

Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Inspection date</b>	1 September 2010
<b>Inspector</b>	Vivien Slyfield
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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 home provides therapeutic care, accommodation with education and outdoor activities for up to eight young people aged 10 to 17 years old. The home is situated in a rural location but within easy reach of essential services and amenities. There is also easy access to major towns and cities.

### **Summary**

This is a key unannounced inspection. The inspection focused on the key national minimum standards in relation to all outcome areas. This related to arrangements to ensure children's health needs are met; to keep them safe from harm; to enable them to enjoy their lives and achieve their goals; to ensure they participate in decision making about their lives and to allow them to live in a comfortable, well-managed home. The inspection considered the capacity of the home to ensure all children have equal access to services and equality of opportunity.

The home demonstrates commitment to ensuring children are able to enjoy their lives and achieve their potential. Staff are well organised and demonstrate a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and a strong commitment to the work they do. Managers provide good day-to-day support and guidance to staff to enable them to do their work. The home also has a clear focus on ensuring young people are protected and that known and potential risks are managed in a way that supports their safety and well-being.

The key national minimum standards (NMS) are generally met and some aspects of the service are excellent. Procedures are in place which makes sure that young people are protected and kept safe from abuse, but not all the required staff references and verifications are in place. Staff make sure that health care needs are met so that the good health of young people is maintained. However, some young people's files lack appropriate authorisation for the provision of first aid and medication. Notifications are not consistently made without delay to ensure the appropriate authorities are well informed about the home. The home is very well maintained and a homely atmosphere is created. The on-site of educational facilities are excellent.

The staff team have experience, skills and relevant training in how to care for young people. The staff group are highly motivated and work well together as a team. There is good management oversight into how the home is running and a commitment to improve practice.

One recommendation and two actions have been raised as a result of this inspection.

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 three actions were made. The Registered Manager has now provided a bound and numbered book suitable for recording physical restraints and regular monthly visits have been made in compliance with regulation 33. Whilst action is taken to notify the appropriate bodies of events within the home there remains a delay in some of these notifications and this continues to be an action from this inspection.

## Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children live in a healthy environment, their health needs are clearly identified and effective services are provided to meet them.

Young people's welfare is promoted because they are provided with a well-balanced diet that caters for their dietary needs. Staff are keen to promote healthy eating and encourage the children to understand the benefits of a healthy diet. Young people are involved in menu choices and there is flexibility if particular foods are disliked. Young people are encouraged to help with the baking and some are supported to make meals for visitors if appropriate. Specific dietary needs are catered for through links with specialist food providers when this is necessary.

Young people's health needs are carefully identified and established links with professional services ensure that individual needs are met. Young people have clear health records which outline the work to be undertaken by the home. This is supported by medical attendance records detailing the contacts with health professionals. Children are provided with guidance, advice and support, appropriate to their age, needs, culture and wishes. They have access to an in-house therapist to help and support their emotional well-being. Young people have an individual therapeutic programme and one-to-one therapy sessions form part of this programme.

Minimal medication is currently administered but it is stored safely in a designated lockable cabinet in the staff office. There are clear procedures for staff to follow, staff receive medication training as part of their induction and refresher training for all staff is provided. The home currently has not obtained the appropriate medical consent before all young people were admitted to the home and this could potentially delay the provision of treatment. Staff are trained in the use of first aid and first aid boxes are provided within the home.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

The home is well established and effectively organised and managed to ensure children are safe and well cared for on a day to day basis. Staff are equipped and trained with the knowledge and understanding to fulfil their roles and responsibilities regarding protection and safeguarding.

Young people's privacy is promoted and respected. They have single occupancy bedrooms to which they have appropriate access. The living arrangements provide space where they can relax and easily find privacy away from others if they wish. They have access to a private space to use the telephone if they wish. Sensitive information is held securely in the staff office and staff ensure confidentiality is respected when taking telephone calls.

Young people are protected from bullying behaviour because staff are aware of what they must do to prevent these circumstances from occurring. Staff and young people know that unacceptable behaviour of any kind is not tolerated and will be challenged. This ensures a safe and comfortable place to live because expectations about behaviour and conduct are clearly communicated in a way that has a positive effect on young people. The majority of the comments from young people in the 'consequences' book were that consequences are 'fair'. The home has systems in place to deal with complaints and this is fully explained to children on arrival. There have been no complaints since the last inspection.

The home has clear procedures for responding to child protection concerns and all staff have been trained in child protection and receive appropriate refresher training. Staff monitor all visitors to the home, who are required to provide evidence of their identity and sign a visitors' book which ensures children are not being exposed to potential risks.

There have been a number of unauthorised absences and staff are fully aware of the procedures to follow and have dealt with these situations appropriately. There is close liaison with the police and incidents are appropriately recorded. Any situation where restraint has been used with a young person is now fully recorded in an appropriate format. Notifications are made following any event as listed in schedule 5 of the children's homes regulations; however, some notifications take place days after the event rather than 'without delay' as specified in the regulations. Such delays could lead to key people not being kept up-to-date with developments in the home.

Young people are encouraged to behave well, to establish, achieve and maintain levels of behaviour that are socially acceptable. The staff support good behaviour with congratulations and praise. Staff are acutely aware of the need to balance their interventions with positive feedback about children's achievements. When sanctions are imposed young people always have the opportunity to 'earn back' the privilege that has been lost.

Positive steps are taken to keep young people and staff safe from fire and other hazards in the home. For example, risk assessments are completed in relation to potential environmental hazards. Frequent checks are undertaken on fire equipment and fire drills are regularly undertaken. The Registered Manager ensures that utilities, domestic equipment and vehicles are checked to ensure they are safe to use and this provides physical safety and security for the children who live in the home.

The Registered Manager sees the recruitment of the right person as being more important than the filling of the vacancy and has established a stable staff group. The vetting of staff is not comprehensive as not all the staff records seen had two written references and not all references were verified. This could lead to young people being placed in vulnerable situations. There is a system for the renewal of Criminal Record Bureau checks which is good practice but is not robust as it is unclear if checks have been fully completed.

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

The provision is good.

Young people receive high levels of individual support. The placement plan for each child addresses how support for individual needs will be provided and daily recordings evidence how the young person's needs are addressed in practical terms. Staff are open to addressing a range of possible needs, including, for example, culture, religion, relationships and trauma.

The home provides on-site education and the school was judged 'outstanding' at the last Ofsted inspection. The expectations of educational achievement are high and young people are encouraged to fulfil their potential. Young people wear a uniform and there is a clear physical distinction between the home and school. Staff are positive in their approach to education and assist in every way to support the young people with their educational needs to enable them to succeed. The school facility allows close liaison and cooperation between staff and teachers and facilitates a consistent approach with all the young people.

There are opportunities for young people to participate in a range of appropriate leisure activities and to pursue their particular interests. There are board games available for young people to enjoy as well as computers and electronic games. The home also has a pool table and a small fishing lake. Young people take part in a range of activities including trips out on the boat, cheer leading, horse riding and attending local youth clubs as some of the ways in which young people are encouraged to develop their talents and interests.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Care is taken to ensure young people are admitted on the basis of their assessed needs and how they will relate to the young people already in the home. Placement documentation consists of a number of documents, which provide good insight into the individual needs of the young people. There is clear detailed information about the aims and objectives of the placement and these plans include risk assessments relating to their admission in order to determine the safety of the placement. Risk assessments are also in place in relation to behaviour and activities, which address any areas that arise out of a young person's disability; race; ethnicity; sexuality; faith or belief. The necessary looked after children documentation is held on file and regular reviews take place within the agreed timescales to assess young people's changing needs and to ensure positive outcomes are achievable. Young people are directly involved in their review and their key worker shares the review report with them as part of the preparation for the review. One young person's social worker commented positively about the quality of the review report and the introduction of the young person to the home; 'The induction period... was fantastic. I have been very impressed by all the staff and the care and support given. I was particularly impressed by the thorough review report.'

The home encourages and promotes constructive contact with family and friends where appropriate and all contact arrangements are clearly outlined in the young person's records. There is effective work undertaken by staff to ensure communication is maintained with young people's families and on occasions staff will supervise the contact that takes place. One parent wrote; 'Everyone I met was truly helpful and very professional... I do not feel I can put into words how good it felt that people who work as well with each other are going to be taking care of someone who is so precious to me.' Staff are very alert to the needs of the young person and ensure their support and safety is the primary focus.

Staff demonstrate that they place great value on the views and opinions of the children and spend a lot of quality time with them to ensure that their views can be established. Forms and documents of the home have been reviewed to ensure that 'the voice of the child' is included explicitly. There are regular one-to-one key working sessions which work very well to ensure that children's wishes and views about their life and the running of the home can be established as relevant to each individual.

Staff offer support to young people after they have moved on. The support provided includes telephone contact and one young person wrote to staff after leaving saying; 'thank you for everything - I will take away the most amazing memories and will never forget you guys.'

## **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is outstanding.

There is a high standard of decoration and furnishing in the home. All young people have their own bedrooms where they keep their personal belongings. Both the interior and exterior of the home are maintained in a good state of structural repair. There are photographs on the walls of young people, which gives a sense of homeliness and values each young person living there. The home is clean and any damage is responded to quickly. The garden and extensive grounds are also kept tidy and free from hazards. The small lake area is secure and risks are monitored effectively.

There is good support in preparing for adulthood and leaving care. Careful consideration is given to young people's emotional and psychological well-being and any planning and intervention in developing skills in independence takes this into account. Staff are flexible in the development of independence skills according to the needs of the individual young person.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

The home's Statement of Purpose provides accurate information about the home's aims, ethos and methods of working. The service provided is consistent with the information outlined in the Statement of Purpose. Young people are given a handbook on admission that is in an appropriate format to help them understand what the home provides. The number of staff on duty is enough to meet the needs of the young people and support their welfare and protection.

Staff are well motivated and competent to meet the needs of the children placed. They undertake inductions, attend relevant training and receive regular, formal supervision. There is also an open door policy so staff feel able to share opinions or ask advice at any time and there is ample guidance in the staff group to support the less experienced staff members. Staff shift handovers are well planned to ensure all information is exchanged and shared. Staff meetings are held on a regular basis and form a valuable communication tool for staff to discuss a variety of issues and to reflect on practice. There is effective communication through out the staff group. Staff work well together supporting each other and providing valuable role models for the young people.

The home operates effective monitoring and auditing systems to ensure national minimum standards are met. The manager is committed and effective. There are high expectations of staff and they consistently strive to improve the quality of care provided for children and young people.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The quality and detail of children's overall plans supports the commitment to equality and staff use opportunities that arise with individual young people to explore diversity in ways meaningful to the young people. Each young person receives an individual service which is designed to meet their personal needs. The current staff team have a good knowledge of the children they are working with, ensuring their needs are consistently met.

Children's case files are confidentially stored and arranged in a manner that makes them readily usable by staff and yet accessible to young people. The files are used as effective working documents to support good practice.



## 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
27	ensure there is a written record of the recruitment process which is followed in respect of all staff, including evidence that all requirements of schedule 2 have been met in every case (Regulation 26)	30 September 2010
20	inform without delay any of the events listed in column 1 of the table in schedule 5. (Regulation 30(1))	30 September 2010

### Recommendations

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

- ensure that written permission from the person with parental responsibility for each child, for the administration for first aid and non-prescribed medication, is obtained and retained on file. (NMS 13.4)