

Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Inspection date</b>	21 April 2010
<b>Inspector</b>	Maire Atherton
<b>Type of Inspection</b>	Random

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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	1 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

This is a local authority children's home providing planned longer term placements (a minimum of six months) for up to six young people aged between 10 and under 18 years of age. All five young people placed have lived in the home for more than a year.

The detached house, created from two semi-detached houses, is near the town centre, on the edge of a residential housing estate. There are good transport links within easy reach of the home. For example, there is a train station within walking distance.

Downstairs the accommodation comprises a lounge, dining room, quiet room, games room and a kitchen. There is also an office and staff facilities. Upstairs there are six single bedrooms and two staff sleeping-in rooms. There are three bathrooms, two of which have all facilities, while the other one has a separate toilet.

### Summary

This unannounced interim inspection followed up the requirements and recommendations made in the last report. In addition, key standards were inspected under the outcome staying safe and a selection of standards were inspected from being healthy, positive contribution, economic well being and organisation.

A well-led and committed staff team work effectively with young people to promote their safety and well-being. This is achieved through the positive relationships that exist between the staff and the young people. Staff provide young people with information and help them develop strategies they need to keep themselves safe, but the young people at times actively resist this option.

One action is made in relation to recording.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

### Improvements since the last inspection

There were three requirements and four recommendations made in the last report. There is now guidance for staff and young people on the circumstances in which it may be necessary to search the information on a young person's phone or lap top. Records relating to risk assessments, physical interventions and incidents are easily accessible, fully completed and up to date. As a result of the check of the electric installation in the house some work has been done. Young people are provided with more budgeting opportunities as part of preparation for independent living. There is clarity about the phrase 'Fraser competent' used in the risk assessment process for young people self administering medication. The young people's files have been audited and information required has been obtained.

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The outcome for being healthy was judged as outstanding at the previous inspection; the key standards under this heading have not been fully assessed on this visit.

The staff are highly tuned to the health care needs of the young people and provide them with excellent support and information to promote their well being. Young people say that staff are very good at making sure that they attend healthcare appointments and ensuring that they follow the healthcare advice that they have been given. This is appreciated by the young people but they also acknowledge that some of the choices they make do not fit with a healthy lifestyle, despite the best efforts of staff.

Meal times are social occasions, enjoyed by young people and staff as a group. There is a good awareness of healthy eating and the meals provided encourage young people to make healthy choices, alongside less healthy treats. Young people preparing their own meals are actively supported by the cook, working alongside her as she prepares the group meal, learning new skills and enjoying the results.

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

The provision is good.

Staff demonstrate a good awareness of the young people's right to privacy balanced with their safeguarding needs, for example in providing clarity about the circumstances in which staff may access information on the young people's phones or laptops.

Young people are familiar with the complaints system and know how to use it. However young people say 'There's nothing to complain about', mainly because staff deal with the day to day grumbles as they arise. They also have regular access to independent visitors who visit the home.

There are good systems in place that seek to safeguard the welfare of the young people, for example through information sharing with other relevant professionals and arranging case discussion meetings. These systems include the effective management of child protection, bullying, and unauthorised absence. The young people acknowledge that staff work with them on keeping safe but that they sometimes choose to ignore the information and strategies that staff have provided them with. However they are really pleased when they have used the advice and kept themselves safe, by declining another choice and returning on time for example.

Relationships between the staff and young people are very good. There is considerable warmth and affection in their interactions, in both the banter and the way young people seek hugs from staff, with appropriate responses from staff providing young people with reassurance and security. The staff have a good awareness of the group dynamics, how the young people relate to each other, and how they influence each other's behaviour. There has been a significant increase in the use of physical interventions. Young people are very clear that such interventions are used to keep individual young people safe and not for any other reason. There has also been an increase in the use of sanctions to discourage negative behaviour. One entry includes the word 'fine', where money is to be repaid.

Health and safety in the home is well managed and there is a proactive, prompt response to repairing damage. This ensures that young people continue to benefit from comfortable, well-maintained accommodation. There have been no new staff appointed since the last inspection. There are robust systems in place to ensure that only appropriately checked visitors may meet with the young people unsupervised.

## Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

## Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The outcome for positive contribution was judged as outstanding at the previous inspection; the key standards under this heading have not been fully assessed at this inspection.

There are good systems in place to promote and support contact with families and friends of young people, including sensitive monitoring where this is necessary. Staff adopt a flexible approach so that contact is a positive and enjoyable experience for all involved. Young people are actively encouraged to express their views and external support is obtained to enable this when required, through the services of an interpreter for example.

## Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The outcome for economic well being was judged as good at the previous inspection; the key standards under this heading have not been fully assessed at this inspection.

Young people are well supported to develop independent living skills in accordance with their individual plans and expressed wishes. Budgets for clothing and personal requisites are added gradually to food budgets.

## Organisation

The organisation is good.

The outcome for organisation was judged as good at the previous inspection; the key standards under this heading have not been fully assessed at this inspection.

The revised Statement of Purpose has recently been approved by the elected members of the local authority.

There is an established staff team in post and any shortfalls in staffing are addressed by the use of staff working additional hours or agency staff. Young people benefit from the flexible approach of staff to ensure that good staffing levels are maintained. Staff communicate effectively to ensure consistency in their management of challenging behaviour.

Record keeping is comprehensive and provides detailed information about care practice with, and for, young people and is used in the care planning process.

## 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
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22	ensure that the term 'fine' is not applied to sanctions imposed on young people (Children's Homes Regulations 2001, Regulation 17 (5)(g))	31 May 2010
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## Recommendations

There are no recommendations.