

Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Inspection date</b>	24 March 2010
<b>Inspector</b>	Jacqueline Malcolm
<b>Type of Inspection</b>	Key

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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	8 October 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 is run by a local authority. It is registered to accommodate up to six young people aged between 12 and 17 years of either gender. The home provides long term residential care to young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The home is situated in a residential area in a village location. It is close to public transport and motorway networks and is not far from the town centre.

The accommodation on the ground floor comprises of a lounge, dining room, conservatory, two kitchens, one of which is used by young people who are preparing for independence. There is a downstairs toilet and two offices. On the first floor there are seven bedrooms, offering single occupancy rooms for young people. There is sufficient bathroom facilities for young people to use. Staff sleeping-in rooms are available.

### **Summary**

The purpose of this unannounced key inspection was to check the homes capacity to meet the outcome areas; being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, positive contribution and economic well-being. Organisation was also looked at.

Since the last key inspection in October 2009, the management of the home has been reviewed and the home's registration has been varied to reflect a mixed gender group. There are positive improvements to service delivery and there is more clarity with respect to the home's leadership and management. The current manager moved from an existing children's home owned by the local authority. An application has not been received by Ofsted to consider their registration.

The morale in the team is strong and staff have confidence in the manager's ability to support them. The team places a clear emphasis on the needs of young people and positive relationships are promoted. This is a team of diverse and competent people who offer a wide range of experience and skills. Young people are engaging in positive relationships with staff. There is capacity within the team to further develop and improve practices in the home.

However, there are areas for improvement. This includes aspects of young people's health needs, placement planning, risk assessments, education and behaviour management issues.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

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

At the last inspection, 15 actions and ten good practice recommendations were made. The home has made good progress to address a number of these issues and demonstrate a commitment to continued improvement.

Young people preparing to leave care have pathway plans that can be followed in practice. This helps professionals and young people maintain a focus on the agreements made. Not all young people are involved in the overall content of their placement plans. It is therefore not clear if the plans are understood by them.

Young people's privacy and dignity is respected when out shopping. Staff use cash and not money orders, which does not cause embarrassment to young people accompanying staff.

Improvements have been made to the way that complaints made by young people are dealt with. Notifiable incidents are sent to Ofsted within acceptable timescales and staff follow the missing from home protocol in conjunction with safeguarding recommendations. These measures promote the safety and welfare of young people.

The medication policy has been amended and implemented in the home. Staff comply with the behaviour management policy and ensure that a written record of restraints is made. These are accompanied by detailed incident forms. They are monitored through the internal and external systems. However, the restraint records do not fully meet the national minimum standards and regulations. The sanctions book is available for inspection. These improvements demonstrate improved transparency in managing the behaviour of young people, despite the shortfalls with restraint records. Staff training in the administration of medication and behaviour management does not extend itself to agency staff. It is not clear how they follow the organisations policy and practice expectations when they do not have this training.

Fire drills are undertaken at regular intervals. Improvements have been made to the home environment and plans are in place to make further improvements.

Staff are regularly supervised and improvements have been made to the monitoring of the home. These measures contribute to improving the quality of care for young people.

Good practice recommendations relate to the home providing a record of actual meals consumed by young people to demonstrate a healthy and balanced diet; developing strategies to positively respond to socially unacceptable behaviour; reviewing physical restraint practices so that they are not used to force compliance; making provision for staff handovers to take place and providing young people and staff with opportunities to meet with the Regulation 33 visitor. Evidence from this inspection demonstrates that these matters have been met, thus improving the outcomes for young people. The home has not met the recommendations with respect to staffing, individual support to young people, reviewing all risk assessments and actively discouraging young people from smoking. These recommendations are reiterated.

## **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is satisfactory.

The home has satisfactory arrangements to promote the health and well-being of young people. Young people are involved in meal planning and their preferences are taken into account. Young people's cultural needs are met and they are encouraged to experience meals from other countries. For example, Chinese, Indian and Italian meals. Planned menus include meals that have a good nutritional content and there is a range of vegetables and fruit available. Take away meals are restricted to once a month. Young people are encouraged to prepare meals, snacks and drinks and they do this competently. The actual meals that young people eat demonstrate that they eat at regular interval. However, not all young people choose to eat a healthy balanced diet.

Most young people are supported to be healthy. They are registered with key professionals, such as the doctor, dentist and optician and attend health appointments. The home has positive contacts with the looked after children's nurse and other agencies who provide support in a

number of areas, including sexual health, drugs, alcohol and ante-natal care. Aspects of health needs are identified in placement plans. However, not all young people have a health needs assessment. Health plans are not detailed, despite contacts with specialist mental health services to ensure the appropriate support is obtained to meet all health needs. Young people are not actively discouraged from smoking, which may have a detrimental effect on their health.

Young people receive good medical treatment and first aid when they need it. The medication policy has been implemented and staff are appropriately trained in the administration of medication and first aid. Agency staff are not trained in these areas. Medical consents have been sought for young people to enable staff to administer first aid and non-prescribed medication.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

There are good arrangements in place to promote young people's privacy and confidentiality. Young people have their own room and confirm they have a key to secure their belongings. Young people have access to a landline phone or can use their mobile phones. Information about young people is securely maintained and confidentially shared. Young people understand that staff will search their rooms if they suspect that they are holding items that may pose a health and safety risk.

Bullying behaviour is not promoted and staff appropriately respond when this is detected or brought to their attention. Young people sign up to the anti-bullying policy. This ensures that they understand the home's expectations. Good support is offered to young people who complain and there is an appropriate investigation process. Young people know how to complain and their views are taken seriously. One complaint has been made by a young person regarding the bullying behaviour of another young person. They express satisfaction with the outcome.

The home works with other agencies to minimise the risk of abuse to young people. Decisions made following strategy meetings are followed to protect acutely vulnerable young people. For example, young people who are at risk of sexual exploitation. Staff are trained in child protection and safeguarding. This ensures the protection of young people and minimises the risk of abuse. However, agency staff do not have access to this training. It is therefore unclear about how they are expected to meet the home's safeguarding expectations.

Young people who are absent without authority are adequately protected. Staff follow agreed protocols and individual agreements, depending on the level of risk to young people. The incidents of young people going missing from the home has been greatly reduced.

Young people are positively supported to develop socially acceptable behaviour. Staff are trained in an approved behaviour management technique and are good at recognising behavioural triggers and use de-escalation techniques to safely diffuse situations. Staff are consistent in their practice and use their positive relationships with young people, including incentives and praise to promote good behaviour, which is effective most of the time. However, the placement of one young person has resulted in behaviour that has been not only unpredictable, but acutely violent and aggressive. Staff have exhausted their skills to manage the behaviour in a safe way and concede that they are not able to guarantee the safety of the other young people when the behaviour escalates. The home has made several notifications to senior management on more than one occasion regarding the placement. Since the inspection,

the issue has been resolved and an appropriate placement has been sought. The health and safety of the young people has immediately improved to a safer level as a result of this intervention.

Incident reports are detailed and clearly demonstrate the activities that may result in a restraint or sanction. The sanction records are satisfactorily maintained and allow young people to comment on the fairness of the measure imposed. However, the restraint records do not fully meet the regulations.

The arrangements to protect young people from hazards to their health and safety is satisfactory. Young people are provided with fire instruction when they move into the home and staff are appropriately trained. Fire prevention checks are regularly undertaken and deficiencies are reported and responded to. Regular health and safety visits take place by someone on behalf of the organisation to ensure a safe environment. Young people have individual risk assessments. However, not all risk assessments reflect the changes to the behaviour of some young people. It is not clear how staff are informed about the levels of risk posed by young people when risk assessments are not kept up to date.

Young people are cared for by staff who are suitably vetted during the staff recruitment process. All staff have an up to date Criminal Records Bureau clearance. There have been no new staff to the organisation, other than staff who have moved from existing homes. Visitors to the home are appropriately checked and monitored around young people. These measures protect young people who may pose a risk to them.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Most young people get individual support when they need it. This includes interventions by health, social care, leaving care and education services, youth offending team and agencies involved in drug prevention and sexual health issues. However, the support provided to some young people is reactive, inconsistent and not effective.

All young people are actively encouraged to attend their educational provision. The home works with schools and colleges to ensure that young people are good attendees and are attaining educational levels that meets their ability levels. Documents, such as personal education plans and behaviour plans are obtained to support young people's education. There are issues for some young people who have a less than satisfactory number of hours in school and despite efforts made by the home to resolve the matter, this remains an outstanding concern. The educational attainment of young people is compromised when they do not get the support they need to prosper.

Young people are actively encouraged to get involved in the leisure activities they enjoy. The current group of young people have their own interest, such as watching DVD's, cinema, art and crafts, camping, games and outdoor activities. Plans are in place for the staff team and young people to have some time away on team building. The aim of the trip will be a bonding exercise for everyone to participate in.

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

The provision is inadequate.

There are inadequate arrangements to plan for the care of some young people. A placement made with respect to one young person raises concerns about the decision making process and communication between the people who make placement decisions and the home. The admissions process is not thorough and in one example, a final meeting did not take place to discuss the placement needs of a young person. It is not clear what recorded discussions had taken place to determine the suitability of the placement and no consideration was made to the existing group of young people. The placement put young people at risk of harm and staff could not guarantee their safety, raising a potential safeguarding issue. The placement was inappropriate. The matter has been addressed with immediate effect and an appropriate response has been made by the local authority. The home's placement plan does not demonstrate how young people are involved in their development. There are instances when placement information provided by some social workers is limited in detail. This does not help staff to consider how they will meet all young people's needs.

Young people's needs are formally reviewed. They are encouraged to attend and share their views. Contact is actively promoted and young people are encouraged to maintain positive contact with appropriate family and friends.

Young people are consulted both formally and informally about some of the decisions that affect their lives at the home. For example, there are monthly house meetings and key work sessions available to young people. Young people have positive relationships with staff and find them approachable.

## **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people are actively encouraged to develop independent skills. Young people can cook, clean, do their laundry and know how to keep their rooms clean and tidy. A second self-contained kitchen can be used by young people who are preparing for independence. Young people planning to move into independence have a pathway plan and appropriate support package. This includes continued interventions by staff, which provides continuity of support.

The accommodation is satisfactorily maintained and furnished. Young people have communal and private space, including a conservatory, however, this room is cold and therefore not used often. Young people's rooms are satisfactory but not all young people are happy with the size and location of their rooms. This has since been addressed. Some parts of the home has suffered deliberate damage and there are aspects of the home, such as new flooring and furnishings that will be addressed as part of the improvement plan.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

The home has an updated Statement of Purpose. It provides readers with information about the services on offer to young people. However, it has not been approved by elected members and the ages of the young people placed is inaccurate. This may be confusing to people who wish to consider a placement at the home.

The staff team is well led by a competent and qualified manager. As yet, a manager's application to register has not been received by Ofsted. Staff are from diverse backgrounds and have a wide range of skills and experience to help them meet the needs of the young people. Staff



are enthusiastic about the care they provide and continue to look for the positives, even during the most challenging times. They recognise the changes that a new manager has made and respond well to this style of management. The morale in the home has improved and staff say they feel stronger as a team. Staff express high levels of satisfaction and enjoy working at the home. Staff also say that they feel well supported and supervised, valued and appreciated. Young people's lives are positively enhanced when they are cared for by a well motivated and supported staff team.

Young people are cared for by a high number of staff that hold relevant qualifications to enable them to work with them. This includes the National Vocational Qualification in Childcare. Staff have personal development plans and opportunities to develop their knowledge base and are encouraged to attend further training. However, agency staff do not have access to mandatory training courses, such as child protection, medication administration, first aid and behaviour management.

Staff absences are covered by the existing staff. Additional support is provided by agency and casual staff. There is one vacancy. There are clear deputising arrangements. Staff know who they are accountable to and find the manager approachable. Staff handovers take place and staff communicate with each other about the young people and their activities. However, it is not clear how staffing at the home is reviewed when they are presented with young people who pose challenging and violent behaviour.

The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Most young people's individual needs are holistically met. Satisfactory steps have been taken to promote equality and diversity within the home and young people are encouraged to participate in the activities on offer. For example, the home has introduced world cultural and spiritual information sheets for young people to read and cultural events are held once a month to promote understanding of other cultures.

Young people's case files are satisfactorily maintained. There is some limited care planning information and not all risk assessments are up to date. The systems to monitor the standards of care has improved. Regulation 33 visits are taking place monthly and appropriate reporting on the findings takes place in a report that is also forwarded to Ofsted. Regulation 34 visits are undertaken by the manager and there is an improved emphasis on improving young people's life chances.

## **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.

<b>Standard</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Due date</b>
1	ensure the Statement of Purpose accurately reflects the age range for the children accommodated (Regulation 4(1))	30 April 2010
2	ensure all young people know the overall content of their placement plan, according to their level of understanding (Regulation 12)	30 April 2010

2	ensure the children's home is conducted to promote and make proper provision for the welfare of children accommodated there (Regulation 11)	30 April 2010
5	ensure that the needs of the children and likely effects of his/her admission upon the existing group of children are taken into account, and recorded, in decisions on admission to the home (Regulation 11)	30 April 2010
22	maintain an accurate record of measures of control as set out in Regulation 17 (Regulation 17)	30 April 2010
24	ensure that the home is maintained in good order throughout (Regulation 31(2))	30 April 2010
31	ensure that agency staff receive appropriate mandatory training, such as administration of medication, behaviour management and child protection to assist them in their work (Regulation 27)	30 June 2010
34	ensure that the appointed manager of the children's home is registered with Ofsted. (Regulation 7(1)(b))	30 June 2010

## Recommendations

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

- actively discourage young people from smoking in a consistent manner (NMS 12.6)
- review and update all risk assessments (NMS 26.2)
- make appropriate arrangements to enable children to obtain individual support, guidance and advice (NMS 2.2)
- review staffing at the home to ensure the home's staffing policy can be maintained (NMS 30.7)
- provide elected members with an opportunity to formally approve the Statement of Purpose. (NMS 1)