

## Inspection report for Children's Home

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| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC386522     |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 15/02/2011   |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Norma Welsby |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | Key          |

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| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 15/09/2010 |
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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 children's home is situated on a main road in a residential area. It is a detached property with four bedrooms and is operated by a private company that has several other children's services throughout the country. The service is registered to provide long term care and accommodation for two children between the ages of 10 years and 17 years of age.

At the time of the inspection one young person was living at the home and participated fully in the inspection.

### **Summary**

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This was an unannounced full inspection to assess the home's performance against all of the key national minimum standards. This is a good children's home with outstanding features.

This is a well-managed home. Young people are cared for by a dedicated team who can meet their needs. Staff engage effectively and proactively with other agencies to ensure they deliver appropriate services to young people. This is particularly demonstrated in respect of promoting health and keeping young people safe. The staff team is very well supported, supervised and appraised. They receive appropriate training to care for young people within safe and nurturing boundaries.

Following this inspection four recommendations were made. The service does not have important up to date looked after children information on site as the placing authority has not provided this in a timely way. This includes a personal education plan and a pathways plan. Young people are not currently benefiting from opportunities to mix with peers and enjoy a range of social interactions. This is partly because the young person has not lived at the service for very long and the staff's priority has been to establish good relations and keep the young person safe. Another shortfall is there is no system to evidence the ways in which ongoing improvements are made to the quality of the service. Due to identified risks, a placing authority has asked staff to search parcels sent to young people at the home. However currently the home does not have a written policy and protocol for this in place. The outcomes for young people are compromised when attention to detail is not paid to these areas.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

There were no actions or recommendations made at the last inspection in September 2010.

## **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is outstanding.

Staff work extremely effectively in helping young people to achieve healthy lifestyles.

Young people benefit from a healthy diet. They also benefit from developing a better awareness of healthy eating and the importance of taking exercise. Meals are home cooked and young people are very involved in menu planning and have regular opportunities to amend menu plans. Staff work hard to promote 5-a-day and young people have free access to fresh fruit and juice. Staff and young people cook and eat together and this provides excellent opportunities for building positive relations and enjoying open discussions.

Young people are registered with health professionals, such as the doctor, dentist and optician. Specialist services are accessed for young people who need support to address specific needs. Health plans are in place. They provide a clear record of young people's ongoing and changing health needs. Staff are excellent at discussing important health issues with young people, for example about drugs, alcohol and sexual health matters. Young people who take risks with their health are actively discouraged and are supported to stop.

Staff promote a wide range of physical and leisure activities, encouraging young people to take whatever form of physical exercise meets their needs. Staff work directly with young people in key worker sessions, supporting their interests and encouraging healthy lifestyles.

The system for the safe storage, administration and disposal of prescribed and non-prescribed medication is very good. Parental permission is obtained for the administration of medication and first aid. This ensures that young people can have efficient treatment. Medication is administered by trained staff who are also first aid trained. There is always a first aid member of staff on duty. First aid boxes are provided both in the house and in the car.

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

The provision is outstanding.

The service has robust policies and procedures in place to keep young people safe. Staff are thorough and competent in their practices. They work hard to encourage young people to develop personal responsibility for their own safety and wellbeing. Overall, the arrangements to promote the welfare and safety of young people are outstanding.

Young people's privacy and dignity are respected and information about them is confidentially maintained. Staff speak about young people in a caring and respectful way. Young people know that they are expected to reciprocate this behaviour. Young people have a single bedroom and key so that they can keep their belongings safe. Young people can use their own phone or the home's phone to receive and make private calls. While the home has a room search policy it does not have a written policy or protocol about searching parcels sent to young people at the home.

There is an established and thorough complaints procedure. Young people know how to complain and are appropriately supported and listened to. Complaints are dealt with in a timely manner and are monitored. The home has also received many compliments in praise of the standard of care it provides.

Young people are protected by staff who know how to keep them safe. The service has comprehensive safeguarding policies and procedures to support and protect young people. Staff are very knowledgeable and proactive in this area, supporting young people at many levels. Key worker sessions are used very effectively to enable young people to feel more confident and to develop key skills and strategies to keep themselves safe. Annual refresher training is provided to all staff and the service has established excellent links with the local safeguarding team and other professionals.

Young people are protected from bullying. Staff are acutely aware of the potential for young people to be bullied. They appropriately challenge and monitor bullying behaviour, taking practical steps to reduce such incidents. The company operates a zero tolerance policy in respect of bullying. Young people have access to appropriate information and staff help them to expand their own awareness of what constitutes bullying.

The protection of young people who go missing from home without authority is excellent. Staff do everything within their power to discourage young people from taking such risks. Risk assessments are implemented and staff contact young people on their mobile phones, encourage them to return and monitor their movements. Comprehensive records are maintained. Staff follow clear missing from home protocols, which include contact with the police, social workers and other interested parties. Young people are aware of the procedures staff must follow if such an event occurs. Following their safe return, staff encourage young people to discuss their behaviour and seek other options in the future, such as approaching specialist agencies. All of these measures effectively contribute to the reduction of young people going missing.

Staff and young people enjoy an excellent rapport and young people know what standard of behaviour is expected. Young people are given clear and consistent boundaries. They are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions. Young people confirm that staff treat them well. Incentives are agreed and positive behaviour is rewarded. All staff receive ongoing training in physical intervention. Staff only use restraint as a last resort and at the lowest level possible to defuse a serious situation and keep young people safe.

Young people are cared for in an environment that effectively protects their health and safety. Risk assessments identify young people's known behaviours and activities. The home provides a comfortable and spacious environment. There is a rolling programme of redecoration and repairs that maintains attractive and safe standards throughout. Routine tests and servicing are well organised and documented evidence is retained for inspection. Staff and young people regularly participate in fire drills.

There are safe recruitment processes. The Registered Manager is involved in staff recruitment and is trained in safe recruitment of staff. The home however has a very stable staff team and there have been no new appointments since the last inspection. Visitors to the home are robustly checked by staff who remain vigilant. These excellent practices support the view that young people are protected within their home environment.

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

The provision is good.

Young people receive good support to develop skills and confidence in a range of social, domestic and learning settings.

A highly personalised package of care is devised for each young person. The manager and staff are very committed to achieving the objectives of the placement plan and ensuring that young people achieve full benefit from their placement. Young people confirm that staff are very motivated to work positively with them.

Young people are given lots of opportunities to take part in a variety of planned activities and to mix with peers. This helps them to develop their confidence and social skills. For example, young people are able to go to shopping, visit the cinema, enjoy meals out, attend college and have work experience. Currently however staff have not succeeded in motivating young people to fully benefit from opportunities in this area.

Staff actively promote and support young people's education and attainment. Young people have opportunities to attend education facilities, whether mainstream, alternative or home education, that best meets their needs and abilities.

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

The provision is good.

Staff work hard to enable young people to make a positive contribution while living at the service and to achieve good outcomes from their placement.

Young people's needs are comprehensively assessed. There is a clear decision-making process regarding the admission and discharge of young people. This

ensures that young people are appropriately placed and their needs can be met by the home. Detailed documents are provided from placing authorities to inform placements. While staff do chase up documents that need completing or updating, at the time of this inspection not all documents were up to date or available on site, including an educational plan and pathways plan.

Young people's statutory reviews are held at regular intervals. Young people are encouraged to participate and express their views. Key workers provide weekly reports to the placing authority and these contribute to statutory reviews. Key worker sessions are held regularly, providing good records which evidence both sensitive support and a diversity of subject areas.

Staff work positively to facilitate face-to-face contact with family and friends, making considerable journeys where necessary. Contact via telephone and letter is also facilitated. Any restriction on contact is fully understood and implemented by staff and well recorded within individual plans.

Young people are regularly consulted. They have positive relationships with staff. Staff show respect to young people and listen and act on what they have to say. Staff understand the importance of securing young people's participation and personal decision making. Young people's meetings and key worker sessions are held regularly and young people confirm that they can speak with staff at any time.

## **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

Young people live in a comfortable and homely environment that meets their needs. Young people are encouraged to personalise their rooms and make use of the personal and communal space available to them. The home is not conspicuous as a children's home and is close to social and community facilities.

Staff encourage young people to learn a range of skills that will prepare them for adulthood, including budgeting, catering and other domestic skills.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

This is a well managed service, providing a positive and nurturing environment that achieves good outcomes for young people.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Young people's individual and diverse needs are well met and are well evidenced in all outcome areas. There is a good gender balance in the staff team. Staff provide excellent role models, promoting respect and tolerance. Staff have a good understanding of young people they support. Good team work ensures that all aspects of individual needs are identified and met. Evidence supports the service's commitment to further improving

equality and diversity in practice to enhance outcomes for young people.

The Statement of Purpose reflects the services provided by the home. It is regularly reviewed and updated. Staff guide young people through the young people's information. This ensures that they know what services to expect from the home. These documents are child-friendly and contain all relevant information including what to do in the event of a complaint about the service. Young people are given a personal copy of this information when they arrive at the home and lots of useful information is also displayed on a notice board.

The team is led by a qualified and experienced Registered Manager who is supported by a skilled and competent deputy. Staff absences are covered by named bank staff. Combined with every good staff retention, this approach means that young people have the benefit of being cared for by familiar staff who are knowledgeable about their needs. Staff are regularly supervised, appraised and good levels of training is promoted. Almost 100% of staff have achieved at least National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in caring for children and young people. Staff feel well supported and are committed to their work with young people. Young people benefit from a staff team who care about them and want young people to achieve as much as possible from their placement. Staffing levels are flexibly arranged to meet the needs of young people. A key worker system is in use and very well thought of by young people. All staff receive supervision each month and newly appointed staff have supervision every two weeks throughout their first six months. Bank staff also receive regular supervision.

Comprehensive monthly monitoring and auditing of the service is carried out and contributes to the on-going evaluation of the service. However, under Regulation 34 a system for evidencing ways in which improvements are made to the quality of care provided is not fully maintained.

## **What must be done to secure future improvement?**

### **Recommendations**

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

- ensure appropriate guidance on when it may be necessary to search a young person's possessions, specifically a written policy and protocol, is in place in respect of searching parcels sent to young people at the home (NMS 9.8)
- provide young people with opportunities to make and sustain friendships with young people of their own age outside of the home and to participate in a range of appropriate leisure activities (NMS 15.1 & 15.12)
- ensure that each young person's file contains all the necessary information as detailed in Schedule 3, in particular an up to date local authority care plan, educational plan and pathways plan, along with a detailed record of any statutory

reviews (NMS 35.2)

- maintain a system for evidencing ways in which improvements are made to the quality of care provided. (NMS 33.1)