

Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Inspector</b>	Malcolm Stannard / Gwen Buckley
<b>Type of Inspection</b>	Key

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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 centre is set on a large secure site in a suburb of a large city in the North of England and comprises of living accommodation, administration areas, education and recreational facilities. The centre is approved to provide accommodation which restricts the liberty of young people by the Department for Children, Schools and Families.

The centre is registered to enable up to 36 young males to be accommodated and provided with care and education in one of the four residential houses available. At the time of inspection 29 young people were resident at the centre.

### Summary

This was an announced inspection to evaluate the quality of care and security at the centre. The key standards in the Every Child Matters outcome groups were inspected along with progress against the recommendations from the last inspection which took place in January 2009. The formal education provided on site was not inspected during this visit. An action related to formal education made at a previous inspection therefore remains to be assessed.

Strengths of the centre include a comprehensive resettlement planning process, imaginative group work and a strong enrichment programme. Areas for development include consistency in some of the recording and the assessment of some areas of need in health care plans.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

### Improvements since the last inspection

Recommendations made to the manager at the last inspection were to ensure greater consistency and clarity in the recording of sanctions, for all appropriate information to be included in risk assessments for the site and premises and to review the information leaflets for young people and parents. Each one has been addressed positively.

Records held on the houses show improved consistency in the way sanctions are recorded. This has been assisted by a revision of the Restore and Resolve logs, where sanctions are initially recorded. This helps to ensure the safety of young people and monitor that appropriate sanctions are used.

Since the previous inspection a range of new risk assessments have been completed and introduced in relation to the grounds and premises. This helps to ensure that everybody at the centre is able to move around safely.

Information which is made available to parents and young people has now been updated and contains more detail relating to how the centre operates. This means that everyone is able to understand the practices more easily and at an earlier stage.

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Very good arrangements are in place to provide meals at the centre. The centre holds the advanced healthy schools award and the kitchen has achieved a five star rating from the local Environmental Health department.

Young people enjoy healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs and they have ready access to a variety of fresh fruit. Meals are taken in a central dining room and these periods are used as a social occasion. Young people say they can influence menus through a residents council and they have adequate quantities and choices of food each meal time. The meals provided enable young people to experience foods from a variety of cultures. Individual support is provided to young people, for example, those wishing to fast for cultural or religious reasons are provided with individual meals in the evening. Young people benefit from these arrangements because staff are sensitive and aware of their needs in this area.

One house has a large kitchen and dining area where breakfast is taken. Young people from other houses eat breakfast in the central dining room. Opportunities to cook and prepare meals are provided to young people by both care and education staff. A recent development enables young people to invite family members to have a meal with them in the dining room which is set up as a restaurant.

Good systems are in place to promote a healthy lifestyle: physical exercise in the gym and outside areas regularly takes place. Young people enjoy regular activities such as gardening, tennis, badminton and football. Use of the fitness suite is subject to having a trained member of staff on duty to facilitate this and young people stated they would use it more frequently if more trained staff were available. Staff help young people develop an understanding of healthy eating and some are able to assist in growing fruit and vegetables. Health education provides young people with information to keep themselves safe and is facilitated through key work discussion, house meetings, personal, social and health education in school and sexual health group work programmes.

Good attention is given to deliver guidance on substance misuse and abuse as well as sexual health and relationships. Programmes provided for young people take account of their learning style and are delivered in groups or separately depending on individual needs. According to their level of understanding and ability, opportunities to achieve a first aid qualification are available to young people.

The centre has recently increased the nursing hours available to the equivalent of a full time post. The Looked After Children (LAC) nurse also visits to undertake LAC medicals when required. Young people have access to a GP of either gender, a dentist and optician. Health plans are in place and staff support young people to access health professionals as needed and records of appointments are maintained.

A medical is undertaken by the nurse on admission. A health care plan is developed from information provided through E-asset which is an official information system used in the secure estate by the Youth Justice Board. Information is also gathered from LAC paperwork and discussion with each young person. The plan highlights actions needed, who will address them and any referrals to internal and external professionals such as substance misuse workers or a dentist. The centre will seek mental health services for young people if the admission paperwork and discussion highlights a need. It will also seek mental health provision for a young person if a need presents itself during a young person's stay. The centre is supported by one session

from a psychiatrist each week. However, systems are not in place to routinely assess mental health needs on admission. This means that young people may not always receive a service when they need it. The manager and local LAC health team are aware that this is not an adequate arrangement and are in negotiations to address the matter.

Having recognised the need to improve this aspect, the centre manager is also working on a partnership project looking at improving the psychological and mental health of those young people who offend. In addition, the manager is looking at formalising links with local prison service providers in order to enable various therapies such as art, music and drama to be provided. The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service previously provided sessions for staff on various topics such as attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder. Currently, this support is under review to ensure staff have access to more focused and meaningful support.

The centre has good guidelines identifying specific roles and responsibilities of staff, for example, nurses, support services officer, first aiders, care and teaching staff. The home enables some young people, if deemed safe, to gain experience in managing their own medication by permitting the self medication of creams. This is subject to the plans being agreed by a team leader or house manager. However, the risk assessments undertaken that influence the decision making are not always recorded so could place young people at risk. A senior member of staff from the centre is on a working party reviewing the Local Authority medication policy.

Medication administration records are well maintained, Running totals of tablets and records of medication are kept and the controlled drugs register is maintained as required by legislation. Local pharmacists are commissioned by the Primary Care Trust to undertake monitoring of children's home's medication administration recording systems. A report of findings is available for April 2008. However, these visits have recently lapsed. Senior staff from the Primary Care Trust are in discussions with the pharmacist to ensure they comply with the contract and that quality monitoring and advice continues to ensure a safe service for young people.

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

The provision is good.

Young people's privacy is respected. Staff knock on bedroom doors before entering and observation windows are curtained to enhance privacy further. All sensitive and confidential information is held securely in the offices of each house.

Young people are provided with information about complaints and how they can access the system. Complaint forms are freely available to young people without having to ask staff. Completed forms can either be given directly to a staff member or posted in an internal post box located in each house. Appropriate records of all complaints received along with an outcome are kept. All young people have access to an independent advocate who visits each house weekly. Young people are listened to and their concerns are dealt with in a way that achieves acceptable outcomes.

The safety and rights of both staff and young people are protected. Good links are in place with external agencies with safeguarding responsibilities and any incidents arising in the centre are referred appropriately to the local social services safeguarding team. Safeguarding training, along with appropriate refresher training forms part of the ongoing core staff training programme.

Bullying is not an area of concern to young people, who confirm staff are quick to intervene should an incident take place. Anti-bullying messages are displayed around the centre and young people are regularly involved in active, ongoing anti-bullying programmes. There is a culture of not tolerating bullying and this is weaved into the sanctions and reward systems.

The centre has tried and tested procedures to deal with unauthorised absence. However, no incidents of unauthorised absence have occurred since the previous inspection.

The behaviour management of young people is good. Positive behaviour is promoted by a system of restorative rewards and sanctions, known as RESPECT. Running alongside this system is another where restorative justice is used to resolve conflict by means other than sanction. Young people understand the systems which they view generally as fair. Appropriate records are kept of any sanctions imposed.

All staff have received physical intervention training and records of all incidents that take place are fully recorded and monitored by managers. The overall aim following the introduction of the RESPECT system is to reduce the number of physical interventions and sanctions imposed. Recorded figures indicate that some success has been achieved by utilising the system and young people are benefiting from this alternative approach.

The systems used to manage behaviour have also had a positive affect on the number of enforced single separations which have also reduced. However, there is a lack of consistency between units in the way enforced single separation incidents are recorded. Consequently, any management evaluation of this information to inform staff practice is undermined. Young people generally feel safe within the environment and they did not raise any serious concerns or issues.

General health and safety issues are addressed by a range of risk assessments covering the whole of the site. Individual risk assessments are also completed for each young person. The centre has good fire procedures and well maintained fire safety equipment. Fire drills take place regularly. Appropriate service contracts are in place for fire, gas and electrical equipment. As a consequence of these routines, young people's health and safety is promoted well.

Furthermore, young people are protected because systems for recruiting and undertaking the relevant checks before appointing staff meet with regulatory requirements. The quality of recording of the checks made for each staff member is good.

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

The provision is good.

There are a range of effective structures in place to support young people with achieving within the unit. Young people's needs are effectively highlighted as part of the care planning process and responded to by the staff team. Their needs are identified on an individual basis and communicated to all staff so that appropriate care can be provided. Young people have designated key workers who work with them on a regular basis. Key workers are able to be changed should the young person or staff feel that the relationship is not working positively.

All staff at the centre actively promote education for the young people. There are individual education plans in place and the content of these is known by care staff. The plans include details of how a young person will be supported to achieve in school. Support is offered on a

daily basis, educational opportunities are valued and achievements are celebrated. House unit staff are able to give guidance with the completion of any work which is required outside of the formal school day. All of the support available means that young people are encouraged to achieve to the best of their abilities in preparation for leaving the centre.

All young people have access to the Voice team who are independent visitors for the young people. Members of the team visit on a monthly basis. Both young people and Voice staff are able to discuss ways that support is being offered to young people, either through the listening process or through direct advocacy. This sometimes results in young people's concerns being taken directly to the centre's management team for their attention.

The centre offers a good range of activities that both challenge individuals and promote healthy living. During the school holidays thorough enrichment plans are in place offering a wealth of activities. These are organised by an enrichment team and run by the care staff, with young people being very aware of the plans for these periods. Specific enrichment projects are also completed during this period such as making a rap video organised by an external organisation. The range of enrichment activities offered is well planned and offers young people differing life experiences and the chance to develop self esteem. A minority of young people highlight that the success of activities is dependant on the motivation of the staff member and that they sometimes feel more motivated in going to school. Activities are assessed by young people who give their feedback on how sessions could be developed.

Young people are actively engaged in a range of topics that relate to their individual needs and areas of risk. Activities organised throughout the week are well organised, with young people having both structured and free time periods. Young people are involved with effective weekly group work exercises that are linked to areas such as restorative justice and health promotion. Group work exercises are also assessed to develop good practice.

The centre is well resourced including a large artificial surface area, fitness suite and a range of games including video games within each of the smaller units. The centre has recently had the large internal courtyard resurfaced to offer a safer playing environment. Although some staff and young people state that they do not like the new surface it is aesthetically pleasing, while also offering an increased ability for young people to be involved in outside activities with improved safety. Young people have access to reading materials within each of the units which contributes to the range of things they can do in their own time.

All activities are risk assessed, with some allowing an appropriate level of low level risk to ensure young people are effectively challenged. This means that all young people are offered the opportunity to take part in an activity.

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

The provision is good.

Arrangements for the development of placement plans within the centre are very good and support the young people's needs well. Planning is developed through the use of the centre's own system as well as a care assessment planning tool. Young people's views of their placement are gained through an accessible recording tool in addition to parental views. All information then contributes to the development of objectives for care within the centre and highlighted target areas of work. This process ensures that plans are highly individualised and target specific



offending areas or areas of need. Objective areas are worked on with key workers; using a good library of resources specific to each young person.

Reviews are completed within the expected timescales and include the views of young people at all times, as well as staff contributions. Reviews lead to the development of targeted areas of work and also the revision of placement plans. Young people meet with their key workers to discuss the developing placement plan following reviews. In addition, minutes of review meetings are discussed with young people and this information is also held within their individual case files.

Contact arrangements with family and friends form part of the planning process and agreed contacts are recorded, with additional checks being completed by the youth offending team worker where necessary. The centre strongly supports contact occurring and this is done by supporting families with travel money and arranging visits. The centre has recently been involved with the Partners of prisoners and families support group, who have highlighted how contact visits could be developed, supporting both the young person and their families. This is a positive development of contact arrangements and young people who are involved are able to discuss how this has supported family contact. The centre has further developed contact between families and young people through a restaurant scheme, with families being able to eat together. This good practice area continues to develop and is welcomed by young people and their families.

Good arrangements exist for the admission of young people. All necessary paperwork is examined prior to admission into the centre and processes for admission are clear. All young people are made aware of the centres rules and the expected behaviour while at the centre.

Arrangements for leaving the centre and follow-up support for young people is extremely good. Disengagement planning starts almost on admission to the centre to ensure that sufficient support structures are in place when young people leave. Support is provided in relation to educational plans, residential arrangements and promoting leisure interests that may combat further offending behaviours. All staff are involved with these plans and provide support to young people for a period after leaving the centre.

There is a strong ethos for listening to young people within the centre and responding to their requests where appropriate. House meetings are held on a regular basis and recorded, although there is some variation between houses regarding the quality of recordings and the level of response to young people's enquiries. The centre has a boy's council with representatives from each of the houses discussing site wide issues. Young people are able to discuss successes from these meetings where improvements have developed for the individual houses, as well as frustrations where they have been unable to change some areas. Boy's council representative's state that the experience of being on the council has helped them develop their self esteem, 'It makes you feel better and that you are involved in the running of the centre'. Minutes of the council are variable in quality and do not always show feedback from staff meetings that discuss issues raised.

Young people are also involved in the interviewing process for new staff, completing role play exercises prior to interview and then scoring interviewees in line with others on the interviewing panel.

## Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The planning for a young person's move out of the centre starts when they first arrive. Plans are developed and put into place to meet individual needs. A resettlement officer oversees arrangements, attends reviews and ensures appropriate care planning is in place. When needed the centre takes action to ensure the needs of individual young people are met. For example, staff effectively remind Local Authorities and Youth Offending Teams of their responsibilities to young people in the secure estate. There is a clear understanding that it is the responsibility of all staff at the centre to contribute effectively to the preparation of a young person's transition to adulthood when they leave the centre.

The centre has strong links with local agencies offering young people various life experiences prior to leaving. These include working alongside volunteers in a local church, staff at a local animal sanctuary and other projects in the community who work in partnership with the Police. Young people gain an insight into different ways of life and work that broadens their horizons and they state they enjoy this work. Local agencies have good working relationships with the centre's staff which helps contribute to safeguarding young people and the community when they are working in the local area.

The level of access to independence and life skills training is dependent to some extent on the living unit a young person resides on which is due to the design of the present building. Presently, those young people in the newest house have access to laundry facilities and the kitchen enables cooking to take place away from the main group. Overall, facilities to promote independent living in the houses are limited.

The centre continuously looks to improve services and develop resources available within the constraints of the present building. Ongoing work includes access to work experience in the centre's kitchens and there are plans in place to further develop the independent life skills programme alongside the preparing for adulthood work undertaken.

Young people have good discharge plans tailored to their individual needs, helping them prepare for leaving the centre. There are very good links with various local community resources providing young people with experiences which they enjoy. These include, working with local charities, community projects and church volunteers. This helps them develop their communication skills, interpersonal relationships, problem solving skills as well as breaking down any pre-conceived notions they may have had. These arrangements help staff expose young people to some realisation of the impact crime has on members of the community.

Good systems are in place to ensure young people have appropriate clothing. Young people are able to have clothes brought in by family or are provided with basic clothes by the centre and all young people are provided with a school uniform designed by young people at the centre. Young people stated that the: 'school uniform makes it (school) feel important and different to the time spent on the house units.'

Wherever possible the centre provides a homely environment for young people by using domestic style furnishings in the houses and centre's dining room. Young people are encouraged to look after their own rooms and living areas.

## Organisation

The organisation is good.

A range of information is available to inform parents, professionals and young people about the practice and procedures at the centre. A statement of purpose is available which is comprehensive and contains all information required by the Children's Homes Regulations 2001. More concise information leaflets are in place which offers an overview of the centre's work for adults and young people. The information contained in these leaflets has been expanded so that details of complaints procedures and the centre's values are now included. This means that information is easily accessible to all and young people are able to refer to the leaflet upon admission.

The roles and responsibilities of the senior management team are clearly defined. There is a large senior and middle management structure in place and some areas of responsibility have recently been reallocated. There are good communication structures in place between management and staff members and strong leadership is in evidence. All managers hold a formal qualification.

There is a comprehensive workforce development plan in place and the centre holds the Investors in People Award. A thorough induction process exists and a mandatory training programme takes place. Further individual training needs are identified through staff appraisals. All managers have completed project management training. Senior staff members undertake relevant training for their role such as supervision skills and chairing meetings. There are eight National Vocational Qualification assessors available and a majority of staff hold a formal qualification. Plans are in place to enable night staff to undertake formal qualifications by utilising temporary secondments to the day care staff team. The availability of training has increased dramatically over the past twelve to eighteen months and senior managers intend to enable time to allow staff to embed their learning into practice.

Formal staff supervision rates have continued to improve. Supervision is undertaken on a monthly basis and all houses at the centre have a completion rate which meets the required frequency. A written record is held of all sessions undertaken and a template is available to ensure that appropriate areas are addressed. The quality of the recordings is variable and the manager is using an audit system to increase the consistency of sessions.

Six monthly staff appraisals are undertaken which assess the performance and development of staff members. Individual staff are able to contribute to these and use them to identify personal development and training opportunities. The frequency of formal supervision undertaken means that staff members can be supported in their work with young people. Managers at the centre have undertaken specific appraisals which have allowed them to identify their own learning and development needs. The level of training and formal guidance available for staff means that they are better prepared to work with and support young people.

Further full time staff have been added to the staff complement. This ensures that the centre managers are able to meet with staffing requirements on a consistent basis. The staff team is diverse with a good mix of gender, ethnic backgrounds and experience. Young people are able to benefit from the skills and experiences of the workforce.

A business development and service improvement plan is in place which outlines strategy for the next two years. The plan covers all aspects of the centres operation and is reviewed on a six monthly basis. There are very good management information monitoring systems in place. Key performance indicators collected on a monthly basis are used to identify areas where development or change may be required. The system enables any variation in attainment or quality to be identified and rectified quickly. The indicators are linked to national targets and assist in helping the centre to improve the quality of service for young people.

Management and staff at the centre are not averse to change, even where this means increased workload. Amendments to ways of working or systems are implemented if they improve the outcomes for young people. Visits are undertaken as required by Regulation 33; a comprehensive report is produced following each visit and made available to the manager. The report will indicate any areas where it is felt changes are required. The visits contribute further to the external auditing of procedures and practice at the centre.

Recording systems used at the centre incorporate both hard copy and electronic records. The recording of individual young people’s development and progress is of a good standard. The information available supports staff in their work with young people. Records are held securely and audited by managers.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Whilst there is no specific staff member responsible for this area, it is embedded into the daily life at the centre. Staff receive relevant training and irrespective of their needs, each young person is treated as an individual with all needs identified, respected and recorded. Staff at the centre support the inclusion of all young people in every activity.

## 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 Childrens Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
14	ensure that the recommendations made by HMI to address shortfalls in the educational provision at the centre are addressed (Regulation 18.1).	1 January 2010

### Recommendations

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

- ensure health needs of young people are safeguarded by the home’s policy and procedures for administering medication. (NMS 13.9)
- ensure young people have a clear written health plan which relates to specific therapies or remedial programmes needed in relation to physical, emotional and mental health needs. (NMS 12.2)

- ensure a greater consistency in the recording of single separation throughout all houses at the centre (NMS 22, Children's Secure Accommodation Regulations 1991, Regulation 17)