

Inspection report for children's home

---

<b>Unique reference number</b>	SC031490
<b>Inspection date</b>	21 July 2010
<b>Inspector</b>	Gwen Buckley
<b>Type of Inspection</b>	Key

---

<b>Date of last inspection</b>	27 January 2010
--------------------------------	-----------------

---

© Crown copyright 2010

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

You can obtain copies of The Children Act 2004, Every Child Matters and The National Minimum Standards for Children's Services from: The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Cripins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: [www.tso.co.uk/bookshop](http://www.tso.co.uk/bookshop)

## 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 secure unit is managed by a county council. It provides secure accommodation to five young people aged from 10 to 17 years old. All the young people accommodated are placed under Section 25 of the Children Act 1989. Those under 13 years must have the approval of the Secretary of State to be accommodated prior to admission.

Four of the young people present at the time of the inspection assisted by providing their views on the care they receive and what it is like to live at the home.

The home is an old building with a fenced secure external hard-surfaced recreation play area and a small garden used for on-site mobility. It also has a secure car port and courtyard area for leisure and education use with hard and soft play areas. An internal fitness room is available and the living areas comprise an open plan living, dining and kitchen area. Education is provided on site.

### **Summary**

This was a key announced inspection which considered all the key national minimum standards under the Every Child Matters outcome areas. The home provides a highly individualised level of care and support to young people which is focused on meeting their needs. Staff recognise the importance of positive relationships with young people. Young people speak well of the staff who care for them, particularly their key workers.

The management team is committed to improving practice and has excellent systems in place to monitor individual progress. External professionals are complimentary about the commitment of staff to meet the needs of the young people and the high level of care provided.

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 no recommendations following the last inspection to report on.

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

The provision is good.

Young people benefit from flexible arrangements for menu planning for meals that takes into account their individual medical, cultural and dietary needs, while still offering them choice. They benefit from a well-balanced and nutritious menu. However, the views of young people varied about the quality of the food provided. The education and care staff work together to support young people to plan, prepare and cook their own meals.

The management of health care in the home is good. Young people's health needs are assessed on or shortly after admission. Assessments cover physical and mental health, substance use and misuse as well as disability and vulnerability. The nurse sees all young people in the home and registers them with a local General Practitioner.

Each young person has a well-documented health care plan that identifies areas of need and progress made. Comprehensive monitoring of a young person's progress considers the effectiveness of the plans in place and if further support is needed to help the young person. Young people's health care plans are available to take with them upon discharge or sent on to the next placement.

The home is good at promoting a healthy lifestyle and encouraging young people to engage in a variety of activities and to try new sports. Exercise and training programmes are available within the secure unit and for young people able to access in the community when they are able to use local facilities.

Good attention is given to how guidance on substance misuse and abuse as well as sexual health and relationships is provided to young people. Programmes provided for young people take account of their learning style and are delivered in groups or separately by specialist staff depending on individual need.

Care staff receive specialist advice and support from visiting consultants about how best to care for and support young people at risk of self-harming. Young people and staff receive guidance, advice and support from external health care professionals such as psychologists, doctors and nurses. who visit the home They also receive support to access services in the community such as the dentist, optician and the genito-urinary clinic.

The building is an old building and there are no en-suite facilities. The home has domestic-style furniture and fittings, is clean and well decorated. However, light fittings in the bedrooms are potential ligature points. Department for Education funding has been sought to completely rebuild the unit and provide up-to-date facilities which will include en-suite facilities for young people and improved in-house medical facilities such as a designated surgery and consultation rooms.

Medication recording systems are good. Records of prescribed and non-prescribed medication are well maintained and medication is kept securely with a medication audit trail in place. A first aid trained member of staff is always on duty. The home enables some young people to self-administer medication, for example, those with diabetes. The home does not have a policy on how to enable young people to gain experience in managing their own medication, if assessed as safe.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Staff promote the right of young people to maintain their privacy and manage this well. The numbers of staff employed together with careful deployment ensures continual observation is in place which helps to keep young people safe, while enabling each young person to have private time when needed.

There is an excellent external scrutiny of any complaints made relating to the home. The complaints procedure is robust, transparent and easily accessible to young people, who have confidence in it. However, young people do not feel the need to make formal complaints as they stated: 'Our key workers will sort things for us.' Independent visitors are available to young people and will support them through the complaints system if asked.

Safeguarding procedures at the unit are outstanding. Staff routinely receive updates to their child protection training and are intuitive in caring for young people. External professionals compliment the home on, 'the high level of care provided'. There is an exceptional level of understanding in relation to the individual needs and vulnerability of the young people in their care and when needed staff act swiftly to keep young people safe.

There is good awareness within the staff team of anti-bullying strategies that help to protect young people. Staff are knowledgeable about the various forms bullying can take and appropriate action is taken to support young people when any bullying may occur.

Staff are aware of the process to notify relevant authorities if a young person should go missing and significant incidents are notified to Ofsted.

Behaviour is well managed by staff who are excellent at establishing a good rapport with young people. Staff work effectively with young people to help them manage their behaviour and assist them to develop strategies to address any issues they may have. High supervision levels enable staff to constantly work with and guide young people in a positive manner.

Young people report that they enjoy good relationships with their key workers. They receive individual support and help and move up the trust level. Young people feel moving up the levels is worth it: achieving a higher trust level enables them to have later bedtimes, mobility and a DVD in their room. Young people are encouraged to engage and interact effectively with others to help build their self-esteem and confidence. Young people say: 'We feel safe in the home and we have people we can talk with if we have concerns.'

Mobility risk assessments are undertaken to help to protect young people before they are able to access resources in the community. Mobility is agreed in advance with the relevant authorities. One young person reports that: 'I am a changed person and the person I now am, is down to the support and help I received from staff at the home.'

Young people live in a building that is secure and domestic in style. Staff ensure all relevant safety checks are regularly carried out and take action when needed to remedy any defects noted.

A robust staff recruitment process is in place, which ensures the people employed to work with young people are appropriately checked before they start. Young people at the home take part in the recruitment process for new staff and their views those of staff are given equal consideration within the scoring system used. Young people are rightly proud of their involvement in the staff recruitment process.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Comprehensive placement plans reflect the specific needs of the young people and take account of any medical, religious or cultural needs they may have. The home works on an individual basis, focusing the work through their care plan at case management meetings. Risk assessments ensure the individual's complex care needs, including vulnerability, are recognised and action taken swiftly to support them. Each young person can access play therapy as part of their placement. Placing authorities arrange one-to-one sessions for the young people with psychologists or psychiatrists if identified as needed.

Young people receive support and encouragement to attend school; they are clear that school attendance is an expectation. Each young person has individual education plans in place and attends the home's educational facility. The communication between the school and care staff is good. The range of activities available ensures that all young people can take part in leisure and learning experiences daily, both during and out of school hours.

Excellent case management and overview of individual needs ensure young people receive focused support by the provision of one-to-one sessions or in group work.

Excellent planning and the commitment of staff ensure that appropriate activities are offered during school holidays and in the evenings. Arrangements in place deliver a wide range of both leisure and enrichment activities to young people. Young people enjoy a variety of activities like music, sports, keep fit, TV, computer access, and the use of games consoles. External facilitators are used to complement the enrichment programme, for example, with art sessions, music sessions and a person who brings in different reptiles for young people to handle.

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

The provision is good.

Young people are appropriately placed and are able to contribute to their assessments and how any needs identified are to be met. The assessment looks at any specific medical, cultural or religious needs a young person may have. A placement plan is then drawn up in agreement with the young person which sets targets on when and how any identified need is to be addressed in order to help the young person.

Weekly case management reviews take place and provide staff with an excellent overview and review of how young people are managing and progressing towards meeting their targets. This ensures that the care plan for a young person does not drift and action is taken quickly to support them according to their individual needs. Key workers in one-to-one sessions, and other staff, support young people daily to work towards addressing the targets set for them. Young people can expect individualised support to address the issues that brought them to the home.

Reviews take place on time and young people are encouraged and supported by staff to attend and contribute. Young people receive support and encouragement to make decisions about their lives at the home and their immediate future. Regular meetings enable young people to have a voice about how the home operates.

Young people are able to maintain constructive contact with family and friends. Families are encouraged to visit and are made welcome by staff. Young people are encouraged to phone family and friends on a regular basis. Any contact restriction is known to staff and explained to the young person. Staff maintain regular contact with family members to keep them up to date with events in the young person's life.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

The home has a positive outlook about working towards independence, enabling young people to develop skills at their own pace according to age and ability. There is some good work carried out with young people in preparation for adulthood and independence. Key workers and care

staff help young people to learn how to cope emotionally and to develop as individuals. A resource package has been prepared for care staff to use which provides a focus on individually assessed needs, helping young people obtain the skills required. This work is delivered by a multidisciplinary team. Education and care staff provide enrichment opportunities including cooking at least once a week. Mobility is used imaginatively and safely to support young people to prepare for adulthood or transition to a new placement.

Discharge planning starts when young people arrive at the home and progress is monitored through the case management meetings. Health care professionals give advice on the suitability of future placements when additional support to young people is required. Staff actively chase information young people are entitled to, for example, looked after children's documentation and pathway plans. However, despite chasing up a pathway plan for one young person, they still do not have one from the placing authority after four weeks. Without this plan staff are not in a position to ensure the best advice and support is in place for the young person.

The home is clean and well maintained and ensures that the young people have a warm and comfortable place to live in. Young people are able to personalise their bedrooms and those spoken with said they have access to a telephone that can be used in private.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

Young people receive suitable information on how the home is run when they arrive. They confirm that key workers talk to them to ensure they understand what is expected and what they are entitled to. The home keeps its Statement of Purpose and young person's guide up to date and reviews these annually. Arrangements are in place to ensure young people who do not speak English have the support they need when they arrive, for example, through the use of translators.

The management of the unit is extremely good and influenced by the knowledge and experience of the senior management team. Staff are well supported by managers who have good oversight of the home. All staff work closely together to ensure a consistent approach to the running of the home. There are appropriate expectations about formal supervision, and line managers and peers support staff formally and informally. Staff receive formal supervision monthly, or fortnightly when they first start their employment.

Staff attendance and retention are excellent, providing a stable staff group and consistent care by staff who the young people know and trust. An excellent number of care staff are on duty to meet the needs of young people. Four staff to five young people are available each day, one of whom may be a manager, with waking night staff and at least two sleep-in staff. The staff group have an excellent range of training, knowledge and skills combined with a good mix of experiences and cultures which help them to provide an excellent and individualised standard of care for the young people.

The home is committed to staff training which is demonstrated in an excellent level of skills and qualifications in child care. For example, 100% of care staff have the National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in child care or higher with other complementary qualifications and training such as therapeutic child care, youth work and play therapy. The care staff have effective support from independent people to improve outcomes for young people. External professionals



consider that there is a high level of competency in the staff group to meet the complex needs of young people.

The manager makes use of the external and independent perspectives, inspections and feedback to improve outcomes for young people. There is an effective system in place to ensure external monitoring. Regulation 33 visits take place each month. They are conducted to a high standard. Surveys are undertaken with young people at various times throughout their stay and with social workers three months after the young people have left. All this information is collated and used by the manager to look at how improvements can be made.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Planning for care takes account of individual cultural, medical and religious needs. A young person's awareness of diversity is raised in many ways throughout their stay. School and care staff work together to promote diversity and develop a young person's understanding. For example, themed events and activities run throughout the year and cover various topics including fund raising for disadvantaged people, Black History month, geography, disability awareness, homophobia, discrimination, religion and food. Traditional meals from around the world provide different experiences for the young people.

## **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
----------	--------	----------

### **Recommendations**

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

- develop and implement a system to enable young people, when assessed as safe, to be responsible for their own medication (NMS 12)
- ensure the environment is safe. This relates to potential ligature points provided by present light fittings in bedrooms (NMS 12)
- continue to develop the system to ensure placing local authorities provide the information young people are entitled to. This specifically relates to obtaining pathway plans. (NMS 6)