

Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Inspector</b>	Elizabeth Taylor / Paul Taylor
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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 situated in the north west region of England and is run by a voluntary organisation. The centre can, when fully operational, offer secure accommodation for up to 17 young women between the ages of 12 to 17 years. The centre accommodates young people whose behaviour has placed themselves or others at risk. The main building incorporates two residential units, a central kitchen, education rooms and administrative offices. Facilities also include outdoor exercise areas and a sports hall. A third residential unit is sited nearby on the campus. However, the latter is not presently operational. There were eleven young people resident at the time of the inspection.

### **Summary**

This announced key inspection evaluated all key standards in the Every Child Matters outcome groups along with progress against actions and recommendations from the last inspection. The formal educational provision at the centre was not inspected on this occasion. All the young people contributed to the inspection process either by completing a survey or talking to the inspectors.

A particular strength of the centre is its ability to effectively support young people's physical and emotional well-being. A full range of external professionals work collaboratively with staff to ensure young people's individual needs are met. Effective arrangements are in place to protect young people and keep them safe.

Young people are listened to and treated with respect by staff. This is reciprocated for the most part by the young people. Good progress is achieved in helping young people understand and manage their feelings and actions. Young people receive a good level of individual support to help them prepare for moving back to live in the community.

Routine repairs and maintenance are carried out to a good standard. However, some fitments are in need of attention. For example, windows which are badly scratched and en-suite facilities where insufficient ventilation and drainage pose a hygiene problem.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

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

Two actions and five recommendations were identified during the last inspection. The manager was asked to ensure young people's psychological needs are effectively addressed. A contract was signed with the Primary Care Trust in April, 2010 to provide direct support to young people and to train and advise staff. This ensures young people's emotional needs are effectively supported and addressed.

A programme of formal supervision for all staff has been implemented. This ensures staff receive the support they require to enable them to meet the young people's needs.

Recording about the management of young people's behaviours was not sufficiently detailed to provide a clear chronology of events. Regular audits of all records maintained in the centre are now carried out. This ensures any gaps in recording are identified and accurate records are

kept to show how young people are cared for. Appropriate sanctions were used to help young people understand that there are consequences to incidences of unacceptable behaviours. However, the sanctions tended to be unimaginative and not always related to the offence. Greater use is now made of reparation and restorative justice to help young people take responsibility for their actions.

Programmes of daily leisure activities were planned for young people but were not always implemented in practice. Weekly activity programmes continue to be devised in consultation with young people and now take place regularly. This ensures young people enjoy a range of leisure activities which promote their physical and emotional well-being.

Young people were not always conversant with plans for their care. Staff continue to encourage young people to contribute to their care plans and to sign them as evidence of this.

It was recommended that data gained via the internal audit system be used to guide the development plan for the centre. The internal system has been developed to include statistical data in addition to the monitoring of records in the centre. The collective information enables the senior management team to gain a detailed overview of the service offered to young people and enables them to see where improvements can be effected for the benefit of the young people.

## **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Young people are supported to have a healthy diet and to enjoy good health. The four week rolling menu provides a varied and nutritious diet. Choice is offered at all mealtimes and young people's views are obtained about the meals provided each week. Records show young people in the two living units vary in their opinion about the quality of meals provided although both receive the same menu. This difference in opinion was repeated in comments made by young people during the inspection. All the young people say they have sufficient to eat but some are less happy with the healthy options or method of cooking of food at times.

Mealtimes are promoted by staff as relaxed, social occasions with varying degrees of success. Fresh fruit and healthy snacks are available to all the young people. They can have a limited amount of 'tuck' and other treats each week. Young people can access kitchen areas for food preparation, cooking and making drinks in each living unit, based on a risk assessment. Further opportunities for young people to cook are provided as part of the education curriculum. This ensures young people's independence is promoted.

Comprehensive health screening is carried out on all young people when they are admitted to the centre. Information gained from the assessment and accompanying documents is used to formulate a health plan for each young person. Nursing staff indicated that information provided to the centre in respect of young people's health needs has improved. However, they continue to be assiduous in chasing information to ensure young people receive continuity in their health care. This exemplifies the commitment to ensure all young people are supported to have good health.

Young people have access to a range of health professionals to ensure their physical and emotional well-being is promoted. Nursing staff are present most weekdays and visit the residential units to meet with care staff and young people to discuss any health concerns.

Nursing staff are proactive in providing a full screening programme as well as offering advice and guidance to young people about a wide range of health and social issues. They communicate effectively with care and education staff and work in close partnership with other health professionals to provide a coordinated service to young people. Their support provided for the young people is commendable.

Arrangements for young people to receive a range of health services are embedded in practice and are well organised. An optician and dentist attend the centre regularly to carry out initial checks. Any required treatment is undertaken in their local surgeries based on a risk assessment of the young person. Support for young people with drug and alcohol related problems and relevant training for staff has been obtained from professional advisors from the local primary care trust.

Many of the young people placed in the centre have a history of, or emerging evidence of, serious self-harm or suicidal tendencies. The implementation of mental health training for staff and new formats to help staff assess the level of risk posed by young people's behaviours has contributed to keeping young people safe and well. A positive outcome of these measures is that only a small number of young people have had to be admitted to hospital for treatment in the past few months compared to the same period last year.

Another significant improvement has been effected in a contract between the centre and a local adolescent mental health team funded by the Primary Care Trust. The new contract is responsive to the diverse needs of the young people. The team is comprised of a range of mental health professionals who work directly with the young people. This ensures young people receive the support they need to promote effectively their emotional well-being.

Young people are encouraged to participate in daily exercise as part of a healthy lifestyle. They have access to recreational equipment in the centre and each unit has an outdoor recreational area. Fund raising events involving sports and activities are organised periodically to benefit young people and charitable institutions.

Systems for auditing and reviewing health care provision within the centre are effective. Appropriate consent is gained from relevant persons for young people to receive medical treatment, prescribed medication and approved non prescribed remedies. Care staff are responsible for administering medication and receive training to enable them to do so in a safe manner. Training includes waking night staff. Nursing staff also assess the practice of care staff in this area to ensure competency in handling medication. These measures concur with good practice.

Arrangements for the storage and disposal of medication on each unit are good. Each unit has three lockable cabinets sited in the staff office for the separate storage of prescribed, non-prescribed and controlled medication. Individual record sheets for each young person in respect of all administered medication facilitate a clear audit trail. A check of the medication system in one of the units shows accurate records are maintained. The administering and disposal of all medication is regularly monitored by nursing staff. This ensures young people receive medication safely.

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

The provision is good.

All confidential information relating to young people is stored securely and young people are aware of their right to see information written about them. Staff are sensitive in supporting young people, if they need it, with regards to self-care and hygiene. It is clear that privacy and dignity are respected and seen as a young person's right.

The centre has a written complaints policy and young people are made aware of it on admission. If a young person is unhappy with the outcome of their complaint, the centre's policy provides redress to senior managers within the organisation. Young people are made aware that there is an independent visitor to the centre who will support them in making complaints if that is needed. Good recording of how a complaint has been investigated and resolved is in place. However, this does not always include the date when the complaint was received or the date when it was resolved. The practice in the centre ensures that young people are confident to express their views and know how they can complain and to whom.

A robust approach toward child protection ensures that young people's safety is valued and promoted. Staff receive appropriate induction and training in child protection and have access to local safeguarding procedures. Members of staff are aware of what they need to do and who they need to contact if they have concerns about a young person's welfare. Comprehensive records are kept of any issues and these show how they have been resolved and what measures have been put in place in order to ensure the young peoples' safety. Good contacts are maintained with appropriate child protection agencies such as the local safeguarding team and child protection police officers.

The centre operates a policy of zero tolerance toward bullying and all young people are made aware of this on admission. Appropriate staffing levels and careful monitoring help minimise the opportunities for bullying to occur. Staffing levels also ensure that they are aware of any dynamics which may be causing conflict and tension. Records demonstrate that when incidents have occurred they are taken seriously and the young people concerned are supported in resolving their difficulties. The young people feel that bullying is not an issue in the centre. The monitoring and guidance offered to the young people by the staff team ensures that young people do not feel bullied and that if it occurs it can be addressed effectively.

The centre has a policy and procedure for reporting young people who abscond. Risk assessments are used to determine a young person's vulnerability should they go missing whilst on visits to court or mobility outings in the community. Staff have developed pen pictures and physical descriptions of each young person that can be relayed to police in the event of them absconding. However, such events are rare. Only one young person has absconded whilst on mobility since the last inspection. The incident was promptly reported to the relevant agencies and the young person returned safely to the centre.

Individual behaviour management plans and risk assessments highlight all possible concerns about challenging or risky behaviour which some of the young people may display. Each young person has their particular issues identified with strategies put in place describing how to de-escalate challenging behaviour and what methods of physical intervention are appropriate. These plans clearly guide staff in how to respond to each young person and thus provide a consistency in approach. In addition staff training in the method of physical restraint used in the centre supports consistency in the management of young people.

The young people are made aware of behavioural expectations. The staff encourage positive behaviour and resolve difficulties and tensions via discussion and reflection with the young people. Positive behaviour is rewarded by the young people earning more privileges and more levels of trust: this provides motivation for them to take responsibility for their own behaviour.

A record is kept of sanctions when they have been imposed. The young people have the opportunity to sign the sanctions book to show that they acknowledge the sanction and understand why it has been given. Young people report that sanctions given are fair. Sanctions are now becoming more varied and include the use of reparation and restorative justice as well as the withdrawal of certain privileges and removal of electrical equipment from bedrooms.

Records are maintained of any control or disciplinary records such as restraints or sanctions. These are not always completed consistently and while records of incidents and how they were resolved are good, sometimes the relevant information has not been recorded in the correct document. For example, a sanction imposed may have been recorded in an incident report but not in the sanctions book. On other occasions the record of restraints has not included the length of time a young person was held.

The health and safety of young people and staff alike is taken seriously. Fire fighting equipment is routinely serviced and tested and fire drills occur on a regular basis. Risk assessments are carried out on the environment as well as activities and behaviours which the young people may display. The risk assessments are regularly reviewed and updated.

There are robust vetting procedures in place to ensure that all the required checks are carried out before a new member of staff begins to work with the young people.

The systems operated at the centre, along with good levels of staff awareness, ensure that the safety of the young people is promoted.

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

The provision is good.

Young people are provided with individual support from key workers who monitor their progress and provide them with opportunities to spend one-to-one time with them. Though the centre operates a key worker system there is an expectation that all staff are conversant with the specific social and emotional needs of each young person. Additional advice and guidance is provided by external professionals such as psychologists and psychiatrists. This enables staff to plan, in a comprehensive manner, how each young person should be supported. Religious and cultural needs are assessed prior to a young person's admission so that the centre can ensure that they can meet them. The approach to individual planning ensures that the young people are offered good levels of support by the staff team.

A positive and pro-active approach ensures young people are encouraged and supported to engage in their education. All young people have clear educational plans in place which detail the type of programme they should be receiving. The expectation that each young person engages in education is embedded in the culture of the centre. It is seen as an opportunity for the young people to experience education positively, often for the first time in a number of years. Achievement is recognised and celebrated by all members of staff, both teaching and care. It is clear education is valued and promoted and the opportunities given to the young people encourage positive outcomes and success for them.



A planned activity programme provides structure for both the young people and the staff. The activity programme is varied and offers activities such as arts and crafts, physical exercise such as basket ball and football, beauty treatments and relaxation sessions. The young people have the opportunity to voice their preferences of activities in the weekly meetings. Activities provided for the young people ensure that they the opportunity to enrich their experiences and to spend leisure time constructively.

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

The provision is good.

All pre-admission information is rigorously assessed and considered prior to being incorporated into detailed and comprehensive plans of care. Each plan clearly highlights the young person's individual physical, medical, social, behavioural and emotional care needs and how these are to be met by staff. Young people are encouraged to participate in this process and sign care plans to acknowledge they understand. Where appropriate, parents and carers are encouraged to contribute to care and review planning.

Regular reviews of care ensure that care plans match the current needs of each young person. The whole staff team contribute to routine meetings where any change to each young persons circumstances, behaviour or emotional well-being are considered fully. Regular statutory reviews focus on the progress of each young person. Reports are provided for these reviews and young people are supported to attend and participate. Additionally, the young people have an independent advocate who will represent them and support them during reviews if requested.

Young people are assisted to maintain contact with their families, carers and friends. Private telephone calls can be made by the young people and the staff team are very aware that contact with loved ones can be an emotive time. At other times, staff supervise young people's calls in accordance with young people's placement plan. Sensitive preparation and support is offered during this process.

Admissions to the centre are carefully carried out. The staff are sensitive to the fact that this may be a time of high anxiety and tension for a young person. The process is carried out at a pace commensurate with the young person's understanding of their situation.

The staff team work on an individual basis to prepare the young people to move into the community. Key work sessions help to equip young people with life skills which can give them the opportunity to succeed. Where discharge plans are clear, the staff team will facilitate visits to the young person's next placement and encourage members of staff from their new centre to visit them. This approach can ensure a continuity of care for the young person and help to manage anxieties over transition and change.

Young people are given every possible opportunity to express their views and to contribute to the day-to-day running of the centre. House meetings take place weekly and these enable young people to voice their opinions on how the centre is being run. Comments made at these meetings are taken forward to be discussed at staff meetings.

Apart from house meetings, the young people are able to meet with key-workers, the manager and visiting monitoring managers. Key work sessions planned for the young people to discuss their care and any other issues are not always carried out in a consistent manner.

Clear details of advocacy services are displayed around the centre should young people choose to contact other independent agencies. A well established and very experienced independent advocate regularly visits the young people to give them another avenue of support and representation if that is required.

Young people are relaxed in the company of staff. They are confident to express their feelings and to speak openly about any issues which are affecting them. 'The staff are the best thing here' was an opinion voiced by one young person.

The approach of the manager and staff, and the culture within the centre, ensures that the young people are empowered to have the right to comment on how they are being cared for, and how they feel the centre is being run.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people are encouraged to take responsibility for some domestic tasks on the residential units. However, opportunities and facilities within the centre for young people to try different vocational studies are limited by the constraints of the building and funding.

While work to prepare young people for a more independent lifestyle is identified in their overall care plan, priority is given to stabilising their physical and emotional well-being. This means young people are more receptive to learning when they are presented with different opportunities. All the young people have an internal pathway plan which focuses on their discharge arrangements and supports them to develop appropriate life skills. A life skills workbook is completed by each young person which covers important matters such as their future accommodation, allowances, employment and practical skills. Key worker sessions are linked to young people's 'preparation for leaving' targets. Young people said a good thing about the centre is that 'staff help' them.

A Connexions adviser visits the centre regularly to support young people and positive use is made of mobility programmes to prepare young people for their transition back in to the community. Staff act to ensure appropriate discharge plans are in place from placing authorities and remind the authority forcefully if there is any delay. Advocacy services are also used to remind placing authorities of their responsibilities. Nevertheless, uncertainty remains about firm transition plans for some young people.

Staff continue to work hard to ensure accommodation for young people is as comfortable as possible within the confines of particular safety and security measures. The two living units the units are furnished and decorated in a manner that is domestic in nature. Both benefit from good natural light. Most young people's bedrooms are nicely decorated and personalised to make them as homely as possible. Arrangements for initiating repairs, upgrading decor and providing appropriate fixtures and fittings are generally good. Young people are consulted whenever possible about plans for redecoration of living areas and bedrooms.

Some aspects of the accommodation though are in need of upgrade. In particular, some windows are badly scratched to the point where they obscure the outside view. Another area for attention are the young people's en-suite facilities. These are in effect 'wet rooms' with poor ventilation and drainage which causes a build up of black mould and rust. Some bathroom mirrors are also

badly scratched with inappropriate words. Work is needed to improve these areas to ensure the provision of suitable accommodation for young people.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity within the service is good. Young people's individual needs are effectively addressed and they are supported to learn about other cultures and faiths. Staff ensure young people maintain contact with their family and other important people in their lives. Young people's views are taken into account and acted upon when possible. Their rights are respected and promoted and they benefit from a service that takes into account their holistic and diverse needs. Staff demonstrate a professional approach to ensuring that young people feel valued and listened to. Young people commented that staff in the centre are good at 'helping them to come down and always laughing and having fun'.

The centre has a Statement of Purpose that accurately reflects the service offered to young people. The young people's handbook is presented in a child-friendly way. Both documents provide clear details explaining how the centre is run. This helps young people to know how they will be cared for and advises interested persons about what services they can expect from the centre.

Continued use is made of a casual pool of staff and a small number of regular, agency persons to cover vacancies, annual leave and long term sickness. However, this is not excessive. Overall, young people are cared for by a largely stable staff team who are skilled in delivering care and support to them. There is good informal support for staff and formal support processes are becoming embedded in the routine. Effective communication systems are in place which promote consistent care for the young people. The culture of the centre is open, friendly and child-centred. Staff are deployed in numbers sufficient to provide safe and effective care. Action has been taken to provide additional staffing when the needs of the young people have indicated this is needed. This shows the centre is responsive to circumstances and demonstrates a commitment to promoting young people's safety and welfare.

Staff are afforded appropriate training opportunities covering a range of related courses. This has included mental health training for the whole care staff team in the past year. This supports the specialism of the centre which is to care for young people who display high levels of risk taking behaviour, including self-harm. This means young people are well cared for by competent staff. Staff are also supported to gain a nationally recognised child care certificate and the centre exceeds the required number of qualified persons. This is commendable. The commitment of staff to on-going training supports not only their individual, professional development but collectively enables them as a team to provide a good standard of care and effectively meet the diverse needs of the young people.

Representatives of the managing organisation undertake monthly visits to the centre and report on their findings. The report format provides an overview of the centre. Sufficient detail is reported to inform judgements and enable strengths and weaknesses in the service to be identified. Young people and staff are routinely spoken with as part of the monitoring process.

The internal monitoring system has been revised and extended. Regular auditing of records is now established practice in the centre. Information gained from the audits and statistical data is used to inform the development of the service.

Young people's records are stored securely and their individual files are well maintained and structured. This enables staff to access important information quickly. The records show the contribution made by staff to meet young people's individual needs. All young people are encouraged to contribute to the contents of their plans and recording about them though some choose not to do so.

## 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
22	ensure that all measures of control and discipline include all the details as required and are recorded in the correct bound volume (Regulation 17 (4) (a-g).	16 July 2010
24	ensure all parts of the children's home used by children are suitably equipped, with particular regard to windows and en-suite facilities. (Regulation 31, (2)(a-e))	29 November 2010

### Recommendations

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

- ensure consistency in the quality of suitably prepared food (NMS 10.1)
- ensure that the record of complaints includes the date when the complaint was made and the date it was resolved ( NMS 16.3)
- ensure that key work sessions regularly occur to ensure that each young person is given the opportunity to seek guidance and advice on any matter. (NMS 2.2)