

## Inspection report for children's home

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| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC368637        |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 31/07/2012      |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Angus Mackay    |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | Full            |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>       | Children's home |

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| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 22/03/2012 |
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## Service information

### Brief description of the service

This privately-run home is registered to accommodate and care for no more than three young people. The home provides medium to long-term residential care, and emergency placements to young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is one of a group of homes, managed by a company which also provides a day school for some of the young people. The home provides young people with access to a psychotherapist, who also provides advice to the staff team.

### 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 **good**.

This is a well-managed home where staff provide young people with a pleasant well maintained family style environment, consistent boundaries and good personalised care. The leaders and manager understand the strengths of the home and are able to identify areas that need further improvement. This is supported by robust quality assurance audits and action and development plans.

Young people display relaxed relationships with staff and build up strong relationships with them over time. Young people have mixed views in relation to the quality of care and how safe they feel as this is the first time that some young people have been accommodated in a children's home. Some young people find house rules and the setting of boundaries challenging. However, the home provides young people with a safe and supportive environment. Social workers talk positively of the home, a typical comment being, 'his progress was brilliant. He did very, very well there and made significant improvements in social skills, engagement with others and in education.' Staff are good at keeping young people safe, reducing high risk behaviours and improving their engagement in education.

Health care is good and staff meet the care needs of a diverse group of young people. Managers plan further health training to enhance staff competency in addressing personal care issues and sexual health, in key working. Policies, procedures, care plans and recording systems are generally very detailed, well

maintained and subject to regular review. However some do not accurately reflect practice or guidance. Similarly some agreements and permissions are ambiguously worded or not in place. Due to good staff practice these have not impacted on the good care of young people. Staff are good at engaging young people in staff selection and the management of the home, which they are planning to expand further.

## Areas for 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 person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

| Reg.          | Requirement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Due date   |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 22<br>(2001)  | ensure that monitoring devices for surveillance of children are used as described in regulation and that the child's placing authority consents to the use of the measure and the child in question is informed in advance of the intention to use the measure, with particular regard to the use of door sensors (Regulation 22 (1)(a)(b)) | 03/09/2012 |
| 5<br>(2001)   | review and revise the statement of purpose and children's guide; notify the HMCI of the revision within 28 days; and supply a copy of the children's guide to each child accommodated in the home (Regulation 5 (a)(b)(c))                                                                                                                  | 17/09/2012 |
| 17A<br>(2001) | prepare and implement a written policy which sets out the measures of control, restraint and discipline which may be used in the children's home. In particular ensure that the restraint policy is clear about the circumstances in which restraint is permissible. (Regulation 17 B, 1 (a))                                               | 03/09/2012 |

### Recommendations

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

- ensure that staff annual appraisal takes into account any views of children the service is providing for (NMS 19.6)
- ensure staff receive sufficient training on health and hygiene issues and first aid with particular emphasis on health promotion and communicable diseases (NMS 6.9)
- ensure that where there has been a physical restraint children are always given the opportunity to be examined by a registered nurse or medical practitioner (NMS 3.16)

- ensure that children receive personalised care that promotes all aspects of their individual identity, with particular reference to care plans accurately reflecting the work done in meeting the personal care needs of all children accommodated (NMS 2.1)
- ensure that each child has prior written permission from a person with parental responsibility for staff to administer first aid and non-prescription medication (Volume 5, statutory guidance, paragraph 2.54)
- ensure staff are clear about what responsibilities and decisions are delegated to them and where consent for medical treatment needs to be obtained, in particular revise the wording of the consent form for treatment. (NMS 6.5)

## Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people, with good support from staff, develop a positive self-view and understanding of their cultural background and personal needs. Staff have daily key-working sessions with young people seeking, amongst other things, to aid them in gaining an understanding their cultural and family backgrounds. Staff provide a consistent approach with young people which social workers say provides, 'stability and consistency which is important for the young people.' Young people are supported to enhance their relationships and ability to sustain attachments through work with therapists. Health care is good and young people engage in very regular key-working sessions reinforcing positive life choices and addressing issues such as safe sex, alcohol and drug abuse. Staff are aware of the diverse health needs of the young people and ensure they provide appropriate support to maintain good health in all of the young people. Some staff provide good health advice and counselling following incidences of high risk behaviour. However not all staff have the necessary knowledge or confidence in health and hygiene issues to confidently provide this advice to young people.

Staff actively support young people in their engagement in education and ensure they are properly prepared and dressed in school uniform each day. One social worker commented, 'he would not previously attend school but goes every day now and wears school uniform.' Staff ensure that young people can engage in education and provide additional supports such as positive incentive schemes. A social worker commented, 'they stuck to the programme and put in a lot of hard work to make it succeed. He made fantastic progress at school.' Young people are supported to maintain friendships and family contacts where these are agreed by social workers. A social worker commented, 'the home worked closely with him and me, to legitimatise friendships and allow him unsupervised time with friends, as part of his preparation for independence.' Staff work diligently to ensure that family contacts occur in a safe manner and with appropriate support for the young person. A social worker said, 'they were brilliant at organising contact quickly and facilitating it. This has been a significant boost for him.'

Young people further develop self-confidence and social skills through engagement in clubs and activities in the community. Staff seek to involve young people in activities which they can continue when they leave the home. Staff manage the move on from the home very well, aiding young people in making a successful staged transition into the community or to a new placement. Staff maintain positive supports for young people during this transition welcoming them in for planned meals, such as Sunday dinner. Social workers praise the positive work done by the home in preparing and supporting young people through this transition with one commenting, 'the movement on was managed really well by the home, they were brilliant and it was them that persuaded him to move on positively.'

## Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy relaxed, friendly relationships with staff including the manager. One social worker said, 'he has an absolutely fabulous relationship with the manager.' Staff interactions with young people encourage engagement and seek understanding of situations rather than rote compliance. Young people say they would give the home, '8 out of 10 and staff, 7 out of 10.' Young people are involved in choosing the décor of the home and are encouraged to personalise their own bedrooms which are pleasant comfortable spaces, clean, well decorated and suitably furnished. Young people eat healthily and engage in discussions about healthy diet, improving their understanding of this. Young people engage positively in constructing the menu, ensuring it contains options which meet their personal preferences and cultural requirements. Staff maintain normal family-style restrictions on the amount of sweets and less healthy food choices for young people. Young people are negotiating with staff to learn appropriate eating habits and retain control of their snacks and other treats.

Staff ensure that young people are registered with local health agencies and attend all appointments. Staff work closely with other agencies where necessary to improve young people's mental health. The home does have medical consent forms but these require updating to make clear the restrictions on staff responsibilities. Staff store medicines appropriately and maintain an accurate record of their use. There is no evidence of a separate consent for staff administration of non-prescribed medication. All staff have, however, undertaken medicines training and the manager confirms that no staff can administer medication until they have completed this training, to maintain young people's safety. Staff address issues of equality and diversity at the point of referral and transmit this into care practice. Placement plans identify clear targets in relation to young people's identity and religious background. However, some placement plans do not always reflect the good personal care on offer to meet young people's diverse needs. Social workers confirm that the home is promoting young people's cultural needs.

Young people make excellent use of community-based facilities and access to these provisions are risk assessed and carefully planned with young people and their social workers. The thoroughness of planning these activities helps ensure that young

people make good progress in broadening their social networks. It results in positive use of unsupervised time and developing new friendships in a safe manner. Social workers commented positively on this, one saying, 'they have been working on improving his engagement with others and in particular community links, so got him involved in a local sports club which has been excellent for him.' Young people comment on the running of the home and all personal interactions through their weekly meeting. Young people confirm that they use this meeting to address issues as diverse as food choices and décor of the building, to respect for others and health and safety issues. Staff ensure that they transfer any representations or complaints young people make in this meeting, to the complaints book to aid continuous improvement.

### **Safeguarding children and young people**

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

Young people and their social workers say that the daily structures and routines of this home keep them safe and make them feel safe. Staff work closely with social workers to clearly identify risks and protective factors for young people and plan how to address these in a safe way. Young people express no concerns about their privacy within the home, including the staff use of mechanical monitoring systems, such as door alarms, as an additional safeguard during the night. The manager provides limited procedural guidance to staff and young people about the use of door alarms and makes brief mention of it in the Statement of Purpose. The home has no evidence confirming the placing authorities consent to the use of door alarms for safeguarding purposes and young people's care plans also lack this clarity.

The home has comprehensive policies and procedures to address bullying. Young people and staff say that there is currently no bullying in the home. Young people use their meeting to discuss respect for others and explore issues of different forms of bullying such as racism, homophobia and sexual stereotyping. The current young people have rarely gone missing in the period since the last inspection and when anyone has, staff take prompt action to assist their safe return. The home enjoy good relations with the local police and community support agencies to further enhance the safety of the young people. The missing from care policy clearly outlines the action to be taken and clearly specifies that these procedures are compatible with and have regard to the Runaway and Missing from Home and Care, protocols and procedures. Staff maintain good risk assessments on each young person detailing their risk of going missing and actions to take to lessen the risk of this happening. The guidance, contained in these risk assessments, on physical interventions to stop young people going missing is ambiguous and not in line with regulations. There have, however, been no instances where staff have physically prevented young people from leaving the home. All staff have trained in safeguarding and are knowledgeable about how to apply these principles in their work with young people. The home has detailed policies in child protection with which staff are familiar and they apply them to keep young people safe.

Young people have a highly detailed placement plan, therapeutic treatment plan, and

positive handling risk assessments to advise staff interventions. Young people's contribution to the plans ensures they reflect their diversity and accurately outline their specific personal and cultural needs. Staff apply behavioural interventions skilfully and young people know that they can rely on staff or therapists to help them through challenging feelings and thoughts. The manager and the service have robust systems in place to monitor physical interventions, use of sanctions and children going missing. These all evidence improving behaviours for young people during their time in the home. However, the record of physical interventions does not record that staff routinely offer young people the opportunity to be seen by a qualified nurse or general practitioner following a restraint.

The home has robust recruitment, selection and vetting procedures for staff which successfully include young people. The general upkeep of the premises and the frequency of routine safety checks maximises young people's safety and security. The home is immaculate both inside and out. Staff encourage young people to respect and maintain the environment and to complete household chores.

### **Leadership and management**

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

The manager assumed responsibility for the home following the last inspection of the home and has commenced the registration process with Ofsted. The home has been proactive and has addressed all recommendations and requirements from the last inspection. Staff say that the manager is good, providing good support and advice. The manager ensures that all staff receive regular supervision and annual appraisal, which they say aids them in their work with young people. The manager has not yet implemented a means of incorporating the views of young people into the appraisal process. The manager has revised the staff rota ensuring young people benefit from better continuity in staffing. In particular, the manager ensures that experienced senior staff work weekends and evenings. Staff say that in addition to formal supervision the manager is always available for debriefing sessions and informal supervision, to help them in their work with young people.

The manager maintains excellent relations with neighbours, providing a safe environment for young people. Neighbours describing the home say, 'the home are excellent, we are never aware of the young people but if we see them they are well behaved and polite.' The manager enacts planned reviews of all health and safety matters, providing a well maintained, clean, bright and comfortable environment for young people. One social worker commented, 'I like the home, it is very nicely decorated, with lots of pictures of the young people and has a nice relaxed domestic feel to it.' Staff apply safety guidelines with all visitors enhancing the safe environment for both visitors and young people. Young people have a detailed knowledge of fire safety procedures and all staff have practiced safe evacuations of the building.

The manager has a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the home which she enhances by her monthly monitoring, quality assurance inspections and

use of the external monitoring reports. The manager uses this information in her construction of quarterly management reports which analyse the functioning of the home. The manager uses this analysis to identify patterns of behaviour in the young people, to better target resources and modify young people's support. This ensures that young people receive the service they require. The manager works closely with senior managers, maintaining the home's development plan, ensuring the service is constantly seeking improvement. Social workers praise the regular and helpful reporting saying, 'communication is excellent and very regular. They supply written weekly and monthly reports which are both excellent. When I visit everything which they have said to me ties in with what I see and what the young person says.' The manager sends monitoring reports to Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) at the recommended frequency to enhance the safe care of the young people.

The manager has recently revised the Statement of Purpose to ensure it reflects the current service she is providing to young people; however, has not yet submitted a copy of the revised statement, including all criteria required by legislation, to Ofsted. Young people confirm that staff provide them with a guide to the home but comment that this does not contain detail which would aid them understand the rules, such as bed times. The home could not produce a copy of the young people's guide during the inspection and the manager must supply a copy of the revised guide to HMCI.

The manager has identified and met the training needs of all staff, to meet national standards and to provide good care to young people. All new staff are engaged in the Children's Workforce Development Council's induction programme as well as engaging in essential core training, to keep them and young people safe. Established staff have attained a minimum level 3 qualification or are engaged in acquiring this qualification to enhance their work with young people.

## 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.