

Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Inspection date</b>	13 May 2009
<b>Inspector</b>	Jeffrey Banham
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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's purpose is to offer accommodation to a maximum of five young people within the age range of seven years to 15 years. The home is close to local amenities. The service operates from a detached property, which provides a lounge and dining area, a family room, activity room, six bedrooms, toilets and bathroom facilities. The premises include a large newly refurbished kitchen, laundry and garden facility. Staff are managed and supported by the on site Registered Manager.

### **Summary**

This key inspection was unannounced and examined all the key National Minimum Standards. Four young people were living in the home and one was on a placement with parents. All five young people participated in the inspection through returning questionnaires or talking to the inspector.

The home provides effective and supportive care for the young people who live there. The majority of admissions are planned. This enables young people's needs to be assessed and detailed placement plans to be drawn up. The use of a key worker system enables the placement plans to be implemented and reviewed effectively and young people to be involved in all aspects of their care. The health of young people is actively promoted. Staff work within clear and established procedures to ensure young people are safe. They provide a high level of support to enable young people to fulfil their educational potential. Staff share their considerable energy and enthusiasm to provide young people with plenty of inspiring and challenging opportunities to develop their strengths, interests and hobbies and to be introduced to new ones.

Staff work well to ensure young people's families are involved and included in the care of their children whenever possible. Young people feel that some restrictions put on their contact with friends are not fair.

The home is well managed. There is a strong emphasis on monitoring practice and continuous improvement. The staff team is experienced, has been together for some time and is well trained. Good systems of communication and support help the team provide sympathetic and consistent care to young people.

Reports from external monitoring visits are not always produced on time. The home has admitted young people in emergency and unplanned circumstances. This is not within the terms of the home's registration and can be unsettling to young people and staff.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

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

One action was made at the last inspection. It concerned the visits to the home conducted under Regulation 33 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001. These visits now take place each month, are unannounced and are conducted by elected members who have been provided with information and guidance on their responsibilities. Young people are spoken with if they are in the home and written reports are produced following the visits.

## **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Young people are given every encouragement and support to stay as healthy as possible. Staff recognise the importance of promoting a healthy lifestyle. Each young person has their health needs assessed and regularly reviewed. Each young person is registered with a doctor, dentist and optician. Specialist healthcare is provided when it is required. A young person said, 'If we are unwell we just stay at home and they will comfort you and if you are still feeling not well they will take you to the doctors'. Staff develop detailed knowledge about young people's health care and ensure that parents and families are involved as much as possible. Information is provided so that young people are able to think about taking responsibility for their own healthcare.

Healthy eating is promoted. Young people are appreciative about the food they have are given and are helped to be involved in choosing the meals that are provided. Staff have developed innovative ways to involve young people in thinking about food. The kitchen, for example, has a number of potted herbs and parts of the garden are given over to vegetable production.

Healthcare is supported by sound policies, such as the administration of medicines. Policies are efficiently implemented by well trained staff and detailed recording demonstrates all the actions that are taken.

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

The provision is good.

The home has a number of policies and procedures that are designed to help staff keep young people safe. Staff are well trained and aware of their responsibilities in preventing bullying, managing complaints and responding to times when young people are missing from care. Privacy, dignity and confidentiality are all promoted so far as this enhances the safety and welfare of young people. The number and design of baths, showers and toilets ensure privacy is maintained at all times.

Staff are focused on the promotion of positive behaviour. Sanctions and other interventions are proportional, consistently applied and well documented. Young people are given every opportunity to consider their actions and take responsibility for their own behaviour. The atmosphere and culture of the home emphasise the value of every young person. Staff concentrate on the person and their needs rather than their behaviour. Detailed risk assessments are produced and regularly reviewed to ensure staff have an effective working framework within which to support young people.

Staff work within detailed health and safety procedures to ensure they and young people are safe. Fire drills are regularly undertaken, although the times at which they take place are not recorded and it is therefore not possible to determine which take place at night.

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

The provision is outstanding.

The key worker system implemented by the home ensures staff have detailed knowledge of the young people for whom they are responsible. This knowledge is supported by detailed placement plans that describe young people's specific needs and the support they should

receive in order for those needs to be met. Communication with other professionals is good and staff ensure that all those relevant to the care of young people are involved at all stages of care.

The home places considerable emphasis on helping young people to achieve their educational potential. All four young people resident at the home regularly attend school. Staff have developed good relationships with schools and assist young people to attend and to complete their homework. Young people have their educational needs assessed and reviewed; all have personal education plans, for example.

The emphasis on activities and promoting and developing young people's interests is considerable. Staff share their own interests and enthusiasms in a very infectious manner that engages all young people in the home. Achievements are celebrated and staff work hard to develop young people's interests and strengths and to promote new and challenging activities, such as outdoor pursuits. At the same time local resources, such as youth clubs and community groups, are used to ensure young people develop local contacts and friendships. Young person, for example, are given considerable support to develop their talents for singing, dancing and drama. Young people clearly respond to the approach from staff and their self-esteem and sense of achievement are enhanced and promoted.

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

The provision is good.

Detailed placement plans provide the basis for staff support to every young person. The key worker system enables close relationships between them and young people to be developed. Key workers ensure that young people are fully involved in their care. Regular discussions take place to ensure young people are able to understand what is happening to them and to have their say about their care in ways that they can comprehend.

Regular reviews of placement plans, both through the key worker summaries and statutory reviews, ensure progress is monitored and staff are aware of their responsibilities. A significant feature of the practice of the home is the emphasis on providing young people with information and discussions to enable them to understand what is happening to them, to think about the consequences of their actions and to take responsibility for themselves in so far as their needs and abilities allow.

Contact with friends and family is promoted and supported. Parents are involved with the care of their children through regular contact from staff and encouragement to visit the home. Restrictions on contact, by not allowing friends into the home, are not always understood or seen to be fair and reasonable by young people.

Admissions to the home are generally conducted in a planned manner. There have been occasions, however, when the home has been instructed to take emergency admissions. This process is not covered by the home's conditions of registration.

Young people are given considerable opportunity to be involved in all aspects of their care. They have regular key worker sessions, for example, and are involved in discussions about their behaviour inside and outside the home. Young people are involved in reviews of their educational progress and care plans. Young people are enthusiastic about the monthly 'Kidsay' meetings

they have in the home. Their discussions in these meetings can influence the way in which the home is run, in food choice, for example.

Relationships between staff are positive, structured and child-centred. Staff work well together to ensure they work consistently to support young people, who clearly feel comfortable with staff. For example, one young person said, 'They are good at looking after you. And we are good at getting on with each other and they are good at arranging activities. It is just like a family'.

## **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

The young people who live in the home are not yet old enough to have formal leaving care plans. They are encouraged, however, to develop skills in cooking, shopping and looking after their own rooms. Help is provided to those who want to do their own washing in the home's washing machines.

Young people receive pocket money which they can spend or save. Records are kept of their money and how they use it. Additional money is available for activities and major items of clothing. Staff assist young people to shop for their toiletries and clothes, although the choices of purchases remain their own. Some young people feel that additional allowances, for example, money given to them at Easter, are smaller than that given to young people they know in other homes. Staff are, however, clear about the rationale for the amounts paid.

The home is well furnished and equipped and suitable for the needs of the young people who live there. The upstairs corridor is narrow and enclosed, but does not have any negative impact on the way in which young people live in the home. The home is well maintained and a programme of redecoration is planned.

The kitchen is well equipped and the lounge, dining room and 'quiet room' provide plenty of opportunity for space and relaxation. Photographs, books and toys emphasise the child-centred nature of the home. The home is situated in a place that is convenient for local and other resources, facilities and activities.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The home is well managed. Senior staff have taken over temporary responsibility for the home in the absence of the manager. They are aware of their responsibilities and all policies and procedures are effectively implemented.

The home has a statement of purpose that has been recently revised. It does not reflect the home's acceptance of emergency admissions. Young people are given detailed information about the home through the young person's guide and the 'Welcome Pack' they all receive on admission.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Staff provide enthusiastic, challenging and varied support to each young person according to their needs and abilities. The development of young people's individual potential is central to the work of the staff team.

Staff are well supported and trained. There are effective communication systems within the home and these promote consistent care to young people and the constant review of practice. The culture of the home is open, friendly and child-centred. Staff are deployed in numbers sufficient to provide safe and effective care. Young people benefit from a staff team that works well together and has been together for some time.

There is a strong emphasis on monitoring and review of practice, both through internal processes and from the external monitoring visits that are carried out each month. Written reports are not always provided within two weeks of the visit.

Young people have case records that contain all the information needed by staff to provide safe and effective care. The records are stored securely and young people are able to contribute to the contents of the records.

## **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):

- ensure that fire drills take place at night and are recorded (NMS 26)
- ensure that any restrictions on contact are clear and understood by young people (NMS 4)
- ensure that admissions to the home are in accordance with the home's statement of purpose and conditions of registration (NMS 5)
- ensure that written reports are produced within two weeks of monitoring visits conducted under Regulation 33 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001. (NMS 32)