

## Inspection report for Children's Home

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<b>Inspector</b>	Gwen Buckley
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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 local authority residential secure children's home for up to 16 young people of either sex. It is owned and managed by a local county council. The home is situated in a small village approximately 10 miles from the centre of a large city. At the time of the inspection, 12 places are allocated for use by the Youth Justice Board and four for young people placed for welfare reasons.

The home is subdivided into two units, each accommodating up to eight young people. There are a number of communal areas which include a large and small lounge, dining areas, games room, gymnasium and a fitness suite. There are educational facilities within the home as well as various offices, family, therapy, and conference rooms. Secure outdoor space is available, one of which is split into a grassed and landscaped area beside a hard-standing court. There is also another large outside area for various ball games and activities.

### Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

This is an announced inspection, the purpose of which is to evaluate the quality of care for young people at the home. The key standards in the Every Child Matters outcome groups were inspected along with progress against the recommendation made following the last inspection in April 2010. The formal educational provision at the home was not inspected on this occasion.

The home provides a highly individualised level of care and support to young people which is focused on meeting the needs of the young people and ensuring their safety and well-being. Staff respect and value the young people. Young people speak very well of the staff who care for them and relationships between staff and young people are extremely good. Young people have prompt access to a range of external professionals including psychiatry and psychology. This helps them to understand and cope with their emotions at a time when they are ready to manage these issues.

All the young people participated in the inspection by talking to the inspector and their views contributed towards the inspection findings.

The home is extremely well managed. Staff have access to training opportunities and specialists to help them understand and meet the individual needs of the young people. The management team is committed to improving practice and have good systems in place to monitor individual progress. A very detailed database has been established that helps managers monitor any trends and patterns in practice to

inform the quality assurance process. One recommendation has been raised at the time of this inspection.

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

There was one recommendation following the last inspection. This related to the need for a fire drill to take place during the night. This has been addressed and a night-time drill took place in August 2010. Senior managers were present at the time to note and action any learning needed to improve practice. They found that the young people and staff remained calm throughout the drill and young people understood what was expected of them.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Young people receive encouragement and support to lead a healthy lifestyle. Staff take time to talk to the young people about food choices and encourage regular exercise. Staff act as good role models and regularly take part in various sports with the young people including badminton, football and table tennis. Young people's personal preferences, dietary, cultural, ethnic and religious requirements are obtained at the time of admission. These are then reflected in menu planning. The school compliments the provision of meals from diverse cultures in the living units by encouraging the young people to cook meals from their own culture within the school timetable.

Young people's views of all the meals provided, varied considerably, describing them as 'poor, ok, and great' but they like the fact that they are able to 'have seconds'. Young people have a choice of dishes each day. The choice is supported by a range of pictorial aids which provide information about the food on offer. The menu has been scrutinised by a nutritionist and staff at the home have training on the nutritional needs of young people which is then reflected in the meals provided. Mealtimes are good social occasions and the young people interact positively together and with staff. Tables are set for meals and dining furniture is domestic in style. The mealtime is a pleasant community activity and assists with building up young people's daily living and social skills. The manager is aware that the interaction between young people, catering staff and food preparation could be improved. A meeting with the catering staff recently took place to enable further positive interaction between catering staff and young people. It is planned that more meals will be cooked in the living unit kitchens.

Excellent arrangements are in place for ensuring that on admission the emotional, behavioural, psychological and physical health needs of young people are fully identified. Arrangements are made to provide the support needed throughout the time the young people are at the home. This includes the involvement of specialist mental health workers such as the psychiatrist, psychologist and substance misuse workers.

Young people receive individualised support and guidance in relation to their current and long-term physical and emotional health needs. Comprehensive information provides a very detailed background of any health issues and how young people are to be supported while at the home. Staff ensure that when young people leave the support needed in the community is made known to the people who are best placed to help them. The mental health, education, substance misuse worker and the nurse all prepare a discharge summary when a young person leaves. This reflects the work undertaken with the young person and highlights any recommendations for further work if this is needed to help a young person in the future.

Excellent arrangements are in place to promote an outstanding level of health care. Young people are offered various screening tests including pregnancy and tests for sexually transmitted diseases. Young people are routinely consulted about the health information they may or may not want to share with others in the home or at reviews.

Services available to young people include: weekly General Practitioner and nurse clinics; daily access to a nurse; prompt access to mental health services; individual or group sessions from the substance misuse service; dentist and ophthalmic checkups and treatment. The 'drop in clinics' provided by the nurse enables young people to discuss anything that is concerning them, or that they want to know more about, as well as talking about how they are coping with not smoking. Young people report that the nurse is approachable and they are not embarrassed to talk to her.

There is a safe system for medication administration. Medication is stored securely in the medical room; two staff sign all medication administration records, whether it is prescribed, non-prescribed or controlled drugs. There is robust management oversight of the administration of medication with stock checks undertaken regularly. Staff have a clear understanding of good practice in relation to medication administration. An external organisation provides training to staff responsible for the administration of medication and staff competency is assessed. A nurse is available on a full-time basis to support young people with their medication or questions about their health. Care staff can access external professionals for support and advice on how best to help a young person in relation to any care needs they identify. The substance misuse service and the mental health personnel are based within the home and as such are available immediately if needed to support staff and young people.

A summary of a young person's health care plan is available to take with them upon discharge. This includes the details of any immunisations and any treatment they have received.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Staff value and respect young people. Information is handled in a confidential manner by all staff working at the home. Records are appropriately stored and staff

understand the importance of confidentiality and manage this appropriately while keeping young people safe.

Excellent care arrangements are in place to support young people to stay safe and to promote their general well-being. The young people commented that they felt safe living at the home. They also confirm that they are able to make a complaint or raise a concern about the service they receive and feel confident in approaching the manager and deputy manager directly if they needed too.

Young people have regular access to people from outside of the home who will take forward any issues they have. This includes weekly access to independent advocates and visiting volunteers. Records of complaints are appropriately maintained. Comments from young people who are preparing to leave the home are very complimentary and reflect how well they feel staff have cared and supported them at the home. All the young people at the home are confident that staff care for them and after a young person is admitted they will soon realise that staff here do care.

Young people are protected by staff that are confident and clear about the actions they should take following any child protection situations that arise. Staff at all levels at the home are aware of their duties and responsibilities in relation to keeping young people safe and have good links with relevant external safeguarding professionals. Safeguarding issues are discussed with young people including internet access and keeping safe in the community, identifying how to reduce these risks. There are effective systems in place to notify relevant authorities of significant events.

Young people are well protected from bullying. Young people are aware that bullying is not tolerated and are confident staff will take action to deal with any incidents. Good staffing ratios allow constant monitoring of young people which reduces the risk of any incidents occurring or going undetected. Staff's awareness of the various types of bullying helps to keep young people safe. They support the young people to discuss things in groups and resolve any issues. Any racial and other comments made by young people are challenged by staff. Talking about these issues helps young people gain a better understanding of each other's views and feelings in cases when bullying has taken place.

Very positive use of restorative justice and mediation techniques effectively assist in behaviour management within the day-to-day practice at the home. The home has an effective restraint minimisation policy in place. There is a low use of restraint and single separation. In the last year, there have been 74 enforced single separations and 63 restraints. These are significant reductions from 140 enforced separations and 137 restraints during the same period in 2008-2009. The home records all incidents that could be considered as restraint. This included incidents where leading a young person by using a hand on their elbow are recorded as restraints. This is an indication of the quality and openness of the recording policy. There is closed circuit television throughout the home and this is routinely used to review practice. There are good links with the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Young people stated that the sanctions are fair and reflect the misdemeanour. On occasions, for those young people presenting extremely challenging behaviour that poses a risk to themselves or others, an individual behaviour management programme is implemented. This helps young people focus on their actions and how to manage situations better in the future.

The home has an established incentive bonus scheme to support young people. This operates both in education and in the living units and helps young people engage positively in the day-to-day activities in the home. This incentive scheme takes account of individual abilities and enables all young people to achieve. Young people new to the home start on the silver level and are encouraged to at least maintain this and if possible to move on to higher levels. Those on the highest levels say the rewards are worth achieving and other young people report that they wish to get to this level.

Strategies agreed for behaviour management and young people's related risk assessments are reviewed during weekly multi-disciplinary meetings to keep young people safe. These meetings are attended by care managers, nurse, education, substance misuse staff and staff from the mental health service known as the unified adolescent team.

The home is well maintained, and offers young people a safe, secure and pleasant environment to live in. Young people are very well protected from potential fire risks and health and safety hazards. A range of health and safety monitoring checks are undertaken regularly and comprehensive fire risk assessments are in place. Fire safety equipment is monitored and regular fire drills ensure that staff and young people are aware of the fire evacuation procedures. This has included a fire drill during the night as recommended at the last inspection.

Excellent staff recruitment processes protect young people. The home has robust selection and vetting procedures in place. Prior to commencing work in the home, checks are made and completed to ensure staff are safe and fit to work with young people. Young people are proud to be part of the interviewing and selection process for new staff and their views on candidates for new posts are taken account of in the selection process.

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

The provision is outstanding.

The placement plans for each young person identifies how to support them and who will respond to that need. Young people receive effective support from named key-workers and a range of external professionals who are readily available to help individual young people. These include staff from the local primary care trust, unified adolescent team and substance misuse service. They also receive support from advocates and have access to volunteer visitors who visit weekly. The unified adolescent team respond promptly when young people ask for their assistance. For example, consultations are provided within 24 hours of a request being made. The



substance misuse service provides one-to-one sessions for young people when needed and is involved in school to deliver lessons on drug awareness and other related topics.

Young people are actively encouraged to engage in a range of leisure activities. They have a personalised fitness programme and for those that are not sport minded, there are alternative activities available to promote exercise including dance and use of the fitness suite. Some young people have requested extra time on dance sessions which they particularly enjoy. These sessions help them develop trust in each other and communicate their feelings and thoughts on topics of their choosing. Staff encourage and support young people to achieve and take part in various competitions in the community. If this is not possible they make arrangements for community events to be held in the home. These include art, dance and poetry competitions.

Young people are encouraged and supported to attend and achieve in education by both care and education staff. The incentive system also encourages school attendance. Young people have individualised timetables for the school day and all have access to laptops in school and in the evening for homework, subject to risk assessments. Very effective monitoring of laptop use and sites accessed by young people helps to ensure young people are kept safe. Care staff and education staff work together to ensure the young people receive the support needed with their homework.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Young people's needs and vulnerability are assessed on admission. Initial assessments and other information inform how staff will provide care for the young people. Individual care plans set out the young people's holistic needs and who will take action to progress them and by when. Looked after children and secure reviews take place within the required timescales. Young people are encouraged and enabled to contribute to their review. The views of young people are not taken for granted and are actively sought prior to each review. Young people know they can access the support of advocates if they wish at reviews and confirm review notes are available to them.

Young people receive excellent support to keep in touch with people important to them. Contact arrangements are recorded and young people can make and receive telephone calls to those people agreed by the placing authority or youth offending teams. Staff are sensitive to the importance young people place on contact with their family. Systems are in place to enable fair access to the phone and as much contact time with family and friends as possible.

Young people receive excellent individualised support in order to make a successful transition to their next placement. Staff are very sensitive to the needs of each young person when they first move into the home and when planning for their

transition back into the community. There is a multi-disciplinary approach to supporting and preparing young people to move on from the home. As a result of this practice, four staff recently accompanied one young person to their new placement. This was recognised as needed by the unified adolescent team to meet the specific needs of the young person and make leaving the home a positive aspect of their care and ability to move on with their life. This is excellent child focused practice.

The home has developed practice which ensures the views of young people's experiences in the home are sought prior to them leaving to help future service developments. Just prior to leaving, young people are encouraged to think about what they have learned from their time in the secure setting and how this will assist them in the future. Key-workers go through a child focused 'endings' booklet with the young people and they are asked to complete an exit survey. Comments received show young people value the commitment of staff to help them, and many apologised for being so 'difficult' when they first arrived at the home. One young person stated, 'I'd fight and hurt people now I'll walk away - changed me in a good way'.

Young people are consulted over as many aspects of their life in the home as possible. They are provided with formal times they can air their views including regular young people's meetings, reviews and discussion with the regulation 33 visitor, as well as informal discussions with the home's senior managers and their key-worker. Changes to menus have been the direct result, as is access to laptops and email which is subject to a suitable risk assessment. Staff respect the rights of young people to have a view on the care received. There is evident warmth in the relationship between staff and young people. Most young people confirmed that they are happy in the home and feel valued by staff and their individual religious or cultural needs are recognised and supported. Staff appear comfortable with their role of setting clearly understood boundaries while maintaining good quality relationships between themselves and young people.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

The home has developed a good enrichment programme that helps young people learn about life and prepare them for adulthood. All young people receive help to develop their social skills and to build appropriate social relationships within their daily life at the home. They are supported to learn daily living skills needed for future independent living. Young people also have access to Connexions and other community resources when they have mobility or via their laptops when safe to do so. The school is introducing a new assessment tool in order to establish the individual skills and abilities of young people. This will enable staff to assess and guide each young person. As this is a new initiative, no formal arrangements are yet in place for school staff to share the new assessment findings and agree the focus of work needed for each department. Staff are very aware joint working will assist them effectively provide the individualised guidance needed to prepare young people for

adulthood.

The day-to-day routine of the home helps young people develop daily life skills. Care staff help young people understand their feelings and the impact their actions may have on others. This assists young people to develop their self-esteem and confidence and the importance of developing positive relationships.

Staff at the home are committed to providing young people with a safe, clean and homely environment. The building and gardens are very well maintained, closed circuit television cameras have been upgraded and redecoration planned to the areas affected by this work. The furniture used in communal areas is domestic in style which helps promote a homely atmosphere. All young people have en suite facilities and confirm they are able to personalise their own bedrooms.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

Good quality information for parents, professionals and young people informs them about how the home operates and the services available. Young people receive an excellent range of detailed information when they arrive at the home. The children's guide is produced in appropriate formats such as a DVD with a range of relevant information included. Translation and interpreter services are available and used when needed to support young people.

Young people have a thorough induction to the home from both care and education staff which is normally undertaken within the first day. This ensures they know about the home, the services available to them and what is expected of them and who they can approach for support.

The vast majority of the care team have a National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in child care; with newly appointed care staff enrolled on training to achieve this qualification. There are continuing training opportunities for staff. Staff receive training to help them protect young people. This includes safeguarding training, physical restraint refresher courses, fire safety, medication administration, first aid and food nutrition. Staff routinely discuss positive behaviour management issues in team meetings and supervision.

Management information data base systems have been developed. These provide a wide range of information that is used effectively to monitor trends and activity in the home and to improve outcomes for people. This includes details of the gender and ethnic origin of the young people and details of staff involved in restraints.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Individual cultural and religious needs are identified on admission and items young people may need are provided. For example prayer mats, the Koran and skin care products. Positive action is taken by staff for ensuring that all young people are provided with equal opportunities to achieve, regardless of their understanding and academic ability. The

culture and religious needs of young people are recognised in the menu planning and in the meals prepared by young people in school. The staff run an enrichment programme which structures activities to create a sense of achievement and build self-esteem and confidence. Young people receive support to widen their knowledge and understanding of difference. For example, poverty, disability and sexual orientation. Preference is discussed to promote tolerance and celebrate diversity and individuality. Policy and procedural guidance for staff has been rewritten in the last year to ensure all policies reflect the home's commitment to equality and diversity.

## **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 there is a comprehensive plan in place for young people preparing to leave care that prepares them for adulthood and independent living if needed. This specifically relates to the need to ensure school and care assessments and practices compliment each other and provide clear guidance to staff on areas to be addressed. (NMS 6.1)