

Inspection report for Children's Home

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<b>Inspector</b>	Linda Brown
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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 home is a large, spacious, detached house located near to the centre of a small town. There are a good range of local shops and community facilities. Public transport is easily accessible. To the front of the property is a car park with a grassed bank and conifers which create a natural barrier between the house and the road.

The setting provides accommodation for up to seven young people between 10 and 17 years. They have complex social, emotional and developmental needs and moderate to severe learning or physical disabilities. Some young people attend the home on a respite or part-time basis. All have their own bedrooms. Staff work in partnership with a variety of other agencies and in close cooperation with parents.

### **Summary**

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

The purpose of this unannounced visit was to monitor the home's performance against the key standards in the national minimum standards for children's homes. All key standards have been inspected along with standard 15, which relates to leisure, and standard 28, which relates to staff support. Pre-inspection information was provided by the Registered Manager and questionnaires were received from staff, young people and parents.

This inspection found that outcomes for children are outstanding and the service meets and exceeds many of the national minimum standards. Staff work in close partnership with families and professionals in order to provide a consistent service for young people. The management and staff provide a very positive environment where young people feel safe, receive excellent support and health care and are encouraged to develop their independence and individuality. The home is well managed and staff are supported, experienced and trained. Education is valued and young people have excellent leisure opportunities. Behaviour is well managed and there are good relationships between the staff and young people. There is a minor inconsistency in the record keeping regarding the recording of young people's views after a restraint, but this does not impact on the excellent care experienced by young people. One recommendation is made against the outcome area staying safe.

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

No actions or recommendations were made at the previous inspection. All improvements made at the home are evidenced in the relevant outcome areas of this report.

## Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Young people benefit from a wholesome varied and balanced diet. Staff work closely with families and young people to ensure that they have a good understanding of individual dietary needs. This information is then shared with the cook and incorporated into the menu planning. Special diets to include food allergies, cultural and religious needs are catered for. Resources are available for the cook to access if any additional nutritional or dietary information is required. Staff are in the process of changing the menu board to depict pictures of the actual meals that are provided each day and the different options available. Staff are keen to encourage the young people to make choices about what they eat and promote a healthy diet. Meal times are social occasions where staff and young people sit and eat together. However, staff are very aware of the needs and moods of the young people and are able to adapt to the situation and eat in smaller groups if this is more appropriate. In addition to the main kitchen a new adapted kitchen is now fully functioning and provides young people with an excellent facility and the opportunity to prepare snacks and meals under the supervision and guidance of staff. Young people stated in their pre-inspection questionnaire how they enjoy cooking pizza with the staff. A recent visit from environmental health awarded the home a 'Scores on Doors Silver Award' for cleanliness, food hygiene, the standard of facility and management. The management are working towards achieving the gold award. All staff at the home are trained in basic food hygiene. This practice ensures that the welfare of young people is promoted well because they are provided with a well-balanced diet that caters for their dietary or cultural needs, and young people are supported to develop their independence skills.

Outstanding procedures are in place to ensure that the health needs of young people are identified and met. Many of the young people have complex medical needs. Staff have an excellent knowledge and understanding of the young people they care for and are able to identify concerns through the moods and behaviours of the young people. Comprehensive and up to date health plans are completed and maintained which cover both specialist and routine health needs. Young people are supported by a range of health professionals some of whom are regular visitors to the home, for example the looked after children's nurse, doctors and paediatric consultants. These professionals work closely with staff and families to ensure that medication and any medical concerns are identified and addressed. The manager continues to attend multidisciplinary meetings that bring together all medical professionals involved to discuss individual cases. This valuable resource ensures all parties work together in the best interest of the young person.

There are robust systems in place to ensure the safe storage, administration and disposal of medication. All staff receive the appropriate training which is regularly updated. Medical consent is available on young people's files. The local pharmacy inspector monitors and audits the records and the paediatric consultant regularly visits the home to review the medication for all the young people. Registered

Manager is keen to continually develop and improve practice at the home and any recommendations made at these audits are immediately implemented. In addition to the external monitoring the Registered Manager ensures that the records are monitored in line with his Regulation 34 checks.

Good health is promoted and young people are safeguarded because the management and staff ensure that excellent records and communication are maintained between families and professionals. Young people are cared for by staff who have a clear understanding of policies and procedures for administering medicines and who receive the appropriate training.

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

The provision is outstanding.

The management and staff promote the privacy and confidentiality of young people in their day to day practices. They are able to clearly demonstrate the need to respect young people especially when carrying out personal tasks. Questionnaires received from parents confirm that they feel the privacy and dignity of their child is well maintained. Confidential information is stored and shared appropriately. Staff work closely with families who are regular visitors at the home. Rooms are made available for a young person to have visits in private.

All of the staff working at the home complete child protection training which is refreshed and updated regularly. Good links are established with the local safeguarding team and any concerns are reported immediately. Staff are vigilant and are able to demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of the procedures in place if they have any concerns about anyone or anything.

The management and staff have a clear knowledge and understanding of the policies and procedures in place to protect young people from bullying. Staffing levels at the home are high and this significantly reduces the risk of bullying taking place. Questionnaires received from young people confirm they feel safe at the home. Staff are aware of the individual behaviour of a young person and are able to detect anxieties so are proactive in following up any areas of concern, for example, bullying at school. Risk assessments are in place and identify any areas of concern including the possibility of bullying.

Good systems are in place for recording, resolving and providing outcomes of complaints. No complaints are recorded since the last inspection. The Registered Manager meets regularly with parents and professionals. He is keen to work in partnership with families and professional to discuss and resolve any concerns they have before they reach the complaint stage. Parents, families and young people can complain directly to the provider's complaints service who will investigate the complaint and provide the complainant with details of the action taken and the outcome. Information regarding this service is available in the home's Statement of Purpose and young people's guide. In addition young people benefit from regular involvement from an independent advocacy service who have a knowledge and

understanding of working with young people with disabilities. Young people with communication difficulties have alternative communication systems available. This ensures they are able to make a complaint or share their feelings.

A protocol for young people going absent without permission remains in place with the police. However, any young person going missing from this home would be reported immediately. The high level of supervision reduces the risk of young people going absent without authority. However, staff are very aware of the process to follow if a young person failed to return to the unit in their taxi, for example, from school.

Excellent and detailed impact risk assessments are completed at the time of a young person's admission to the home. Staff collate all the information available to produce detailed and informative risk assessments and behaviour management. As previously stated a strength of the home is the relationship staff have with the young people and staff's understanding of their individual moods and behaviours. Staff ensure that they are aware of the guidance to follow in order to manage challenging behaviour in a calm and controlled way. One parent stated in the pre inspection questionnaire. 'I have absolute confidence that my child is safe at the home' Sanctions are rarely used, behaviour management is promoted through a consistent approach with the young people and by rewarding positive behaviour. All staff are trained in the use of physical restraint, however, this is only used as a last resort to protect the young people concerned or other young people from being harmed. Detailed records are maintained. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of the effect of a restraint on a young person and the frustration and emotions they experience. They dedicate time to the young person following a restraint, offering support and an opportunity to communicate feelings. This remains standard practice and records of these discussions are recorded on young people's files, although the statutory restraint records do not always reflect this practice. Records of sanctions are recorded appropriately.

Young people's protection is further supported by good health and safety routines. There is a designated member of staff responsible for health and safety. Regular fire tests and drills take place and equipment is checked and serviced within the required timescales.

A sample of recruitment files for staff employed in the provider's five children's homes were examined at the Human Resources department during July 2010. Records are well maintained of staff Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks and a system to ensure that they are renewed every three years is in place. Recruitment files contain relevant information, however, some concerns were identified during this visit regarding the verification of references and the inconsistencies in filing information. An action plan received from the provider addressed all the concerns raised. The Registered Manager is also able to demonstrate the action taken to address the shortfalls and is actively involved and trained in the recruitment process. All visitors to the home are signed in and where appropriate identification is requested. The provider ensures that the recruitment policy is effectively implemented and this protects and safeguards young people.

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

The provision is outstanding.

The welfare of young people is promoted and safeguarded because the manager ensures the appropriate services are available to provide and support a young person in order to meet their individual needs. Young people's files provide detailed documentation to evidence the range of support services provided to them. In addition to the external services and professionals involved, the staff remain committed to ensuring that they provide young people with support in their day-to-day lives. It is evident that there are good relationships between staff and young people. Staffs knowledge and understanding of individual young people and their methods of communication enables staff to adapt the care of young people to support their individual needs.

All young people are provided with an education placement. The management and staff work closely with the education provision to ensure that the best outcomes for young people are achieved. Daily communication is received from schools either by phone call or in the form of a communication book, and parents and families are included in the process. Staff attend school events and support families to attend if this is appropriate. Personal Education Plans (PEP) and educational statements are on file and appropriately reviewed. This practice ensures the education of young person is fully supported.

Young people experience a wide range of social activities and benefit from regular holidays, mini breaks and day trips. Staff are continually seeking new opportunities and experiences for young people. Young people participate in a range of weekly activities, such as horse riding, rock climbing, youth club and swimming. Individual hobbies and interests are pursued. There are also a range of facilities available at the home. Evening and weekend activities are planned and young people take an active role in choosing what they want to do. Questionnaires received from young people state that they are very happy with the activities they are involved in. Staff continue to maintain 'memory boxes' which contain photographs, memorabilia and certificates of young people's achievements. Young people's social skills are well promoted as they are encouraged to participate in a range of activities and make individual choices regarding their social lives.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Young people benefit from management and staff who are motivated to ensure that their individual need are identified, assessed, reviewed and met. This is achieved through working in partnership with families and social workers to collate as much information as possible in order to complete detailed, robust and up-to-date plans that cover all aspects of a young person's life. These plans include any additional services and support that arise out of a young person's, disability, ethnicity, race,



sexuality, faith or belief. Plans provide staff with clear guidance regarding how to care for young people and how their needs will be met. Management ensure that staff are informed of any changes and these are clearly recorded on plans. Staff are aware of the different communication needs of the individual young people and ensure that time is spent with the young person using appropriate communication aids to ensure that their views are heard. Young people are actively encouraged to attend their reviews and participate in decisions being made about their futures. However, if this is not appropriate and young people do not want to attend, key workers ensure that they represent the views of the young person. If appropriate, the independent advocate can also represent the young person.

The welfare of children and young people is promoted because they are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and influence the way the home is run. Young people confirm that their views are sought. Staff are committed to ensure that the young people's disabilities do not restrict their opportunities for effectively communicating and involving young people in the day to day decisions about their lives. Key workers spend time with individuals, and through the excellent use of communication systems, young people are provided with all relevant documentation in an appropriate format, for example, placement plans, young people guide, house rules, questionnaires and menus. A young people notice board contains copies of all relevant information.

Staff respect and value equality and diversity and it is shown throughout the young people's placement plans. Their individual needs are identified and addressed. The management and staff are very keen to promote independence and encourage all young people to achieve their individual goals.

Contact arrangements are discussed at the time of admission and reviewed regularly. Staff work in partnership with parents or the person with parental responsibility to provide care that meets the needs of their child. Parents and families are regular visitors to the home. Pre-inspection surveys returned to Ofsted by parents are very positive about the relationship which they have established with staff at the home.

Young people have their needs assessed effectively and comprehensively, young people's views are sought and staff work in partnership with parents and families. This excellent practice ensure that the welfare of young people is promoted throughout the standards examined in this outcome areas

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is outstanding.

Plans are completed and the Registered Manager is actively involved in working with the transitional teams to find appropriate placements for young people. All young people complete independence tasks dependant on their age and ability. The Registered Manager stated the concerns he has regarding young people moving from children's to adult services. Although there are systems in place for transitional work to prepare young people for reaching 18 years old and moving out of children's

services, the lack of resources available results in minimal planning taking place and at times children having no appropriate move for when they are 18 years old. The manager is keen to work closely with the transitional teams in order to reduce the concerns and plan more appropriate moves for young people.

The home is clean and well maintained with young people's pictures, paintings and achievements displayed throughout the house. Young people live in a very comfortable home that is decorated and furnished to a good standard, providing suitable aids and adaptations to serve the needs of the young people it accommodates. The excellent facilities at the home enable staff to cater for individual needs and interests. There is adequate space provided which gives young people the opportunity to socialize in groups or have individual time away from the group. Downstairs provides the main kitchen and dining area, staff offices, three well equipped lounges, an adapted kitchen and a hot tub room. Bedrooms are personalised to reflect the hobbies and interests of young people living here and demonstrate how they each take an active role in their choice of colour and design. Since the previous inspection, two of the bedrooms have been fitted with ensuite facilities, and a new hoist from the bedroom to the ensuite is in the process of being installed. One of the house bathrooms has also been completely refurbished. In addition to the bedrooms the first floor also houses a soft play room and a sensory room. A well equipped garden to include a sensory garden is also available. Young people benefit from a Registered Manager and motivated staff team who are continually striving to improve facilities. Plans for improvement and development are constantly under review. Young people's welfare is promoted because staff provide excellent facilities for their use. Management and staff are committed to continually improving and updating the resources at the home.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

There is a comprehensive Statement of Purpose in place that gives clear detail of what services can be expected from the home. A children's guide is also available in different communication formats.

The Registered Manager provides effective leadership to the staff team and young people. There are systems in place for deputising in the absence of the Registered Manager and adequate staffing is in place. Due to unforeseen circumstances there has been a considerable number of changes within the permanent staff team. Positions are being covered by relief staff who are working full time at the home in order to provide consistency to the young people during this difficult period. Recruitment is currently taking place to address the vacancies and sickness will continue to be covered by regular relief staff. Despite a difficult staffing situation, the level of care remains consistent for the young people. Relief staff are known to the young people and are supported by permanent and experienced staff. The Registered Manager remains actively involved in the day-to-day operation of the home and has clear expectations that the staff team will continue to achieve the best possible outcomes for all young people in their care.

Staff state they feel well supported by both their colleagues and the management team. Staff supervision and staff meetings take place regularly and provide a valuable communication tool for staff to maintain their consistent approach and sort out any concerns and discrepancies. Handovers take place daily and staff recognise the importance of the handovers to ensure that all relevant information is shared. Staff speak very positively about working at the home and their commitment to providing an excellent service to the young people is evident.

There are good systems in place to ensure that staff complete an induction. New staff shadow experienced staff in order to understand the differing needs of the children and young people. Mandatory training is provided for both permanent and relief staff and where appropriate regular refresher training is completed. The deputy manager monitors the training needs closely and plans training to address any shortfalls. Pre-inspection information supplied by the manager shows that a range of training to include both mandatory and specialist training has been completed and future training is identified. New on line systems are currently being introduced by the provider for the recording and monitoring of training. These records are not yet fully operational and the deputy manager is currently imputing and monitoring the information. Staff speak positively about the training opportunities that are available to them.

Management show a commitment to the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 3 and 4 in Caring for Children and Young People. The majority of the staff team have achieved NVQ at level 3 and senior staff at level 4. The Registered Manager is currently completing his leadership and management award. Training is ongoing and new recruits attend NVQ training once their probationary period is completed. The welfare of young people is promoted because they are cared for by staff who are supported and committed to regularly attend training to update and improve their knowledge and practice.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. It is clearly shown throughout the young people's placement plans that their individual needs are identified and addressed. The manager shows a commitment to improving equality and diversity. Cultural and religious needs are respected and celebrated, special diets are catered for and young people are treated as individuals.

There are appropriate systems in place to monitor the practice at the home and this safeguards young people. The manager monitors the home through his Regulation 34 checks. This monitoring covers all aspects of the home and identifies any weaknesses and areas for improvement. Unannounced Regulation 33 visits continue to take place regularly and copies of these reports are sent to Ofsted.

Young people's files are well structured, contain relevant information and are stored in an appropriate and safe place.

The welfare of young people is promoted and safeguarded in all aspects of this home, because the management and staff are committed to ensuring that there are

positive outcomes for young people in all aspects of their care and this is outstanding.

## **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 that records of restraint contain all relevant information as detailed in national minimum standard 22, with particular regard to young people's views (NMS 22.9)