns and to develop their skills in managing their presenting behaviours. Young people are clearly benefiting from this.

Young people are actively supported to meet their educational potential. All the young people are attending full time educational facilities; which reflect their educational development abilities, age and presenting behaviours. Staff are clear as to how they can assist young people and ensure that there is regular communication with the school to ensure that appropriate support is provided to each young person.

The religious and cultural needs of young people are incorporated into their individual plans and are also reflected on the cultural calendar; which is on display and represents the wider multicultural society in which they live.

Regular house meetings and key worker sessions are used to review current activities and explore new ones. The home has good transport provision which meets the needs of the young people.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are fully supported to make a positive contribution to their placement and future plans. All young people are assisted to communicate their views in discussion with their key workers and during house meetings.

Despite a number of requests from the manager, placing authority social workers have not provided the required up to date and complete looked after children information for some of the young people living here. The staff ensure young people's needs are assessed and recorded in individual in-house placement plans to ensure that their needs and any required support are identified and addressed. Staff use the information gathered to develop individual placement objectives in conjunction with the young people, so that all parties are clear as to what work needs undertaking. This excellent practice enables young people, with support from staff, to identify their progress and set their own goals to be reached.

Placement plans are continually reviewed to ensure that they remain relevant and that where necessary tasks can be amended to meet the needs of the young people. Young people are encouraged to attend and fully participate in these reviews. Staff from the home prepare detailed reports for each statutory review so that informed decisions can be made.

Wherever possible and appropriate, the home strives to forge positive relationships with young people's parents, family members and friends. Young people are supported to maintain contact with their family, where there are no restrictions. Arrangements for contact are clearly recorded and staff monitor contact in line with these arrangements.

Young people are well supported by staff at the time of their admission to the home, with young people receiving clear guidance regarding the routines of the home, the home's expectation of them and what they can expect from staff. All relevant information is gathered before a young person is admitted to the home, so that an assessment can be made as to whether the placement is appropriate. These effective procedures ensure that young people's placements do not break down.

Young people are involved in decisions around the house and in any events affecting them personally. This is facilitated by good relationships between the staff and young people. If extra support is needed in any decision making, an independent advocate will be contacted. This arrangement provides young people with an additional safeguard.

Records show consultation and communication with young people is an area of real strength in the home. As well as being consulted about their care plans, young people are regularly consulted about the daily life of the home, in house meetings and through informal discussion. Young people's records show that they are fully involved in all the decisions that are made about their lives and they say they can contribute their views to the running of the home.

## **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is outstanding.

None of the young people currently living here have reached the age when a pathway plan will be implemented. In recognition of some young people's future needs, staff ensure they start to receive in-house support to prepare them for moving into adulthood when they reach 15 years of age. The organisation has developed an independent living skills plan. This 'life skills' pack ensures young people are supported to take responsibility for budgeting, cooking, washing and all areas of their personal care in preparation for adulthood. It also ensures they are aware of how to open bank accounts, pay their bills and includes a comprehensive list of telephone numbers; for example the police and fire service. This effectively promotes young people's well-being.

The young people's clothing and personal requisite needs are fully met. There are clear policy and practice in respect of their allowances, but sometimes there are lapses and not all pocket money records are signed by young people as well as staff.

Young people enjoy homely accommodation which is decorated, furnished and maintained to a good standard. Young people are encouraged to contribute to the home's environment and as a consequence changes in the décor accurately reflect the taste of the young people. The home is well designed and offers ample space to meet the needs of young people. Young people are supported to decorate and personalise their own rooms, with the assistance of staff.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

The home is effectively managed and organised to enable young people to be the focus of the care provided by staff. This results in young people making excellent progress whilst they are resident.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. All recording systems take account of potential needs in relation to a young person's diversity such as identity, race, culture and religion. The home provides an environment where the value of equality and diversity is understood, promoted and celebrated.

Staff know and understand the aims and objectives of the service which is consistent with the home's Statement of Purpose. Young people are well informed about what the home does through information given to them in the young people's handbook.

The staff team work consistently and effectively to keep young people safe at all times. The staffing structure of the home is clear and supports the work with young people. There are clear lines of accountability in the home. The home has clear deputising arrangements in the absence of the registered manager and there is a formal on-call system if additional support is needed. Staff supervision records show that all the required topics are discussed and supervision takes place in accordance with required timescales.

Staffing is sufficient in number and competence to ensure that young people's needs are effectively addressed. There is a good mix of gender and cultural backgrounds within the staff team to promote young people's identity, well-being and reflect the multicultural society in which they live.

Staff training is effective and well coordinated to ensure that staff acquire the necessary skills and maintain statutory competences. The majority of staff have achieved the National Vocational Qualification at Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People and the remaining staff are in the process of completing this qualification.

There are robust systems in place to monitor the daily lives of the young people living in the home. Regulation 33 visits are undertaken monthly to monitor the overall care and welfare of young people. These reports are thorough and detailed. The manager reports on what action is being taken to rectify any issues identified by the visits. The manager also undertakes detailed monthly quality monitoring of all the files and records as required.

The individual records for the young people in the home are comprehensive, well organised and contain all the required information.

## **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 |
|----------|--------|----------|
|----------|--------|----------|

### **Recommendations**

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

- ensure risk assessments are carried out and recorded in writing, specifically staff lone working on holiday with young people (NMS 26.2)
- ensure young people sign their financial records (NMS 11.8)
- ensure placement plans are consistent with any plan for the care of the young people prepared by the placing authority and continue to request the looked after children paperwork when the local authority has not provided it as required. (NMS 2.1)