

Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Inspection date</b>	31 July 2009
<b>Inspector</b>	Gavin Thomas
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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**

This is a home for up to seven young people, aged between five and 15 on admission. An older admission age applies to the two young people who are accommodated in the semi-independent unit. This service is accredited as a registered therapeutic community. Most of the young people have therapeutic input from external therapists and the aim is to achieve permanency within a family setting. The young people usually remain at the home for up to two years before they move on. The home is a very well maintained and modernised detached 17th century building situated on a busy main road a few miles from a major town centre.

### **Summary**

This is an outstanding service. Young people's holistic needs are identified through care planning processes which are comprehensive and evaluative. Young people benefit from an environment which is resourceful and engaging. This means that everyone is encouraged and fully supported to contribute to the broad range of group and individualised activities. The service is not complacent and outstanding work is undertaken to monitor and challenge practice. This includes the input from young people and significant others who are associated with young people's wellbeing or the operation of the home. Although the home does not currently have a Registered Manager, interim management arrangements have not impacted on the quality of service.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

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

The Registered Manager was asked to ensure that all incidents of restraint were recorded in a dedicated, bound and numbered book. Although these incident reports are written electronically, they are now attached to dedicated, bound and numbered books for each young person.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are supported in a variety of ways to develop the skills for designing menus, food shopping and cooking. Individualised programmes are in place to ensure that young people receive the appropriate level of support. A broad range of information is available to young people on nutrition, menus, and cultural diets. Written menus also indicate that meals prepared by young people are balanced with a wide selection of healthy options. Young people living in the semi independent unit require minimum support with regard to menu planning and preparation. The kitchen and dining facilities in both the main home and the semi-independent unit are suitably furnished for the needs and numbers of young people.

Robust procedures are in place for assessing, recording and monitoring young people's health needs. Individual health plans are comprehensive with clear links to care plans and the therapeutic standards. Young people are encouraged and supported to access a range of health services in accordance with their assessed needs. This includes primary health services and therapeutic services. Although young people sometimes find it difficult to engage with relevant health services and professionals, they benefit immensely from the persistence and perseverance of the staff team who support them consistently through very sensitive and highly complex situations affecting their health and wellbeing.

Detailed procedures are in place for the receipt, administration and disposal of medications. Relevant consent forms are in place for young people to receive first aid and appropriate non-prescription medications. The storage of medication is satisfactory and all staff attend training on the management of medications. Risk management procedures for young people who self medicate are thorough.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Young people's privacy is respected and includes provisions for private discussions, meetings and telephone conversations. Procedural guidance is in place and monitored for ensuring that confidential information is handled appropriately.

Vigorous processes are in place for responding to complaints. There have been no complaints since the last inspection. Young people are aware of the complaints procedure and encouraged to express their opinions and views of the service.

Extensive work is undertaken to safeguard and protect young people. This is supported through the effective implementation of written procedures, direct work with young people and communication with external professionals such as the police and social workers. Significant work is undertaken with young people about their safety. This work is linked to care plans and relevant therapeutic standards. Young people's safety is enhanced by ensuring that all staff attend updated training and have access to relevant information such as the Local Safeguarding Children's Board policies and procedures.

Young people are protected from bullying in a number of ways. This includes discussions related to bullying which are covered in themed nights, written information displayed in the home, and direct work with young people individually or as a community. Anti bullying policies are clearly written and in keeping with external initiatives.

Incidents involving young people who are absent without authority are significantly high. An evaluation of these incidents is undertaken periodically and includes consultation with external professionals such as the police. Preventative work undertaken with young people is extensive and records relating to all incidents are detailed.

Positive and socially acceptable behaviours are promoted consistently with young people. The emphasis of the therapeutic community is strong within the context of behavioural management systems. The consequences of unacceptable behaviours are clearly recorded although the recording of young people's comments is not always consistent. All staff are trained to use Team Teach methods of physical intervention. However, this is very rarely used.

Young people enjoy the benefits of an environment which is physically safe and secure. Excellent procedures are in place for ensuring safety. This includes regular visual checks, periodic checks undertaken by approved contractors and risk management. Outcomes of a recent health and safety inspection and food hygiene inspection are indicative of high standards of health and safety.

Fire safety procedures are robust. The frequency of fire drills exceed the national minimum standard and all staff attend regular fire safety training. Routine fire safety checks are carried

out at regular intervals including internal checks and checks undertaken by an external professional body.

Recruitment procedures are thorough and where possible include input from young people. Young people say that it is beneficial to meet with prospective staff and to give feedback following practice shifts. Written recruitment procedures are in place and kept up to date with current legislation including equality and diversity. Outcomes of interviews are clearly recorded and staff recruitment files are in very good order.

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

The provision is outstanding.

The levels of support are wide ranging and opportunities are created within the context of the therapeutic community to provide support and advice to young people. The types of support are creative and meaningful and include input from professional services and individuals on project nights. Young people say that staff are approachable and always available to talk to. An abundance of information is available to young people to help develop their identity in relation to matters such as gender and culture. An established key worker system is in place and outcomes of young people's meetings with key workers are clearly documented.

Young people are fully supported with their education or work placements. Where appropriate, young people's files contain detailed information such as a personal education plan. Young people say they appreciate the quality of support they receive from staff when seeking employment and or work experience placements. Current support strategies for supporting young people's education are evolving through the recent promotion of one member of staff as education coordinator. Advanced education provisions and facilities are being explored in particular for the semi independent unit.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Young people's care plans are comprehensive and cover a wide range of information linked to assessed needs and desired outcomes. Therapeutic care plans are also in place for all young people and include matters such as positive self perception, emotional competence, sense of belonging and resilience. Young people are encouraged to contribute to their care plans. Care planning is tailored with a different focus for young people living in the semi -independent unit.

Care planning reviews are conducted within the relevant timescales. Significant work is undertaken with young people in preparation for reviews. Reports prepared by the service for young people's reviews are comprehensive. Young people say they are happy with the way in which they are supported before, during and after their reviews.

Contact arrangements are clearly documented and monitored for effectiveness. Where appropriate, support strategies for contact meetings are included in young people's care plans. Practical and therapeutic support strategies are constructive and take into account sensitive and complex situations which young people may find difficult to cope with. Young people are also supported to express and cope with their feelings about living away from home.

Procedures for introducing young people to the home are thorough and include the choice of introductory visits. Current processes are being evaluated and include input from peer reviews. Processes for young people occupying the semi-independent unit are also being evaluated for effectiveness.

Opportunities for consultation with young people are consistent and innovative. New initiatives and methods for engaging with young people are often explored and implemented. For example, in addition to community meetings already in place, a daily community meeting with an open agenda is now available to all young people and staff. One young person describes consultation opportunities as being 'honest' and this is one of the reasons why they enjoy living in the home. Weekly meetings known as 'Kid's chat' are held with young people. Young people say they also enjoy the meetings with external professionals who visit the home on theme nights.

## **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is outstanding.

Young people receive varying levels of support to prepare them for adulthood. The staffing, support structures and the environment are examples of the key provisions of the semi-independent unit which reflects the needs of young people currently resident. Placement plans and pathway plans are tailored and significant work is undertaken with external agencies including training initiatives to prepare young people for moving on. The aims and processes for young people occupying the semi-independent unit are being evaluated including proposals for developing this provision.

The home is decorated and furnished to exceptionally high standards. Young people say that the home is well maintained and they are consulted on the décor and furnishing of their bedrooms and communal rooms. The semi-independent unit can accommodate two young people at any one time. It has its own entrance and operates independently to the main home.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

A Statement of Purpose and Children's Guide are in place. These documents are comprehensive and reviewed at least annually. Young people are also issued with a document titled 'What's it all about', a document designed to give young people in depth information about living in either the main home or the semi-independent unit.

The Registered Manager's post is vacant. However, interim management arrangements are consistent. The deputy manager was recently appointed and is in the process of undergoing an induction. The deputy manager is suitably qualified with extensive experience. Young people are supported by a staff team who are competent and committed to professional development. All staff have achieved or are working towards professionally recognised qualifications including National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ's), NVQ Assessors Awards, social work qualifications and relevant therapeutic qualifications.

Staff are deployed to ensure continuity of care. Wherever possible, the staff group in day to day contact with young people includes staff of both genders. Staffing arrangements and resources are clearly identified in relevant policies and procedures. The staffing arrangements for the semi-independent unit reflect the needs of young people. The deployment and role of staff for this unit is being reviewed. Young people are aware of the waking night staff and

adults sleeping in both houses each night. However, there have been occasions when there has been no sleeping in staff in the semi independent unit. Although young people were consulted at the time and risk management processes put in place, these unplanned arrangements are not reflected in the staffing policy.

All new staff complete a very comprehensive induction which is linked to external initiatives such as the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) standards and the therapeutic standards. The topics covered in the induction are wide ranging and evaluated frequently. In addition to in-house induction training, staff attend a four day organisational induction forum which they say is a valuable exercise. Extensive training opportunities are available to the staff team. The quality of training records is excellent and includes individual training profiles and a master training programme.

Quality assurance systems for monitoring the performance of the home are robust and extremely detailed. A broad range of monitoring systems takes into account matters listed under Schedule 6 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001, outcomes for young people, the use of positive handling and consequences. Formal consultation regarding the provisions of service is undertaken with young people, their families and external professionals. A written plan is in place for reviewing practice and identifying any changes in the operation or resources. This plan is shared with staff and young people and includes visions, actions and timescales for achievement.

Young people's needs, development and progress are reported in detail with excellent examples of care planning, risk management and evaluation. Procedures are in place for ensuring that young people's personal files are stored securely.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Young people are given opportunities to participate in a range of stimulating and purposeful activities to celebrate a variety of cultural events. The community also benefits from 'themed' nights to raise awareness about matters such as different aspects of health, education and career opportunities and managing stress. Information on various support groups and specialist services is accessible to young people in a variety of ways. Young people describe the recruitment processes as being fair and are of the opinion that the assessment shift undertaken by prospective employees is a valuable opportunity for young people to contribute effectively towards the selection process. A member of staff has undertaken the role as Equality and Diversity coordinator. The terms and conditions of this role are being determined. Equality and diversity is discussed explicitly with young people and staff during 'kid's chat' and team meetings. Policies and procedures are reviewed and updated to ensure that equality and diversity is reflected in practice.

## **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):

- improve the consistency when recording young people's comments in the sanctions record.  
(NMS 22)
- review the staffing policy and sleeping in arrangements for the semi independent unit.  
(NMS 30)