

Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Inspection date</b>	20/09/2011
<b>Inspector</b>	Malcolm Stannard / Graham Robinson
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Full
<b>Provision subtype</b>	Secure Unit

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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	17/03/2011
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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 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the *Inspections of children's homes – framework for inspection* (March 2011) and the evaluation schedule for children's homes.

### The inspection judgements and what they mean

**Outstanding:** a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

**Good:** a service that exceeds minimum requirements

**Satisfactory:** a service that only meets minimum requirements

**Inadequate:** a service that does not meet minimum requirements

## Service information

### Brief description of the service

The unit is registered as a secure children's home, operated by a local authority and is approved by the Secretary of State to provide secure care and accommodation. Education is provided on site in dedicated school facilities. The unit provides secure accommodation for up to 24 young people.

### Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be **good**.

The unit provides good individualised care and young people state that they feel safe. Planning for young people is excellent and staff are aware of individual needs and how they are to be met. Young people are able to contribute to the running of the unit and have access to an effective complaints system and an independent advocate. The young people's guide, while accessible, does not contain all relevant information.

There are good respectful relationships between staff and young people and positive behaviour is promoted. Contact arrangements for young people are excellent and they are encouraged to keep in touch with families and friends.

There is a good activity and enrichment programme in operation. However, this could be enhanced by additional involvement with local community resources. Internal and external monitoring is good and the additional input from the Local Authority Designated Officer in the reviewing of incidents adds a layer of transparency to all undertakings. The scope of Regulation 33 visits undertaken requires expansion.

### Areas for improvement

#### Recommendations

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

- explore how young people could be given more opportunities to benefit from wider community involvement (NMS 7)
- update and revise the young person's guide to include the contact details for the Children's Rights Director, a young person's independent reviewing officer and Ofsted (NMS 13.5)
- include in the external monitoring report the views of parents, relatives and

persons working at the unit. (NMS 21.7)

## **Outcomes for children and young people**

Outcomes for children and young people are **good**.

Young people are aided to progress by the positive input they receive from staff at the unit and external professionals. They are helped to increase their confidence and self-esteem as well as explore and understand their background and culture. Young people have a strong sense of identity and those that wish to are fully supported in following their religious beliefs.

The health needs of young people are met fully. All areas of health care are considered to ensure young people are able to enjoy a healthy lifestyle.

Young people's education is supported well. There are good relationships in place between the education and care staff and most young people demonstrate good progress and achievement compared with the level when commencing education at the unit.

Young people are able to maintain, where appropriate, a very good level of contact with family and friends. Visits are encouraged and facilitated and young people are able to make phone calls in private from their own rooms. This helps to ensure that young people are able to continue relationships which are important to them.

Good support is available for young people in preparing them to leave the unit and some vocational experiences are available. Staff members support them to ensure a future placement is secured and appropriate and that they understand what they need to do achieve in that setting. This increases the chance of a young person being successful within the community.

## **Quality of care**

The quality of the care is **good**.

Staff are competent at forming positive and supportive relationships with young people, allowing them to develop trust with adults who provide good role models. Staff work transparently and communicate positively with young people. Young people benefit from well-established care practices and a joined up working approach by all staff. This means that they receive good quality individualised care.

Signs of frustration or distress are identified promptly and staff intervene quickly and sensitively before most incidents escalate. In practice this means that usually incidents with a potential to become serious are dealt with through negotiation and support, resulting in a less stressful experience for a young person.

Young people understand how they can make their views known and are able to have some influence in aspects of the unit's operation. Young people are able to

discuss day-to-day issues with staff, who support them to make appropriate choices and decisions. Young people who act as unit representatives also meet with the manager on a monthly basis.

The easily accessible complaints system is fully understood by young people who receive timely and thorough responses to any concerns raised. They also have access to an independent advocate during weekly visits. Contact details for a variety of help lines and external agencies are available and can be accessed by telephone from their bedroom. This ensures young people do not become isolated from the outside world and can communicate with approved contacts regularly.

Excellent care plans identifying the individual needs and requirements of young people are in place. This includes a young person's religious, cultural identity and dietary needs. Monthly key worker sessions looking at and reviewing these plans have been introduced since the previous inspection. These sessions are carried out in conjunction with a young person which enables them to understand the plan and how much progress they have made.

Staff proactively support young people in their education which is provided in the on-site school facility. Enrichment and learning weeks are undertaken during breaks from formal education. Young people demonstrate pride in their work, some of which is displayed around the unit.

The health needs of young people are promoted positively, with young people having access to a full range of medical services. Their physical, emotional and psychological requirements are identified and plans put in place to meet them. Young people are supported to achieve a healthy lifestyle and understand the importance of looking after themselves through appropriate diet and exercise.

A wide range of purposeful activities and leisure interests are available. As a result, many young people enjoy improvements in both their general health and development of interests. Activities in the main are facilitated by staff, with minimal use of resources available in the local community. This means that young people are not always able to engage with community groups or facilitators who may be able to offer additional hobbies.

### **Safeguarding children and young people**

The service is **good** at keeping children and young people safe and feeling safe.

Young people feel safe at the unit and are confident that they can approach staff with any issues. There is a robust safeguarding system in place, which helps to promote young people's welfare. Good links exist with the Local Safeguarding Children Board. The unit manager attends a sub-committee of the board and regular contact is made with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). All referrals or requests for advice are made appropriately and a response is received promptly. The LADO attends a monthly meeting at the unit where all incidents are reviewed. Any areas for practice development are identified and addressed with the relevant staff

member. This enhances the transparency of the safeguarding process.

Bullying within the unit is minimal and any actual or suspected incidence is responded to proactively by staff. A risk assessment is available which identifies any area of the unit where there may be an opportunity for bullying to occur. This ensures that young people's sense of safety is promoted.

Good individual risk assessments and behaviour management plans are in place for all young people. These clearly identify risks to young people and state how these can be managed or negated. Staff are able to demonstrate a good knowledge of individual young people and what is required to ensure they are kept safe. Comprehensive information is collated on those young people who may harm themselves or others. One young person stated 'Staff help me to be safe.'

There is an effective incentive scheme in place which is understood by young people and encourages positive behaviour. The scheme is tailored to those who find it difficult to achieve by introducing shorter timescales for sustained acceptable behaviour and associated rewards. Staff act as good role models and young people are encouraged to engage in respectful interactions and to respond to the set boundaries.

Staff are trained in approved physical intervention techniques. These are used only as a last resort. Comprehensive records are held of any behaviour management techniques used including separation and sanctions, and young people are supported by staff to add their own comments. Monitoring of the frequency of use of physical intervention is carried out and a deputy manager who is a qualified trainer communicates with the training provider on a regular basis to ensure that all techniques remain appropriate and meet with updated guidance. The overview of all incidents of restraint both internally and externally helps to ensure its use is appropriate.

Some work has been undertaken to introduce and develop the use of restorative justice principles. Senior staff have undergone training and care plans have been amended to enable recording of all interactive restorative principle work. The process whilst in its infancy enables young people to take responsibility for their actions and resolve issues without formal sanctions being imposed.

Comprehensive steps are taken to ensure that the premises are physically safe and secure. Risk assessments are in place and regularly reviewed. Servicing contracts are in place for all gas, electrical and fire equipment. Fire drills are held regularly during which all young people and staff participate ensuring young people know the evacuation procedures. The unit recently achieved the highest safety level available during an assessment by the local fire service. Security arrangements are robust and offer protection for all at the unit. Searches of young people entering the unit are risk assessed and full searches are only carried out when intelligence suggests a need. This helps to protect the dignity of young people. Random room searches are now carried out routinely each day.

## Leadership and management

The leadership and management of the children's home are **good**.

The organisation and management of the unit is good. A Statement of Purpose clearly sets out the aims and objectives of the unit. Staff understand their role and responsibilities as well as having good insight into the needs of young people. The staff team are committed to the ethos, aims and working practices which are well established in the day-to-day function and operation of the unit.

The staff team receive regular supervision, appraisal and training. Most have completed professional training and the ongoing staff training programme provides initial and refresher core training on a regular basis. This ensures staff possess the competences and skills necessary to effectively meet young people's diverse needs.

A range of information about the unit aimed at different parties is easily accessible. This includes a young person's guide which although detailed and informative, does not include the details of a young person's independent reviewing officer, the Children's Rights Director or contact details for Ofsted. This means it may be difficult for a young person to access this information.

Records relating to young people's progress are of a good standard, fulfil legislative requirements and are updated on a regular basis. This helps young people to have a good understanding of their history and care.

Both internal and external monitoring of the unit takes place regularly and meets with regulatory requirement. Reports containing elements of quality assurance are prepared monthly. This process benefits young people by effectively monitoring working practices and identifying areas for improvement. Young people contribute to the monitoring by discussing their views as part of the process. However, the reports from external monitoring do not specifically contain the views of parents, relatives and persons working at the unit.

The manager demonstrates a good understanding of the unit's strengths and areas in need of improvement. Development plans are in place and many positive amendments have been made to the working practices of the unit. There is a good record of compliance and the management team have successfully addressed the one recommendation made following the previous inspection. As a result all actions which have been identified as required during the internal monthly safeguarding meetings are now fully evidenced as been completed.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.