

## Inspection report for Children's Home

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<b>Inspection date</b>	08/12/2010
<b>Inspector</b>	Elizabeth Taylor
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Random

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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	24/06/2010
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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**

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 12 girls and boys between the ages of 12 to 17 years. The centre accommodates young people whose behaviour has placed them 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.

### **Summary**

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This unannounced, interim inspection focused on standards relating to staying safe and progress on previous actions and recommendations. The formal educational provision was not inspected on this occasion. Nine young people were present at the time of the visit and the majority contributed to the inspection process.

A child-centred approach continues to guide practice in the home. Young people benefit from a good standard of care and enjoy positive relationships with staff. Effective systems are in place, which promote young people's safety and well-being. Staff work hard to help young people understand how their behaviour impacts on others as well as themselves. Young people are supported to behave in an acceptable manner through positive measures such as praise, encouragement and rewards. This makes them feel valued and enhances their self-esteem. Young people receive good individual support in response to their needs.

Some aspects of the accommodation continue to require improvements and shortfalls were identified in some records.

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

Two actions were made during the previous inspection. One was in respect of ensuring that details about all measures of control and discipline are accurately recorded in the correct bound volume. A management monitoring system continues to be implemented to oversee important record keeping. However, minor omissions continue to be identified in some entries, therefore the action is repeated.

The home was asked to ensure all parts of the children's home are suitably equipped. This related to the poor condition of some windows and en suite facilities. Some improvements have been effected in that wall coverings in some young people's en suite facilities have been upgraded and are now more suited for use as wet rooms. However, this work has only been completed in one of the two residential units. New windows were delivered but they did not comply with the

required level of safety and security. Different windows have been ordered. Other improvements have been made to young people's living areas; however, the action remains as some aspects of the accommodation remain in need of attention.

Three recommendations were also made during the last visit. The home was asked to ensure all meals were of consistently good quality. This matter has been addressed and young people are offered a range of nutritious meals. Records demonstrating how the home responds to complaints were not sufficiently detailed to show they were dealt within specified timescales. The home's records are regularly checked and now show when a complaint is received and the date it is resolved. This ensures a complainant receives a response within a reasonable time frame.

Planned keyworking sessions with young people were not taking place regularly. Records of keyworking sessions with young people continue to vary in frequency. However, daily records show staff do meet with individual young people and discuss relevant issues with them. This means young people receive individual support to respond to their needs.

### **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.

The atmosphere in the home is generally relaxed. Young people are treated with courtesy and respect. Staff act to meet young people's individual needs while encouraging group cohesion. Relationships between staff and young people are predominantly friendly and positive. Young people learn to trust adults and to work cooperatively with them. All of the young people spoken to said the best thing about the home was the staff who they described as 'great'. The worst thing they identified about the home was 'being in secure' and 'not being able to smoke'.

Young people's privacy and dignity is promoted by suitable arrangements such as en suite facilities in all young people's individual bedrooms. Observation panels are fitted in bedroom doors to enable staff to check on the welfare of the young people. However, a curtain is fitted across the panel to promote young people's privacy and dignity. Staff are sensitive to young people's right to privacy and their practice upholds this. However, some young people feel the regular checks conducted on them by night staff are unnecessary and intrusive. Young people know about the home's complaints procedure and are aware of various ways they can raise a concern. For example, all of the young people have an allocated social worker, some have a solicitor and others have an independent advocate. The home also has an arrangement with an independent advocacy service called 'Voice' whereby a representative visits the home each week to meet with the

young people. Records show the young people's advocates raise concerns on their behalf and these are taken seriously and acted upon by the management team.

Complaint forms for young people are usually kept in the main lounge on each residential unit. However, this is risk assessed based on young people's presenting behaviour. Young people are aware they can ask staff for a complaints form if they are not easily accessible. Most young people said they prefer to tell staff about any concerns they have and that staff act to put things right. No formal complaints have been received from young people in the last six months. However, a comment made by a young person in response to receiving a sanction was not followed up to see if the young person wished to make a formal complaint.

Staff are well trained in safeguarding matters and are conversant with the referral process to the Local Safeguarding Children Board. They are also aware of the home's 'whistleblowing' policy and use this appropriately to raise concerns. Records show the home acts in a transparent and robust manner to safeguard young people. The management team refers concerns promptly to relevant, external agencies and work cooperatively with them to facilitate any subsequent investigation.

The home ensures information is obtained about young people on admission, particularly those who present significant risk to themselves or toward others. Any young person at risk is carefully assessed and supported by qualified health care staff. Plans are implemented to monitor their behaviour and clear strategies developed to reduce the likelihood of harm. This means young people's safety is prioritised and effective measures are implemented to promote their emotional, mental and physical well-being.

Bullying incidents do occur. Nevertheless, all the young people spoken with said they felt safe in the home and that staff act quickly to stop such behaviour. Any observed or reported incidents of bullying are recorded and a plan is initiated to monitor the behaviour of the perpetrator. Practical strategies are devised to minimise the risk of further episodes of bullying. For example, perpetrators are closely supervised during unstructured periods and particular consideration is given to the grouping of young people in shared activities. Work is undertaken with young people who display bullying behaviour to help them understand the effect on others and more appropriate ways of interacting with their peers. However, records do not demonstrate how victims are supported by staff to increase their resilience although this is happening in practice.

The home acts to ensure young people are able to undertake visits in the community, prior to their discharge. All planned visits are thoroughly risk assessed beforehand and staffing levels and other arrangements have to be approved by young people's social workers or youth offending service worker prior to the outing. While young people very occasionally run off during an external visit, the home remains committed to ensuring young people benefit from being prepared for moving back to living in the community.

Appropriate persons are kept well informed about significant events relating to

individual young people.

Staff demonstrate effective skills in managing challenging behaviours displayed by some of the young people. They are trained in techniques which help to defuse and deflect potential conflict. Additional training in mental health issues has further increased the staff team's knowledge about the antecedents of young people's behaviour. Individual behaviour management plans for young people are developed in conjunction with specialist mental health workers, where necessary. The plans provide clear strategies for staff to follow and are regularly reviewed to reflect any changes or improvements in young people's behaviours.

Young people are supported to behave in an acceptable manner by positive means rather than negative measures. This is exemplified by an incentive scheme linked to education attendance and various rewards which young people are able to gain. Sanctions are infrequently imposed but are appropriate measures which are relevant to the misdemeanour. Restraint is also infrequently used and only in situations where a young person is at risk of seriously harming themselves or others. None of the young people expressed any concerns about the imposition of sanctions or the use of enforced separate time in their room as a measure of control. Records of sanctions, elective and enforced separation plus restraints are maintained. However, minor omissions in the completion of some entries mean records do not always provide an accurate, detailed account of events. This does not assist the monitoring process which aims to ensure young people are treated fairly and appropriately.

The home has good systems in place to ensure it is maintained in good order and is safe for young people to live in. These include environmental risk assessments and daily checks of the building. Fire safety is promoted by suitable equipment throughout the home and regular drills and evacuations. However, young people are unclear about arrangements for their safety in the event of a fire in their bedroom at night. Visitors and escorts have their identification checked prior to any access to the centre and young people. This ensures young people are kept safe within 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?

### Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Std.	Action	Due date
24	ensure all parts of the children's home used by children are suitably equipped, with particular regard to windows and ensuite facilities (Regulation 31, (2)(a- e))	24/06/2011
22	maintain an accurate and up-to-date record of measures of control used. (Regulation 17)	24/12/2010

### Recommendations

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

- ensure any necessary further follow up action is taken in relation to individual cases, particularly where young people's written comments suggest they are unhappy about something (NMS 16.7)
- ensure records demonstrate how children who are bullied are supported (NMS 18.4)
- ensure children know the emergency evacuation procedures for the home, including those for use at night, in case of fire. (NMS 26.7)