

## Inspection report for Children's Home

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<b>Inspector</b>	Julian Parker
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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 offers placements for up to three young people who may have a combination of mental health, psychological, emotional or complex care needs that present challenging behaviour. The service is designed to offer medium to long-term care placements but can exceptionally accept emergency placements. The home's programme of care incorporates a structured balance of education, recreation and therapeutic interventions tailored to meet individual needs. Care is provided in a large detached house in an urban location. It has the benefit of easy access to the comprehensive range of recreational and leisure amenities in the local town. The house has been modernised and refurbished to offer a spacious living environment with individual rooms for young people.

### **Summary**

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This was the first unannounced key inspection of this setting. It concentrated on all of the key national minimum standards.

The inspection focused on the Every Child Matters outcome areas related to being healthy, safeguarding and recreation, how young people are enabled to enjoy and achieve, relationships between young people and their carers, the competence of staff and their management and the general standards of the accommodation in which the service is being provided. At the time of the inspection three young people were living at the home. Two spoke with the inspector.

The home is judged as good with some satisfactory features. Young people receive an individualised care package that is sufficiently flexible to adapt to their changing needs and to keep them safe. The registered person provides good direction and leadership that enables positive care from an enthusiastic and competent staff team. Staff are clear about their roles and are consistent in carrying out their responsibilities to sensitively address the particular needs of individual young people in their care.

Three actions and one recommendations arise from this inspection predominantly recognising shortfalls in areas of administration that confirm care planning.

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

This is the first inspection of this setting and as such no previous actions or recommendations have been made.

## **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Young people are encouraged to contribute to menu planning and meal preparation at the home particularly when they are developing their self-help and independence skills. Care staff practically help and support young people by providing guidance and information that helps their understanding of what constitutes healthy eating and a balanced diet. All staff receive training in food hygiene and share this knowledge with young people to promote safety in the kitchen.

The health and psychological needs of young people are promoted by the registered provider's guidance and procedures. Young people's individual needs are identified and recorded in comprehensive health files that are summarised in their care plans. This is achieved through consulting with individual young people, their parents, specialist health professionals and placing authority social workers.

Health, psychological and medical needs are practically addressed by established access to a range of local health professionals including Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). Upon admission young people are registered with the local medical services. They are encouraged and supported to attend all health appointments and accompanied by staff if requested. The home provides the young people with practical advice, guidance about healthy living, medical, emotional and sexual health matters and substance misuse consistent with their assessed needs and level of understanding.

All staff receive regular training in first aid and the administration of medication, which helps them to keep young people safe and in good medical health.

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

The provision is good.

The welfare and physical safety of young people is promoted by care staff following the registered person's policies and adopting procedures and guidance that fully complies with regulatory requirements. Policies promote child protection, countering bullying, managing difficult behaviour and dealing with missing persons. They conform to the requirements of the Local Safeguarding Children Board and government guidance and help ensure effective working with other agencies. The company provides statutory training that informs and equips care staff to fully understand their responsibility for safeguarding looked after young people.

Young people have their privacy respected. Personal information is securely stored and shared confidentially only with other professionals. Young people have access to a telephone that they can use in private. They are provided with their own lockable bedrooms and made aware of the particular circumstances in which these may need to be searched. Any searches respect privacy and are well recorded.

Young people know how to raise any concerns or complaints. Although the home has formal policies and procedures, concerns are usually addressed effectively before they become a complaint. The home's complaints policy is usefully summarised in the young person's guide. No formal complaints have been received from young people. In the event of a concern from a third party this would be maintained in a transparent manner by the Registered Manager. Young people have access to independent representatives such as their social workers or advocates

The home has a written procedure identifying the action to take when young people go absent without authority. Staff will actively look for young people where this is appropriate. They will arrange to collect young people whose whereabouts are known and welcome home any young person upon return. Current recording practice does not identify if young people can, if they choose to, speak with an independent person about the reasons they have for going absent from the home.

The home notifies all those persons and appropriate authorities listed in Schedule 5 of any significant event that has occurred that includes young people. Where required and in accordance with individual care plans, significant people in the lives of young people are also informed.

Young people are encouraged to develop socially acceptable behaviour within the boundaries set by normal living. Staff are trained in behaviour management and physical intervention. This training is regularly renewed to remain effective. Young people are aware of the expectations being made from them prior to moving to the home. The staff team understand the range of challenging behaviours individual young people may present and how these may be effectively addressed. A good staffing ratio and the encouragement of positive relationships between staff and young people help to promote and maintain a relaxed homely environment. All behavioural incidents are evaluated by the home's manager. The views and opinions of young people are always taken into account following any sanction to improve the effectiveness of staff practice.

The home uses risk assessments to evaluate all aspects of its practice and home safety. Risk assessments are taken into account when planning daily activities in the home and for all types of organised trips. All staff and young people know the fire safety instructions and there is an effective awareness of fire safety in the home. Fire drills and evacuation practice are carried out regularly and detailed records are kept. The home is protected by prescribed levels of insurance cover.

There are effective procedures in place for the monitoring of visitors to the home. The company's recruitment and selection process ensures that all appointments to post are thoroughly vetted and assessed to confirm their suitability for working with young people.

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

The provision is good.

Young people are looked after by staff who understand child development and help young people to moderate some of their challenging behaviour to fit into socially acceptable norms. The home presently looks after older teenagers who have the need for a safe, facilitating, community-based environment that provides consistency of support, positive adult nurturing and explicit behavioural boundaries. In some cases young people may need the additional support provided by community based mental health resources.

The children's home aims to improve young people's self-confidence and practical abilities in an age appropriate manner. By doing so it promotes their care and placement plan. Young people are assisted to access both in-house and community based activities that help develop particular interests and promote achievement and self-esteem. The staff team try to stimulate young people's shared awareness of gender issues, diversity, inclusion, tolerance and showing respect both within the home and the wider community. This is achieved by setting a good example using positive role modelling and providing practical guidance and support when introducing young people into new social situations.

Young people are assisted by care staff to comply with any imposed statutory orders and improve their own potential by accessing external services appropriate to their specific care needs. The home assists young people to make full use of the company-based service that can help them address psychological or mild mental health related issues. This provision supplements external services provided by the community CAMHS team and those provided by the Youth Offending Services.

To achieve educationally upon placement at the home, young people are initially assessed by the National Teaching and Advisory Service as a time limited, interim measure while an appropriate full-time local educational placement is commissioned for young people of school age. Education is to begin with is provided by one-to-one tuition and guided study within a wider curriculum. Older teenagers are assisted to look for further relevant college education placements or employment opportunities through Connexions. Links with education placements are well supported to help learning stability.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Planned admissions to the home are usually comprehensively assessed through effective liaison between placing authorities and the registered provider. Young people are invited at an early stage to contribute their views about moving into the home. Care planning is successful because young people are involved with the development of an in-house placement plan that identifies the purpose of the placement. This develops upon the placing authority's formal care plan to promote

achievement. Upon admission young people are encouraged to contribute to the contents and aims of their plan. The progress of placement plans is kept under review, formally by statutory looking after children reviews and internally by the home's own placement reviewing procedures.

The home may also admit young people, deemed as appropriate, on an emergency basis subject to a preliminary assessment. These placements have not always been supported by the placing authority through formalised plans or early review within the statutory timeframe for emergency placements. Without these key requirements being met the placement objectives are ill defined and do not promote stability. Some independent reviews have not been facilitated in a manner that invites contribution by the subject.

Placement plans are discussed and reviewed in house by the staff team regularly to ensure that they accurately reflect the nature of the care being provided and to record those changes considered necessary to improve how the service can be delivered. Case recording consistently follows the Every Child Matters outcomes format.

Young people are supported to maintain ongoing contact with their families where this is permitted by the arrangements detailed within their plans. These make explicit the authorised arrangements for contact between young people, their family, friends and professional workers such as social workers.

All young people are supported and encouraged to express their views and opinions about their life in the home. Their guide to the home provides information about the advocacy services available to them should they need to speak to an independent person. Young people are expected to attend regular recorded children's meetings, with their own agenda, where they may raise their own issues, however day-to-day dialogue with staff generates most practical changes in the home.

## **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

The home provides care for young people in a renovated, large detached family house. The home's location is within easy reach of the town centre and has convenient access to local recreation, leisure and further educational facilities that can assist a young person to integrate into the wider community.

The large detached property provides ample, homely, and well-maintained accommodation for young people with an ongoing maintenance regime in place. The home includes a reception room, lounge, three young people's bedrooms, kitchen, utility, dining room, two bathrooms, toilets on both floors, staff office and a staff sleep-in room. There is a conservatory being used for games and a recreation space. The home is decorated and furnished to a good standard providing young people room for relaxation, recreation, education and a degree of privacy. A separate living area, being used as an independence flat, is being developed on the ground floor to



enhance this aspect of the service being provided. The home's small garden provides limited outdoor private green space separate from safe, off-road parking for vehicles. The urban property's privacy is promoted by fences and walls that will deter unauthorised access.

Where age appropriate, preparation is made for young people to leave care by helping them practise and acquire the skills needed for adulthood as a component part of their everyday home routine. Life skills are learnt through participation with staff involved with tasks such as shopping, cooking and undertaking some daily household chores such as tidying personal bedrooms and being supported to attend meetings. Pathway plans are compiled as a component of the home's recording as an interim measure while placing authorities formalise their own documentation.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The home's Statement of Purpose includes all the information prescribed by Schedule 1 of the Children's Home Regulations confirming the service provided. There is a young person's guide that provides a useful source of information for those placed at the home.

Young people are supported with their daily living by the home's team of trained staff. Staff provide young people with safe and consistent care. The experienced and qualified Registered Manager supports staff by providing regular supervision and access to professional development opportunities. By attending induction and all statutory training staff are equipped to provide care specific to young people's particular needs. Permanent staff that have not gained a National Vocational Qualification at level 3 are registered to do this and in the interim their skills are being assessed. Staff say that the registered provider offers them opportunity for advancement and this helps them develop good practice.

The staff rota confirms the complement of staff in the home is sufficient for providing for the care needs of all young people both during the day and at night. Any shortfalls in the home's rota are covered by in-house staff. The arrangements for safe one-to-one work with young people are addressed by individual risk assessments to ensure the safety of young people and staff.

There is a established system for monitoring the operational efficiency and quality of care being provided by the home through the use of the Regulation 33 visitor. The views of young people are enlisted during this process and the findings from reports are used to review aspects of the service.

The promotion of equality and diversity is very good. The young people living at the home receive an individualised service that provides care fitting to individual age, ability, ethnic background and specific mental health related risk. A mixed gender and diverse staff team display an excellent knowledge of the young people they are working with, including their cultural and disability needs. The home has developed

explicit policies and procedures promoting equality and diversity for all aspects of its service. Discrimination of any kind is actively challenged by staff.

Case files are securely retained and recorded in a manner that makes them accessible and confidential. File records confirm regular management monitoring. Young people are made aware of the contents of their files and know they can request access or contribute to them should they wish.

## 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
19	ensure that on return to the home young people are seen by a person independent of the home to consider the reasons for the absence without authority Regulation 30 (NMS 19.4)	01/04/2011
2	ensure that a placement plan is held for each child, including those children admitted in an emergency, that sets out clearly the assessed needs to be addressed needs and objectives of the placement Regulation 12 (NMS 2.1)	01/04/2011
5	ensure that a review is initiated as soon as possible, and never more than 72 hours following an emergency admission to confirm the appropriateness of the placement Regulation 5 CA1989. (NMS 5.6)	01/04/2011

### Recommendations

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

- ensure that the home contributes effectively to all reviews on the progress of young people in placement. (NMS 3.5)