

Inspection report for Children's Home

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	SC033362
<b>Inspection date</b>	26/10/2010
<b>Inspector</b>	Gwen Buckley
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Random

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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	28/04/2010
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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 outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

## 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 registered children's home approved by the Secretary of State to provide secure accommodation and care for up to 16 girls and young women, from 10 years of age to 17 years, who are subject to a court order on 'welfare' grounds in accordance with Section 25 of the Children Act 1989. Children aged 10 to 12 years may only be placed subject to approval of the Secretary of State.

The home comprises of four individual living units with formal education provided on site. The education unit has undergone a major rebuild which was funded by the Department of Education, formally the Department for Children Schools and Families. Other building work has also been funded, such as bedroom upgrades, external courtyards and access roads. Internal and external on-site leisure facilities are available including a gymnasium and fitness suite and small external courtyard areas.

All the young women assisted in the inspection process by talking to the inspector either individually or in small groups. At the time of the inspection there were 14 young women.

### **Summary**

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This was an unannounced interim inspection. The inspection focussed on all key standards in staying safe and examined progress on actions and recommendations made at the previous inspection.

The home cares for young women with challenging behaviour that can present a risk to themselves and others. Some young women find group living difficult at these times, but report that staff help them deal with this and keep them safe. Staff and visiting professionals are good at helping young women come to terms with past experiences and help them to move forward. The young women are enabled to develop insight into their own behaviour, its effect on others and to explore alternative actions.

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

At the last inspection, one action and three recommendations were made. Two recommendations and the action have been met, with action taken to progress the remaining recommendation.

A service level agreement has been agreed with a private health care provider to ensure young women receive primary health care services in the home. This includes

the provision of a nurse working within the home full time Monday to Friday and access to a GP and dentist.

Physical restraint records show that young woman are asked if they wish to see a nurse or GP after any incidents involving restraint.

To improve the suitability of menu planning, two catering staff are undertaking a national vocational qualification. This incorporates an element relating to understanding and developing nutritionally balanced diets for the ages of young women looked after. The home is using more fresh produce than previously. Although, young people who have been at the home for some time can see improvement in the meals, they consider the quality of the meals provided can vary considerably. This recommendation, although being progressed, is carried forward from this inspection.

The management team at the home have re-launched the staff appraisal system and introduced a new performance management system. Supervision agendas are routinely updated with items that need to be discussed which have originated as a result of action points from various meetings or from practice issues.

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

The provision is not judged.

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

The provision is good.

Staff are sensitive to the issue that preserving young women's privacy, dignity and confidentiality can be difficult to achieve in a secure unit. The unit manager is very aware of this issue and plans to further develop practice to preserve young women's dignity during the night. Young women report that the new observation panels in bedroom doors are good and they understand the need for their use.

Young women can access the complaints procedure without direct reference to staff and they receive a prompt written response. They sign the complaint record to say they are satisfied with the outcome and are aware that they can take the complaint to the next stage if they are unhappy with the outcome.

Independent advocates visit the home weekly and support individuals, this includes attending reviews and meetings if requested by the young women. The young women all say they have someone to whom they can speak to if they have any concerns. They feel safe in the home, one said 'I will speak to a member of staff who she trusts and respects and can talk to her psychiatrist'. Another stated 'the staff are the best thing about this place'. Compliments received by the home since the last inspection show that external professionals consider a high level of care is provided

and young people who have left have written and thanked staff for the care and help provided while they were at the home.

Systems are in place to notify relevant authorities if a young woman should go missing and significant incidents are notified to Ofsted as required.

Safeguarding procedures at the unit are good. A strength of the home is the positive relationships between staff and young women. Staff receive initial child protection training and regular refresher training is provided. There is a good level of joint working with professionals from the local safeguarding team. Agreement is in place for an annual report to be produced for the Local Children's Safeguarding Board and safeguarding staff have been shown the physical restraint methods used at the home. This helps ensure transparency and external monitoring. The anti-bullying procedures in place help to protect young women. Staff are aware of various strategies used by young women to bully others. The young women are confident in the staff that care for them and report that appropriate actions are taken in regard to any instances of bullying. Staff are very aware of the needs of the young women and the potential for power imbalance in groups and the vulnerability of each individual. However, practice developed to address these issues is not always reflected in updated behaviour management plans or risk assessments.

Interaction between young women and staff is positive; staff acknowledge good behaviour and work constructively to address inappropriate behaviour. A new progress and development system is in place with points awarded throughout the day by care and education staff. There is a range of standard incentives used and these run alongside highly personalised incentives agreed with each young woman. These incentives help young women develop their own interests and hobbies both in the home and the community. On the whole, the young women think the new system is an improvement on the previous one. However, they believe that being required to spend time in their room, restricted room time, for inappropriate behaviour is overused. This is not in line with the home's own guidance on managing behaviour. Records show there is a range of agreed sanctions not used by staff, the only sanctions used recently are restricted room time and, or a drop in the incentive level.

The home cares for young women who may present very challenging behaviour that includes significant risk to others or to themselves. Staff report that at times it can be difficult to manage such challenging behaviour in a group environment and keep everyone safe. Young people say that they understand everyone has issues but it can be 'scary' when they have to live together. There is no separate lounge area where young women can go, to receive one to one support or to have quiet time away from the group. Despite this staff manage the difficulties this presents well and keep young women safe.

Staff, along with mental health professionals, work closely with young people who are at risk of self harming, in planning for and developing individual care packages. One young woman was extremely complimentary about the help she was getting and stated 'staff help you get through the issues you have and develop strategies with

you to keep you and everyone else safe'.

Young people live in a building that is secure and maintained to a high standard. An equality of access policy is in place and the entrance to the home has been modified to enable easy access. Recent work to improve the facilities include upgrades to bedrooms, school, grounds and vehicle access. The fire department have visited during the building work at various times to familiarise themselves with the new layout of the building and work with the home to update fire procedures. A night time fire drill has not occurred while the recent building work has been ongoing. A night time fire drill is planned in the near future. The manager stated that the fire department will be involved in this drill and it will include the testing of the new access road which needed to be widened.

Good procedures are in place for the recruitment and checking of staff. Records of visitors are maintained and proof of identification is requested where appropriate. These practices reduce potential risks to the welfare of the young women living at the home.

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

The provision is not judged.

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

The provision is not judged.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is not judged.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is not judged.

## **What must be done to secure future improvement?**

## Recommendations

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

- ensure the meals provided offer a suitably balanced nutritious diet (NMS 10.3)
- review the use of measures of control to ensure any consequences of unacceptable behaviour are clear and measures applied are relevant to the incident (NMS 22.4)
- ensure staff are able to maintain safe, consistent and understandable boundaries for the young women. This specifically relates to the need to maintain up-to-date risk assessments and behaviour management plans that reflect practice developments. (NMS 21.2)