

## Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Inspector</b>	Diane Thackrah
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<b>Provision subtype</b>	Children's home

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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

This children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to 18 children and young people who have a learning difficulty.

The service is privately owned. A respite/short break service is provided and young people may stay in the home on an independence programme until the age of 25.

### Overall effectiveness

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

Young people benefit from well-planned and personalised care in this home. There are strong arrangements for ensuring that young people are treated as individuals and for taking into account their individual needs. This helps to ensure that young people benefit from positive outcomes in all areas of their lives. Young people are positive about their experiences in the home. They feel happy, safe and well cared for. Staff ensure that young people remain safe by placing their welfare at the centre of all practice. Young people and staff enjoy warm and positive relationships and this helps young people to thrive. There is a clear understanding from leaders about the strengths of the service and a commitment to improvement. This helps to promote quality in the service provision. The policies and procedures in place in relation to the handling of medication generally promote young people's safety. However, the recording of medication is not fully robust in order to further promote safety in this area. There are strong arrangements for health and safety in most areas which helps to keep young people safe. This could be further improved by ensuring that young people do not have access to storage cupboards and by ensuring that clear safety guidance is in place regarding the use of cleaning products. The arrangements for keeping young people safe are generally good but the missing person's procedures do not have regard to police protocols in order to fully promote young people's welfare.

### Areas for improvementStatutory 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 person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
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21 (2001)	ensure that suitable arrangements are made for the recording and handling of any medicines received into the children's home (including recording the full date on medicine administration records (mars), recording what medication goes with the child to school and the separate recording of PRN and daily medication on mars)(Regulation 21 (1))	09/11/2011
16 (2001)	ensure that there is a procedure to be followed when any child accommodated in the children's home is absent without permission which has regard to any relevant local authority or police protocols on missing children. (Regulation 16 (4)(b))	09/11/2011

## Recommendations

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

- ensure that all parts of the home to which children have access are so far as reasonably practicable free from hazards to their health and safety (particularly in relation to access to the storage room in the attic and to safety information being in place regarding the control of substances hazardous to health)(NMS 10).

## Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people flourish in a supportive environment. They benefit from highly-individualised support and this helps them to develop a positive self-view, strong emotional resilience and confidence. Young people have clear goals and targets that staff understand and this helps to ensure that goals are achieved. The effective key worker system in place helps young people to focus on their goals. It also helps to nurture young people's strengths, talents and interests and this promotes their welfare. There is an excellent approach to promoting the physical and emotional well-being of young people. All young people see health professionals as needed and specialist health care is sought as required. For example, one parent said that their child had been able to make good progress in their development since the home had accessed support from the child and adolescent mental health services for them.

Young people have an excellent record of school attendance. All attend full time education and have made excellent progress from their starting point at the time of placement. Staff ensure that there are wide-ranging opportunities for young people to make a positive contribution to the home and the wider community. A parent said, 'They help young people to realise their full potential and help to open new horizons like introducing them to trampolining club'. Young people are encouraged to develop individual interests. For example, some young people enjoy membership of a pottery group whilst others have music therapy, go to the local pub or for walks in the country side. This ensures that young people lead fulfilling lifestyles and achieve their

maximum potential. Young people are strongly encouraged to play a central role in the day-to-day planning of their lives. They are fully involved in areas, such as menu planning, shopping, cleaning and laundry and this helps to ensure that they make excellent progress in their preparation for independence and in making informed choices. Staff understand the important role that young people's families and friends play in the lives of young people and positively support contact. This ensures that young people benefit from positive links with family and friends.

## Quality of care

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

Young people benefit from the excellent behaviour management systems that are in place and this ensures that they maintain positive and constructive relationships with staff. Staff encourage good behaviour and a sense of right and wrong. Guidance and discussion is used in place of sanctions to promote positive behaviour. Restraint is used depending on young people's needs and only as a means to keep young people safe. These measures promote young people's welfare. Young people's wishes and feelings are highly valued. Staff and young people plan daily living together. For example, young people are involved in menu planning, shopping and housework in their individual houses. They choose how they wish to spend their free time and staff are creative and flexible in facilitating activities. Staff have high aspirations for young people and this is reflected in the activities on offer. Activities are planned around individuals and their wishes and supported by one-to-one staffing levels. Activities are purposeful, such as pottery club, music therapy and swimming. Young people are enthusiastic about the activities available. One young person said they enjoy going to drumming club and out for meals at local restaurants. Young people are able to play a key role in the design of their bedroom. A parent said that staff had, 'found out what she likes and sorted this out before she moved in'. A social worker said, 'they did lots of planning work to help the child settle in'. Staff ensure that they provide an appropriate explanation for why it may not be possible to act upon young people's wishes. This helps young people to feel valued and helps to build their confidence. There is an effective complaints process that young people may follow if they are unhappy. This ensures that young people's views are valued and that problems can be put right.

Each young person has a comprehensive care plan and risk assessment that sets out their individual needs, wishes and goals. These are well known to all involved in the young people's care and this helps young people to succeed in all areas of their lives. Needs relating to personal identity are identified in care plans and addressed positively. Young people have daily planners drawn up in pictorial format and this helps to ensure that they are clear about their goals and expectations of them. Young people are consistently and centrally involved in the review of their care. They are invited to attend every review of care and supported to complete pre-review questionnaires in order to ensure that their views are heard. Young people learn to understand the nutritional value of eating a good diet. The home has employed a nutritionist in order to ensure that all menus provide a healthy diet and this promotes young people's health. Staff ensure that young people have access to health care

professionals who can meet their needs and promote their good health. Exercise is promoted and many of the young people enjoy using the home's own swimming pool. All staff have training in life saving and this ensures that young people are able to make the most of the pool. Staff highly value young people's education. They ensure that young people are attending education that meets their individual needs. They support progress by maintaining good contact with schools and colleges and ensuring that young people are able to make the most of their education. Young people have facilities within the home, such as desks, computer equipment and internet access, and this also helps them to make positive educational achievements.

The home is well placed and designed to meet the individual needs of the young people and this promotes their well-being. Planning for independence is well organised and structured and this helps young people to develop the skills required for adulthood. Young people are offered a place in the home up until their 25th birthday. This ensures that independence programmes are clearly built into care plans and focus on positive outcomes for young people in the future.

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

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

This is a home where young people feel safe and secure. There are strong systems in place for keeping young people safe such as sound policies and procedures for responding to allegations of abuse, bullying and behaviour management. Staff say that bullying is not a problem in the home. They are clear of the group dynamics and triggers which can lead to behaviour that causes distress or conflict between young people. They respond to this behaviour appropriately in order to promote young people's safety. Training for staff in child protection is ongoing and this helps to promote young people's safety. Staff help young people learn to take responsibility for their actions. There is reward and praise for improved behaviour and this helps young people to keep themselves safe. It is not common for young people to go missing from this home. The home has its own policies and procedures in place for responding to this should it occur and this promotes their welfare. However, the policy does not relate to the local police protocols for missing children and, therefore, does not fully protect young people.

There is, generally, a robust risk management system in place that helps to keep young people safe. Risk assessments which address fire safety and the general use of the building are completed and kept under review. Individual risk assessments help staff to reduce any risks faced by the young people. The risk assessment system has not, however, identified all risks to young people, as there is access to a store room in the attic and some missing safety information about cleaning materials. Whilst the level of risk posed is minimal, these issues do not fully promote young people's welfare. Engineers routinely test fire safety equipment and the electricity and gas supply. Good fire safety practices such as staff training, drills and checks on the fire system occur. These measures ensure that staff and young people are kept safe and understand how to keep themselves safe. Significant incidents are recorded and reviewed. This ensures that preventive measures can be put in place to keep

young people safe and minimise risks.

The home has a robust recruitment policy. This details the need to employ suitable staff, who complement the existing staff team. Extensive checks are made on all new staff prior to them working with young people in order to protect them from harm. This includes obtaining an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check and two written references for all new starters. There is generally effective management of the medication systems in the home and this helps to keep young people safe. All administered medication is recorded and young people's medication is regularly reviewed. However, records of medication do not always reflect good practice, for example, they are not always dated, or reflect administration instructions. This practice does not fully promote the safety of young people.

### **Leadership and management**

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

This is a well-managed home that functions as described in its Statement of Purpose. This ensures that parents and social workers can be certain of what to expect from the home. Young people benefit from living in a structured and stable environment. This supports them to make good progress in all areas of their lives. Young people benefit from high levels of staff support. There is a one-to-one staffing ratio for most young people. Young people with higher needs have two-to-one staff support. Young people benefit from consistency in their care as there is a permanent staff team. Some agency staff are used to cover staff sickness and annual leave. Good efforts are made by the home to ensure that the same agency staff are used. This helps to promote consistent working practices which focus on enhancing young people's quality of life.

Young people benefit from being cared for by a well-supported and trained staff team. There are excellent arrangements for staff training and development in this home. This ensures that young people benefit from having their needs met by competent and knowledgeable staff. There is a full-time dedicated training manager and training facilities available on-site. This helps to ensure that staff receive excellent opportunities for training and development. Staff feel well equipped to carry out their roles and say that their development is valued. This ensures staff possess the competence needed to undertake their role, have the required individual skills and are up-to-date with professional and legal developments. A high value is placed on handover sessions, team meetings and supervision. These are held regularly and this promotes the professional running of the service.

There are strong systems in place for quality assurance. This includes monthly Regulation 33 visits, health and safety audits and canvassing the views of young people, parents and stakeholders about the service. This helps to ensure that the management focus on the home's strengths and identify areas for improvement. Records keeping in the home is generally good. This helps to ensure that there is a clear and accurate record of young people's progress in place. Two requirements and a recommendation from the previous inspection, requiring the organisation to make



improvements in training and record keeping, have been acted on. There are strong arrangements for the management of the home that help to promote positive outcomes for young people. The current manager has good experience of working in the home and has submitted an application for the post of Registered Manager. The management structure is strengthened by senior team leaders which provides clear accountability and leadership.

Equality and diversity practice is **outstanding**.