

## Inspection report for children's home

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| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC366002        |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 27/09/2011      |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Michelle Bacon  |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | Full            |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>       | Children's home |

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| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 09/02/2011 |
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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 service is a private children's home which provides care and accommodation for up to four young people of either gender, aged 10 to 17 years of age. A registered school is also included on site.

### Overall effectiveness

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

Young people receive a level of care which is satisfactory with some good features. In a survey young people have positive views about their care. They live in a supportive environment that provides good routines and boundaries. Young people are encouraged to develop their personal and social skills with activities outside of the home. They enjoy good relationships with the staff.

The home has an on site school and staff work hard at ensuring young people recognise the importance of a good education. Young people are often in crisis when they move to the home, however, behaviour management strategies do not take into account individual needs and the home relies heavily on the use of sanctions as a means of control. Young people report they feel safe, although do make risky decisions that can place them at risk of harm.

Monitoring systems do not demonstrate an evaluation of practice or outline appropriate action taken to improve the quality of care delivered. There are a number of breeches in regulations and these are having a direct impact on young people. Records show young people are putting their health at risk and some staff files do not comply with the regulations.

### 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   |
|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 13<br>(2001)  | ensure young people are provided with food which is properly prepared, wholesome and nutritious; and is sufficiently varied (Regulation 13(a)(i)(iv)) | 31/10/2011 |
| 17B<br>(2001) | review and revise the behaviour management policy to ensure it promotes appropriate behaviour (Regulation 17B (a) (b))                                | 31/10/2011 |
| 17            | ensure the following shall not be used as a disciplinary measure                                                                                      | 31/10/2011 |

|              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |            |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| (2001)       | - the imposition of any financial penalty, other than the requirement for the payment of a reasonable sum by way of reparation (Regulation 17(2)(g))                                                                                 |            |
| 20<br>(2001) | ensure each child is a registered patient with a general practitioner (Regulation 20(2)(b))                                                                                                                                          | 31/10/2011 |
| 26<br>(2001) | ensure full and satisfactory information is available in relation to staff; specifically, a complete employment history together with a satisfactory written explanation of any gaps in employment (Regulation 26 and Schedule 2(6)) | 31/10/2011 |
| 27<br>(2001) | ensure all persons employed receive appropriate supervision and appraisal.(Regulation 27(4)(a))                                                                                                                                      | 31/10/2011 |

## Recommendations

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

- ensure sanctions for behaviour are clear, reasonable and fair and are understood by all staff and young people (NMS 3.8)
- ensure staff are supported to manage their responses and feelings arising from working with young people who display challenging behaviour, in particular they are supported to understand how young people's previous experiences are communicated through behaviour (NMS 3.9)
- ensure the home regularly reviews incidents of challenging behaviour, examines trends or issues emerging from this, to enable staff to reflect and learn to inform future practice (NMS 3.21)
- ensure where any sanction ,disciplinary measure or restraint are used, young people are encouraged to have their views recorded in the records kept by the home. (NMS 3.18)
- ensure written records kept by the home when a young person goes missing detail action taken by staff, in particular any reasons given by the young person for running away and any action taken in the light of those reasons (NMS 5.10)
- ensure monitoring identifies patterns and trends and takes immediate action to address any issues raised by this monitoring. (NMS 21.2)

## Outcomes for children and young people

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

Staff ensure appropriate arrangements are in place for young people to fulfil their educational potential and maintain a healthy lifestyle. However, some young people are at an age where they are taking responsibility for their own health and do not attend necessary health appointments. Young people often choose to snack rather

than enjoy a healthy and nutritious meal. This means they are putting their health and well-being at risk.

Young people have the opportunity to acquire life skills in the preparation for independence, such as menu planning, budgeting, shopping for food and keeping their bedroom tidy. Pathway planning has begun for some young people however, not all young people are in contact with professionals who help them to develop and accomplish their pathway plan.

Young people contribute and understand their placement plans. They benefit from regular key worker sessions with the aim of developing a positive self view, respecting their backgrounds and identity. The home holds regular young people's meetings giving young people the opportunity to have input in the day-to-day running of the home.

Often young people have missed substantial amounts of education when they come to the home. They are supported to gain qualifications appropriate to their level of attainment and re-engage in their learning. Where young people are reaching school leaving age, they are encouraged to go onto further education.

Young people's sense of identity is reinforced through maintaining appropriate contact with their families. Where there are restrictions in place these are to safeguard the safety and welfare of young people. Young people have opportunity to engage in activities in the local area and socialise with friends.

## **Quality of care**

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

Young people enjoy positive relationships with the staff. There has been some bullying, however, this is being addressed. A social worker commented, 'I am impressed with their pro-activeness with the issue of bullying'. Young people have an allocated key worker who oversees their placement plan and ensures their needs are met. These needs are well documented, and progress is reviewed.

Complaints are taken seriously and handled appropriately. Clear information is given to young people advising them who they can contact if they have a complaint about their care. Where young people have had cause to complain, records confirm that these were resolved to their satisfaction. The home provides weekly updates for placing authorities and written contributions to young people's reviews. One stakeholder commented, 'the weekly updates are very good'. This ensures young people are cared for in line with their placing authority care plan. Staff value educational achievement and education is viewed as important. Staff support young people during education, attend parents' evening and where appropriate other educational events. This ensures young people enjoy their learning opportunities.

Young people live in a home that is modern, spacious and well maintained. There is plenty of outdoor space and they can access the local amenities such as shops,

leisure facilities and health care services.

## **Safeguarding children and young people**

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

Young people report in a survey that they are safe and feel safe. The home's arrangements for safeguarding young people are good. They work in partnership with other agencies responsible for the protection of young people. Staff recognise the young people's vulnerabilities and have taken action to address these.

Staff have undertaken work with young people to develop their understanding about keeping themselves safe. The home works in line with agreed police protocols for managing young people being missing, to ensure their safety. The number of incidents of young people missing from the home is high. However, this is often due to young people not returning home within agreed times and therefore being absent without permission. To minimise potential risk, the staff complete daily welfare checks by arranging to meet young people. This ensures young people are safe and well. The home has clear practices and agreed arrangements with placing authorities to ensure the safety and welfare of young people who are missing from care. However on return, young people's views and comments are not consistently recorded to discuss the reasons why they were missing. This means any concerns about the placement are not addressed.

Young people are encouraged to develop socially acceptable behaviour and they know what the expectations of good behaviour are. However, the behaviour management policy is ineffective in practice. The home has implemented individual rewards systems; however, these are not tailored to an individual's specific needs. Therefore, sanctioning is the main tool used to correct negative behaviour, with imposition of financial penalties being the main penalty imposed. Also, young people's views are not consistently recorded in response to sanctions imposed. All staff are trained in the use of restraint; it is only used as a last resort, for the minimum period and with minimum force. Discussion following a restraint is always followed up with the young person to allow them the opportunity to reflect on the effects of their behaviour. Young people's risk assessments highlight any specific risk-taking behaviours and the strategies used to minimise these.

Young people live in a home that is free from any hazards to health and safety. All fire drills are up to date and all equipment is regularly tested. A selection of staff files were inspected and do not meet regulatory requirements. Information in respect of a complete employment history was absent from one file. This means the home's recruitment and vetting procedures are not as robust as they should be.

## **Leadership and management**

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

The Statement of Purpose accurately reflects the aims and objectives of the home and is reviewed annually. This is made available to parents and stakeholders. Young people are presented with a detailed guide to the home and the facilities available to them. At the last inspection there were no recommendations or requirements.

There is regular monitoring of how the home is operating. However, this has not identified shortfalls, patterns or trends. There is no clear evaluation of the behaviour management strategies used nor their impact on the welfare of young people. The manager is active and involved with children and staff in day to day care practice. Staff are suitably trained and qualified, however, they do not receive regular supervision and appraisals. Nevertheless, they say they are satisfied with the support they receive from the manager.

Young people's files are detailed and give a clear picture of the young person and contribute to an understanding of the young person's life, and are stored securely.

Equality and diversity practice is **satisfactory**.