

Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Inspection date</b>	17 November 2009
<b>Inspector</b>	Lynda Mosling
<b>Type of Inspection</b>	Key

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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	9 June 2009
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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 children's home it comprises four houses set around the manager's office. Two houses can accommodate seven young people each and two can accommodate six each. The total compliment of the children's home is 26 beds.

The home caters for young people between the ages of seven years and seventeen years with a variety of disabilities, primarily epilepsy and learning difficulties. Each unit has the facility to accommodate wheelchair users and has equipment suitable to care for young people with a physical disability as well as learning difficulties. On the same site is a residential special school which the young people attend as day pupils. Whilst the home was newly registered in 2009 the individual houses were previously separately registered as children's homes and have therefore provided continuous care for the young people accommodated.

### **Summary**

This unannounced inspection assesses the key national minimum standards for children's homes. It took place over two weekdays during the school term and was conducted by two inspectors. Young people were observed in each of the houses during the inspection. The manager and staff from each house were consulted during the inspection.

The home provides good care to young people with a range of complex needs. The assessment of need and resulting placement plans are thorough and well recorded. There is evidence of good progress of young people in the home and they were observed to be well cared for and relaxed in the company of the staff.

The service is outstanding at providing individual support and enabling young people to access a large range of activities. The arrangements for education and liaison with the school are also excellent. The home has a very effective quality assurance programme.

The care is delivered by a committed staff team and practice is well monitored by the registered manager. There is support from specialists working for the organisation on the same site and a very good understanding of the needs of young people with epilepsy and other complex needs.

The action and recommendations made as a result of this inspection relate to record keeping and adherence to standards regarding staff qualifications.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

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

This is the first inspection of the home since registration.

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

The provision is good.

Young people enjoy a varied menu with choice at each meal. Allergies, likes and dislikes are well known by the staff who also provide the necessary practical support to help the young

people enjoy their food. Symbols and pictures are used to aid communication when choosing meals and when consulting young people about menu planning. Good consideration is given to cultural and religious food choices and a range of special dates are celebrated with food appropriate to the occasion. Young people clearly enjoy their food and were seen to be eagerly anticipating meal times.

Very thorough assessments of health needs inform the individual health plans. These are delivered with the support of a range of specialists based at the on site medical centre. Records show clear diagnostic information and identify the needs resulting from the large range of conditions affecting the young people. The daily timetables and records evidence that staff adhere to the agreed health plans and are involved in any review of these. Staff are trained to provide the care needed and are confident in their interactions with young people.

Medication needs are clearly recorded and administered according to the agreed programme. Staff are aware of the effects of the medication they administer and report any concerns, or need to review medication, to the appropriate specialist. Staff are trained in first aid and in dealing with common incidents relating to conditions such as epilepsy. The on site medical centre is available in emergencies and is staffed with qualified medical practitioners.

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

The provision is good.

Staff are careful to protect young people's privacy and deliver personal care sensitively. Confidential records are securely locked and private information is shared only with consent. Young people all have single rooms and can use these, or a large range of quiet areas in the home, to have private time.

The complaints procedure is comprehensive with an informal and formal stage. Most complaints are resolved quickly in the houses. Records of complaints at both stages track the action taken and the satisfaction of the complainant. The staff are aware of the young people's right to make a complaint and use individual time and young people's meetings to elicit their views about their care. Young people have access to independent visitors and advocacy services to provide additional support.

Safeguarding training is a mandatory part of the induction programme for new staff and is refreshed on a regular basis. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of the need to protect the young people in their care and use their extensive knowledge of the individual to interpret signs of discomfort or distress. Good liaison with the school ensures that any accidents or incidents are reported and carefully recorded, using body maps where necessary.

The young people have little notion of bullying and rarely target other young people. Staff are aware of individual vulnerabilities and risk assessments are used to highlight the necessary action to protect young people from harm. Good strategies are in place to divert potentially harmful behaviours and there are a large range of attractive communal areas that can be used to separate young people, with staff, if necessary.

Whilst there is a clear missing persons process this has not been used as the young people are closely supervised and do not leave the home unaccompanied. This is by agreement and as a

result of the young people's lack of capacity to understand likely dangers. Each file contains good identifying information in the event of such an incident happening in the future.

There is constant interaction between the staff and the young people using their preferred communication method. Individual behaviour management strategies are recorded for each young person and are used by all the staff to provide consistent care to them. Anti-social behaviour is usually dealt with by distraction or replacement of the behaviour with more acceptable activities. Where restraint is used it is undertaken according to the agreed methods, in which all staff have been trained. Records are generally good but some omitted the location of the restraint.

The home provides safe, well maintained accommodation. Entry to the houses is restricted by key pads and all visitors have their identity checked to protect the young people's safety. There are good systems in place to ensure young people are protected from fire, infection and identifiable risks. These records are monitored by the manager to ensure compliance.

The recruitment of staff is undertaken by the central human resources section in consultation with the registered manager and the house managers. The records are comprehensive and evidence safe practice. New staff have an extensive induction programme to complete before they start caring for young people and confirm that it equips them to provide confident and competent care with the support of their colleagues. Appraisal and supervision records show that appropriate action is taken if any concerns arise regarding individual practice within the home.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Support to individuals is excellent. Their assessed needs are well documented and the plans are developed in line with these. There is recognition that each young person has different capacity, desires and needs and the staff work as a team, with other colleagues in the organisation, to meet as many of these needs as possible. Most of the young people are placed in the home on a long term basis and make close and beneficial relationships with the staff. Young people are helped to reach their potential and there are examples of young people progressing further than initially predicted.

Young people attend the special school run by the same organisation. As this is on the same site as the home it gives ample opportunity for teaching and care staff to work closely together. Plans for learning are shared across the site and this provides a consistent approach to the work undertaken with young people. Progress made at the school is carefully monitored and all reviews are attended by the staff of the home.

An extensive range of activities are available to the young people both in school and at the home. The activities are planned to make the most of individual interests and abilities. There are sufficient staff to ensure both individual and group activities are enjoyed. Young people are consulted about the activities provided and choose which ones to participate in. Imaginative schedules are put in place to maximise young people's experiences. Young people who enjoy swimming, for example, are taken to different baths and leisure centres to undertake this activity rather than always using the same facility. Young people enjoy an annual holiday and are taken on trips into the local community to extend their learning and socialise with people

away from the setting. Young people were observed to be leading the staff to their chosen activities within the home. There is an excellent balance between organised time and free time.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Placement plans are thorough and cover all areas of the young people's lives. They are based on the young people's assessed needs and are up dated in accordance with any changes, including progress made. The manager in each house is consulted about possible new placements prior to the decision being made by the registered manager. This gives them the opportunity to consider the affect of an admission on the current group of young people. All of the young people accommodated are appropriately placed.

The house manager and the key worker of each young person are involved in all reviews of young people. Whilst the young people do not generally attend they are helped to contribute by individual work undertaken by key workers and fed into the reviews. The staff have proved to be very effective advocates for the young people in their care. Whilst reviewing arrangements are generally excellent some requests for reviews of young people's specialist needs of have not been rigorously followed up.

A contact plan for each young person identifies the agreed arrangements for contact with family and friends. Contact plans are flexible with some young people having regular overnight contact with their family whilst others spend the majority of time in the home. Staff are sensitive to the different experiences of the young people and are skilled at making all young people feel special on their birthday, at Christmas or other special occasions. Staff ensure they have at least weekly contact with parents to up date them on the care of their children and to help them feel involved.

All of the placements are planned and this provides excellent opportunities for young people to be gradually introduced to the home. Some are able to stay for trial periods prior to the placement being agreed and benefit from their familiarity with the school and some of their accommodated peers. The staff have developed attractive children's guides, including staff photographs, to help prepare the young people for the placement. There are equally sensitive plans made to help young people when they move on from the home. Staff understand the anxiety many young people experience during transitions and make very detailed plans to minimise this.

Young people's views are considered on a continuous basis using their individual preferred method of communication. Most of the young people accommodated at the home have limited verbal communication skills but staff are very skilled at using their knowledge of the young person to interpret their signs and gestures. Key worker sessions and children's meetings are recorded to evidence the way young people are consulted. The home further demonstrates their desire to gain the views of young people and their families and friends by sending out questionnaires on an annual basis. The results of these are collated and used to create action plans for any necessary changes to improve the service offered.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

Whilst the young people in the home are unlikely to achieve full independence in adulthood the home aims to provide them with as many life skills as possible. Individual targets are agreed for each young person and the staff work with other colleagues across the organisation to help them meet these.

The home is purpose built and provides good quality accommodation. There are four separate houses situated close to each other and are similar in design. They are colour coded for ease of identification. All of the accommodation is on one level and is suitable to care for young people with some physical disabilities. The houses are domestic in style and provide attractive and comfortable accommodation. All young people have their own room and can personalise it with their belongings. There is a good range of communal areas within each house.

The home is on a site that includes a special school, nursery, residential homes for older young people, a further education college and a medical centre. There is plenty of space and young people benefit from the many facilities on site.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The Statement of Purpose has been recently updated and provides an accurate picture of the service on offer. In addition each house has a children's guide that includes lots of photographs and information suitable for the young people accommodated. The organisation has its own website and provides a large range of information about its work. The information is easily accessible to all interested parties.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Young people are taken to the church of their choice and are supported to observe all practices important to them and their family. There is good observance of the stated wishes of young people and parents with regard to food, activities and celebration of special occasions. Staff use young people's preferred communication methods to interact with them and act as advocates whenever necessary to protect their interests.

Some of the staff group have many years of experience of caring for young people with complex needs. Those that are newer to the job have received good induction and follow up training to ensure their competence. Less than 80% of staff have the required National Vocational Qualification at level 3, although there are a number of staff currently working towards this. Whilst this is the first inspection of the newly registered home the houses have functioned as registered homes for several years and have provided consistently good care to the young people during this time.

There are sufficient staff to provide good care to the group and to meet individual needs. The staffing arrangements are considered on a daily basis and reflect the needs of the current group of young people. The manager is a competent and respected manager who has vast experience of caring for young people with complex needs. She is experienced by the staff as supportive and knowledgeable.

The internal arrangements for monitoring the practice within the houses are good and there is evidence that any issues of concern are dealt with in an efficient and professional way. The regulation 33 visits however, currently focus on just one of the houses each month. This does not provide a broad enough assessment of the overall effectiveness of the registered home.



The records for each young person are thorough and up to date. All of the information necessary is provided and is kept securely. The records are only shared as guided by agreed procedures. Staff understand the legislation relating to storage of information.

## **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.

<b>Standard</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Due date</b>
22	maintain an accurate and up to date record of measures of control used, as set out in regulation. (Regulation17)	21 December 2009

### **Recommendations**

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

- ensure all elements of the placement plan are reviewed regularly and the outcome recorded (NMS 2.1)
- ensure the regulation 33 visits are broad enough to include checks on all of the houses within the registered home (NMS 32.2)
- ensure there are sufficient appropriately qualified staff to meet the minimum standard. (NMS 29.5)