

## Inspection report for Children's Home

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| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC372652      |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 08/09/2010    |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Julian Parker |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | Key           |

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| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 08/03/2010 |
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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 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 single occupancy children's home specifically developed to offer accommodation and care to a young person with emotional and behavioural difficulties being prepared for independence. The semi-detached family style home is unobtrusively located on a residential estate in a large rural community. The home affords easy access to all major amenities, education and recreational facilities.

### **Summary**

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This was a full unannounced key inspection. One young person is living in the home but was not present during the inspection. The inspection focused on all of the Every Child Matters outcome areas.

The home is judged as good with many examples of very good practice. The making a positive contribution outcome area was judged outstanding. Young people receive an individualised care package that is able to provide consistency yet adapt quickly to changing needs. It is effective in addressing behaviour and promoting health and well-being. The home is internally well appointed providing a homely living environment. Young people are well supported to access age appropriate education and practice independence skills. The registered person provides good direction and leadership with a well-trained staff team who provide a good quality of overall service. Staff are clear about their roles and are consistent in carrying out their responsibilities to address the specialised care needs and safeguard the young people they look after.

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

There were no actions or recommendations set at the last inspection.

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

The provision is good.

Young people help to prepare and enjoy healthy and varied meals that take account of their individual health needs and personal preferences. The link between a balanced diet and health is emphasised by staff who receive training in food preparation. Young people experience shopping for healthy food as part of their preparation for independence.

The health needs of young people are carefully assessed prior to admission to ensure they can be effectively met. Case files include comprehensive health plans relating to each individual's specific health, medical and psychological needs. Young people receive good advice, guidance and informed staff support to promote their personal safety and well-being. This is achieved through staff training, consultation with relevant professionals including consultants, key workers, company therapists and the placing authority social worker.

Clear recording practice and ongoing assessment, which include young people's responses, confirm that healthy living is actively promoted by the home.

The recording of all accidents, the use of prescribed and over the counter medication, including for emergency treatment is sound. The home's medication policy complies with official advice and guidance. Storage of all medication is secure. First aid arrangements are supported by staff training that is in practice effective in dealing with minor accidents and most health related emergencies.

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

The provision is good.

Young people's right to privacy and confidentiality is promoted by having their own bedroom, by the confidential storage of their sensitive personal information and by staff exercising discretion when discussing young people with other professionals. Young people know that staff are required to discuss their care in meetings as they are always invited to contribute their own views about the service they receive.

The registered person's policies, procedures and informed staff practice promote the safety and welfare of children living in the home. These have been developed to comply with regulatory requirements and provide safeguards in areas of child protection, including countering bullying, behaviour management, dealing with missing persons and good quality childcare. All staff are informed about, and have access to, the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures, including how to recognise any signs of abuse. Ongoing staff training ensures that all the registered provider's staff receive training equips them to look after children competently and safely.

Any concerns or complaints young people may have are always taken seriously by the staff looking after them. This is evidenced by concerns being speedily addressed before they become a formal complaint. The home has a responsive complaints policy and procedure that is summarised in the young person's guide. Young people know how to raise concerns and who they can complain to. They are provided, early in their stay at the home, with an introduction to the services of an independent advocate should they need advice or require help. The absence of any complaints confirms the home's ongoing stability.

The home's unauthorised absence procedure is effective in deterring young people from putting themselves at risk by absencing themselves without staff permission or

support.

Management of young people's behaviour is based on encouraging acceptable social interactions by providing unambiguous expectations and praising cooperative and positive behaviour. Staffing numbers in the home are increased whenever necessary to maintain the young people's safety. Staff treat young people fairly with respect and tolerance. This approach is rewarded by generally good behaviour and a minimal need for the application of sanctions or physical controls. Staff receive regular training in behaviour management including the safe use of physical restraint using an approved methodology. To maintain safe practice, staff training is refreshed annually and any and all incidents are evaluated by the home's manager. Although the use of physical intervention has not been necessary, the opinions of young people are always enlisted and recorded to improve the transparency and effectiveness of the home's behaviour management practice.

Potential dangers to young people are actively evaluated by staff. Comprehensive risk assessments, that broadly cover all aspects of safety in the living environment, are compiled; for example the risk from fire and environmental hazards, those emerging from behaviour and recreational activities including trips out. Risk assessments are regularly reviewed and take into account daily routines and any changes affecting the home such as staffing levels or alterations in the home's routine. Young people always play a compliant part by responding to fire precautionary drills, including false alarms.

Young people are practically safeguarded by the provider's effective systems for the monitoring of all visitors to the home. No stranger is allowed access without an appointment and appropriate measures are in place to ensure personal safety. The registered provider's recruitment and selection process confirms that no staff start working with looked after children ahead of all necessary suitability checks being completed. Personnel files were inspected ahead of this visit. Skeleton staff files retained in the home summarise that all staff working there have been appropriately checked for their suitability, qualification and experience.

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

The provision is good.

Young people are cared for by a qualified and experienced staff team who know how to promote child health and development. The single occupancy home is successful in looking after young people who have a specific need for consistent care provided within safe explicit behavioural boundaries where they receive positive adult nurturing.

Young people are encouraged and assisted to access a variety of in-house and community based activities that enhance their cultural and self-awareness and helps to improve their self-esteem. They can access services appropriate to their specific care and therapeutic needs from the registered provider's own therapy team and mainstream community and adolescent mental health services.

The provision of education for young people is promoted through the provider's education policy and the home's established relationships with appropriate local provision. For example, older teenagers are introduced and admitted courses provided by a local further education college. Young people, when in an education placement, are practically supported throughout the college day by residential staff who can, where necessary, work in partnership with teachers to ensure that the educational timetable is achieved.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Effective care planning is evidenced by focused plans that identify the purpose of the placement and how care plans will be progressed. Young people help, through their review process, to develop their placement plan which reinforces how their placing authority's expectations are being implemented in practice. Case file recordings confirm that progress is reviewed within the statutory time frame and that personal objectives and outcomes are routinely achieved.

Regular in-house meetings record and update each young person's plan and helps to inform looked after children reviews of the placement. Placement plans include summarised details of the young person's health plan and educational progress. Young people actively contribute to this process and have their views listened to and recorded.

Young people are supported to maintain contact with those considered people important to them. Placement plans and case files record authorised arrangements for contact between young people, their family, friends and professional workers such as social workers. The quality and appropriateness of contact is always evaluated to ensure that any agreed arrangements are safe and in the young person's best interest.

As a single occupancy placement young people are actively involved with the every day decision-making processes within the home. Young people have an active say about the running and appearance of their home. Key work sessions review personal issues, such as confidentiality, and how specific requests can be progressed in a safe and meaningful manner. Staff provide effective role modelling for young people, teaching safe and socially acceptable behaviour.

The day-to-day issues of young people are dealt with using a consistent, safety-conscious approach within clearly agreed and recorded parameters. Sessions with staff and supportive case records confirm the view that this children's home offers realistic boundaries that effectively safeguard and promote the welfare of young people both in the home and the wider community. Young people generally respond cooperatively to this approach.

## **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

The home effectively helps to prepare young people for leaving care by introducing them to and practising the skills needed for independence as an integrated part of the everyday care provided. Requisite social and life skills are learnt through active participation in the tasks involved with the running of the home such as shopping, personal budgeting, cooking and undertaking daily household chores. Young people actively participate through choice.

The children's home is set in an unobtrusive semi-detached house located in a large village. It has access to most civil amenities, using reliable public transport or its own vehicle, to access nearby major towns. The house is suitably furnished and very well maintained throughout, showing no signs of deliberate damage. There is evidence of regular maintenance and some personalisation by young people.

Being a single occupancy home, there is ample space for resident young people to spread out and treat the accommodation as their home. The home has a neat private garden to the rear and sufficient off-road parking for staff cars and a private vehicle to its frontage, although this area remains in need of structural maintenance and visual enhancing.

The home has been well chosen in its discrete location and is well-equipped for its particular care function.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The home's Statement of Purpose includes the information prescribed by Schedule 1 of the Children's Home Regulations 2001. Both the Statement of Purpose and the young person's guide have been amended to provide accurate and up-to-date information about what services the home provides, although detail about recent changes within the organisation have not been amended.

Young people living here are practically supported with every aspect of their daily living by the team of competent and qualified staff who effectively demonstrate their commitment to providing safe and consistent care. The experienced and qualified Registered Manager provides support through regular staff supervision and ensuring access to professional training keeps staff practice up to date. Staff have attended all statutory training and have attained or are embarked upon National Vocational Qualification training to provide the informed care required to meet young people's specific needs.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. This is because there has been collective commitment by the staff team to fully understand, support and practically address the potentially harmful behaviours presented by young people. The home



has a track record of being consistently successful in adapting to and managing such young people by shaping their service to address complex needs. Case records evidence that outcomes for young people are being met. Staff receive training in equality and diversity and promote this learning in their practice with young people.

The duty rota for the home confirms that the complement of residential support staff, as identified by the home's Statement of Purpose, provides individualised care on a two-to-one and one-to-one ratio for young people according to assessed need. Any shortfalls are covered by house staff or known staff from another of the registered provider's homes to reduce the potential for any disruption to the young person's care routine or levels of support.

The Registered Manager has established a clear process to regularly monitor the operational efficiency and quality of care being provided by the home. The content of the in-house monitoring is very good. Monthly monitoring takes place through the use of a Regulation 33 visitor to confirm that the home is operating within the scope of its Statement of Purpose. Feedback from young people contributes to the home's quality monitoring systems and influences aspects of the service being provided. The future operation of the home is projected in an annual development plan that is subject to ongoing review. The proposed improvements to the frontage of the home have, however yet to be implemented.

Comprehensive individual case files for young people are safely stored and arranged in a manner that is familiar to the staff team while protecting confidentiality. Young people are made aware of the contents of their files and can request to access or contribute to them.

## 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   |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 24   | ensure that the exterior of the home is maintained in a good state of structural repair. This includes the driveway and frontage to the home. Regulation 31(2)(d)) | 25/10/2010 |