

Inspection report for children's home

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| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC368137          |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 16 September 2009 |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Heather Chaplin   |
| <b>Type of Inspection</b>      | Key               |

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| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 26 March 2009 |
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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**

The home is a three storey period house in a small town near the coast, and provides individual care for one young person with emotional and behavioural difficulties. It is not easily accessible to young people, staff or visitors with restricted mobility or visual impairments.

The bedrooms for young people and staff are on the first floor, and the staff office is on the second floor, the latter reached by very steep steps. Young people and staff share a bathroom.

There is a kitchen and lounge space for dining and relaxing. The home has a very small garden at the front and back. Sports and leisure facilities can be accessed by car, and there are many local places of interest to visit.

Education is provided either locally or at the company's own small school, situated at another children's home approximately half an hour's drive away.

### **Summary**

This was a positive unannounced inspection and the young person was present, but did not wish to take part on this occasion. Two recommendations have been made, neither of which impact in any way on young people's direct care or safety.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

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

The staff files were inspected at the company's head office and were found to meet the requirements of Schedule 2 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001. In particular, the company has improved practice in conducting telephone checks of written references before appointment takes place.

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

The provision is good.

Staff encourage young people to prepare snacks and cook for themselves, and this often takes place during the night, so it is not always possible to record exactly which foods have been consumed. Although staff promote a healthy diet, in practice this is difficult to monitor, but there have been significant improvements in independence skills since the last inspection and the range of healthier foods consumed continues to increase.

Health care planning documents are well recorded and provide sufficient information to enable staff to look after young people well. The home is now working towards a consultation agreement with a child psychologist to provide staff with support and guidance in managing young people's behaviour, even if young people themselves choose not to take up specialist medical resources. It has proved very difficult to encourage engagement with any health care professionals, but the offers of support remain in place if needed.

The home has a clear medicines policy in place, and uses a controlled drugs book to record the controlled medicines currently in use. The administration entries cannot be signed by two staff,

because due to improvements in the young people's behaviour, there is usually only one member of staff on duty when medicines are given, so no recommendation has been made. Medicines are kept securely in the staff office.

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

The provision is good.

Young people have their own bedrooms and staff respect their privacy at all times. They have managed to balance the need for privacy and choice with supporting young people with very complex needs to accept improvements to their environment.

There is a complaints procedure and a suitable complaints log in place, but there have been no complaints raised since the last inspection. The home has a child protection policy and all staff receive updated training in December of each year. There is a computer in the home and this ensures that the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures are available to the manager and staff online.

The company has an effective anti-bullying policy which is in operation across all the children's homes in the group. Bullying is not an issue in this home at the present time. There has been no recent absconding from the home, but a good risk-based policy is in place to help staff respond to any incidents of this nature, and the manager says that they would respond proactively to search for the young person before following police protocols.

The restraints log shows that there have been no recent incidents where physical intervention was required. Permitted sanctions are verbal reprimand, loss of 'trust' (restrictions in free time), grounding and loss of points, which in turn has financial implications for the young person. The inspector observed a group of staff receiving Team Teach training in physical intervention, and this was very well delivered.

The company employs a health and safety consultant across all their homes. All the necessary risk assessments on the premises, fire risk and individual issues with young people are in place, with detailed actions for staff to follow. Annual fire equipment checks are conducted and the home has an effective system for monitoring fire safety through a well recorded fire log and monthly fire drills.

A sample of staff files for all the company's homes was inspected at the company's head office on 16 September 2009 and all were found to be well managed, with the documentation necessary to meet Schedule 2 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001. There is a file audit system in place, interview notes are kept, and the company constantly reviews its personnel systems to look at ways further to improve safe recruitment practice.

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

The provision is good.

Staff meet young people's individual needs very well, often under difficult circumstances. Improvements in young people's behaviour now enable the home to be run by a small consistent group of staff, and this provides a stable environment. Active work continues on improving the young people's ability to accept help from outside parties, in particular health care professionals and educational resources, and some progress is being made.

There have been several attempts to set up a college placement, with mixed results due to young people's lack of engagement with the process. Regular Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings are held, the latest meeting being in May 2009. The manager explained that the aim is now to support young people to attend college for three or four hours a week and build on this. Staff and the manager are very patient and understanding of young people's perspectives.

Many activities are potentially available but are limited to shopping and fishing, again due to lack of engagement; for example an overseas holiday has been on offer for the past two years but young people chose not to take this opportunity. Staff do their best to encourage and motivate, with some positive outcomes.

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

The provision is good.

All the necessary placement planning documentation is in place to enable staff to meet young people's needs. Plans are updated regularly in response to any changes, and informed by statutory reviews. Additional meetings have been held where young people's future plans are uncertain.

Young people enjoy regular contact with family members and friends. Their wishes and needs are paramount when determining future contact arrangements. Staff facilitate home visits when appropriate.

No young people have moved into or out of the home since the first resident moved in, and this was a planned move from another home belonging to the same company, with the young person fully involved in the process.

Young people are consulted on a daily basis about all matters affecting their care and daily routine. Staff encourage and support young people in making good choices, but do not impose their ideas upon them.

## **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people have a Pathway Plan and are supported to acquire independence skills according to their needs and abilities. These skills include cooking, cleaning, using public transport, reading meters and instructions on medication, using money sensibly, and finding information from the internet or directory enquiries.

Pocket money records are well maintained. The young people receive a maximum of £15 per week based on behaviour. They receive £5 minimum pocket money and can exercise choice in how they spend this. They have been undertaking some work for their own family members and receiving payment, which is an introduction to work experience, but more formal work experience is planned for the future.

The home has improved since the last inspection but receives very heavy wear and tear. The lounge has been refurbished, and the staircase and bathroom are yet to be done. There were signs of damp or condensation on the bathroom ceiling, and this is on the maintenance list to be resolved. There is a continual programme of maintenance, and builders have been working

at the home for some time, which has made it impossible to develop the garden because the garden space is being used for building materials and equipment.

At the last inspection the inspector was concerned about the young person's bedroom, and it was not possible to gain his consent to see the room on this occasion. The bedroom previously occupied by the young person has now been refurbished and is much improved, but the bedroom currently occupied is unlikely to have improved.

## Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home has a Statement of Purpose which met all the requirements of Schedule 1 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001 at the last inspection, and has not been changed since then.

Staff are well qualified, with four members of staff holding National Vocational Qualification at Level 3 (NVQ 3) in the care of children and young people, and one staff member in addition to the manager also holds NVQ Level 4. The home is well staffed on a one to one basis, with one member of staff sleeping in. The manager is often on duty there during the day, and divides his time between this home and another home in the same town.

The company has done well to bring all staff up to date with their required training, since taking over several children's homes from another organisation. One member of staff apart from the manager is now an NVQ assessor, which helps to ensure that staff receive sufficient guidance when undertaking training.

Regular management checks are carried out in the home, and there is evidence on all the records that the manager is monitoring the running of the home. The manager has had to restart NVQ 4 and the Institute of Leadership and Management Award, and has some way to go to complete this. He holds NVQ 4 in the care of children and young people.

The documentation in the home is complete and meets all the requirements of Schedule 3 of the Children's Homes Regulations, and this ensures that the young person benefits from full and correct paper records to help inform staff of his care needs.

## 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 Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

| Standard | Action | Due date |
|----------|--------|----------|
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### Recommendations

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

- continue with the present plan to repair and maintain the premises (NMS 24).

- ensure that the Registered Manager continues to work toward achieving a recognised qualification in Management equivalent to the Registered Manager's Award (NMS 34).